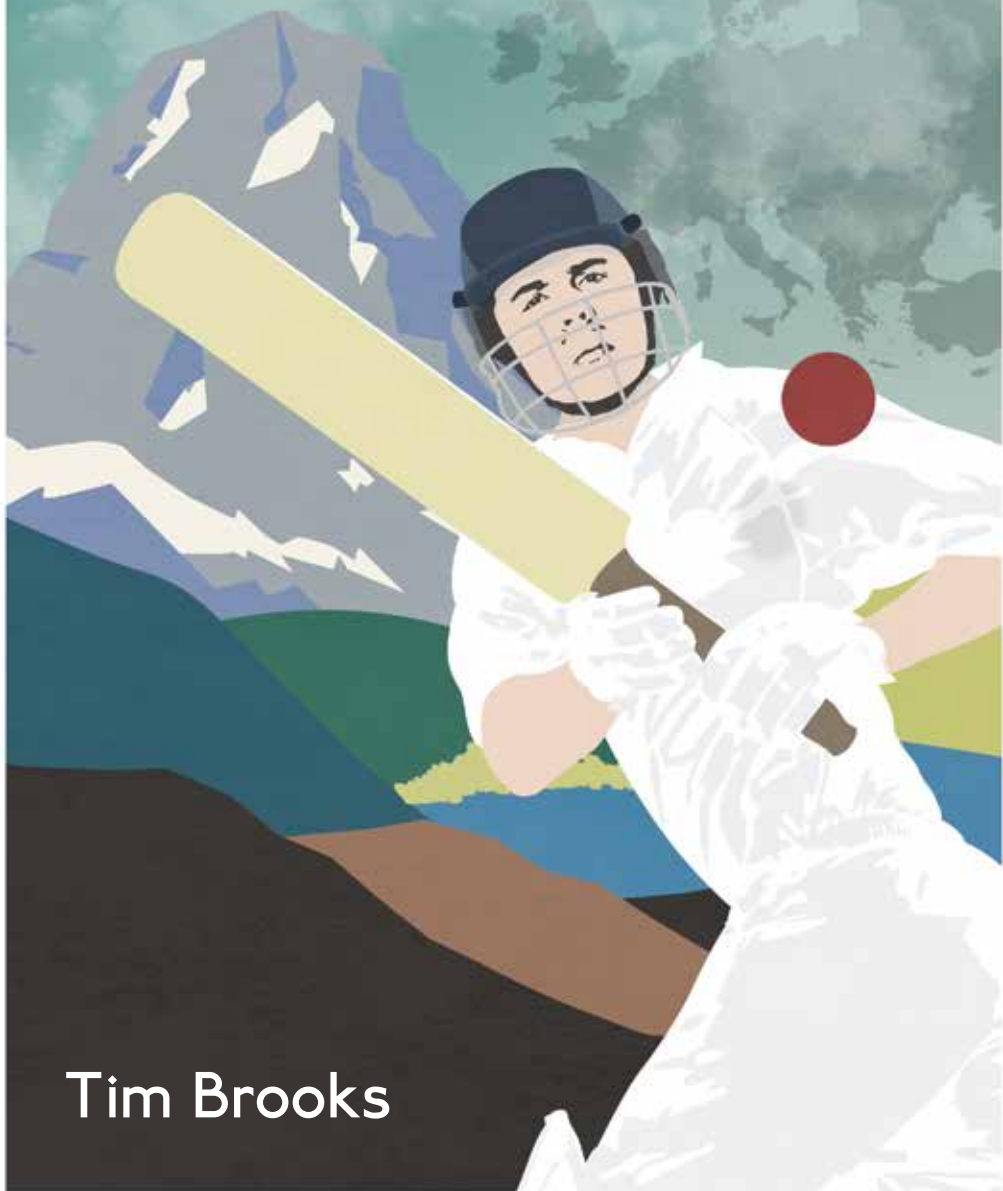


CRICKET

ON THE CONTINENT



Tim Brooks

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Introduction

CRICKET on the continent has hit the headlines twice in the last decade. The first was when the Netherlands defeated England at Lord's in the opening game of the World T20 in 2009. It was a victory celebrated across the world, even by some in England, as a triumph for the underdog and an inspiring example of a team from beyond the game's traditional heartlands shining on the global stage. For the Dutch cricket team it was a moment to savour and an opportunity to capitalise on. As a minority sport in the Netherlands with a player base of only several thousand they had struggled for relevance and recognition at home. But suddenly they were the darlings of world cricket, the photo of Ryan ten Doeschate and Edgar Schiferli having scored the winning runs becoming one of the sporting images of the year, resonating across the cricketing world. The team became celebrities at home too, shaking hands with the great and the good seeking to bask in reflected glory and appearing on television chat shows where they tried to explain cricket to an affable but bemused host and an intrigued but uneducated audience.

The victory in 2009 was a David and Goliath story and at the heart of its journalistic appeal was the amateur overcoming the odds to humble the professional. But this was no fluke. Yes the Dutch team didn't enjoy the funding, facilities and profile of their neighbours over the North Sea but neither were they the rag-tag group of odd-job men the press relished portraying them as. The Dutch team that beat England in 2009 was very different from their forebears who famously defeated Australia on home soil in 1964. A product of the ICC's High Performance Programme, they had a professional outlook and professional preparation. Their success raised some fascinating questions. Could a continental country ever become a leading cricket nation? Did the region have the potential to be a cricketing heartland in the future or was this just an isolated success in a region where the dominance of football was absolute? How realistic was it for cricket to develop from a recreational game on the margins of sporting consciousness? These were questions I wanted to explore.

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The second time cricket hit the headlines was in the early summer of 2016 when news of Germany's inspiring work in giving bats, balls and hope to refugees entering the country exploded across the internet and made news bulletins. Once again the ingredients needed to turn a local, specialist story into one of international interest were present. There were the deeply moving human stories of people who had risked their lives and walked thousands of miles to flee persecution and war suddenly to find hope again through sport. There were inspiring pictures of whirling bats and beaming smiles. And there was cricket's role in profound social and political themes that have defined the modern age: the battle between compassion and tolerance against fear and self-interest.

The stories raised awareness amongst the general public and the cricketing world of the character and composition of cricket in continental Europe. It is a region where cricket has changed from a game identified with Englishness and played by Anglophiles who admire its associations with manners, fair play, elegance and sophistication to one identified with South Asia and predominantly played by economic migrants from that part of the world. There are five times more cricketers in the region now than in the mid-eighties, but the number of native cricketers has declined. Less than one in every ten cricketers on the continent is from the majority, indigenous ethnic group.

This has undoubtedly had a transformative effect on the amount of cricket played and the geographic spread of the game within the region. While still very much a minority sport, with all the challenges and constraints that brings, it is nevertheless more widespread than ever before and the passion and enthusiasm for the game in its nexus of outposts is extraordinary and inspiring, presenting much hope for the future. Politicians are taking an interest too, appreciating cricket's role in social integration in their increasingly multicultural countries.

But while this shift in the continent's cricketing fabric brings opportunities it has created a gamut of challenges, sensitivities and criticisms along with a polarisation of opinions that are never far from the surface in continental cricket. There are many who would dearly love to see teams of blond-haired, blue-eyed Germans playing games on silken lawns adjacent to a Bierkeller and representing their country on the international stage. They want cricket to be a German sport, a French sport, a Spanish sport. With its local eccentricities of course, that is all part of the charm, but authentic. In reality native players make up a tiny percentage of cricketers on the continent, national teams are largely comprised of players of South Asian ethnicity and the administration and playing culture reflects the cultural background of participants. In an ideal world the cricketing

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population and the composition of the national team would reflect general demographic trends but is this realistic in a region where cricket has not even secured a toehold in the cricketing consciousness? This is one of the questions that frame the future of the game on the continent but that have never been addressed. Does it matter that the primary role of cricket administrations in Europe may be to facilitate the playing of cricket amongst particular ethnic groups? In doing so will they further strengthen an already common perception in the region that cricket is a foreign rather than universal sport? Those of a cynical, though they would argue pragmatic, view would also pose this head scratcher: should development funding be targeted only at those countries that have a genuine chance of being a force in world cricket and where cricket either has or has the potential to have broad appeal and participation amongst the majority, native ethnic group?

In this book I will address those questions within the context of both common issues across the continent and particular cultural and cricketing factors in each country. I'll also set out my thoughts and proposals for how to develop cricket on the continent in the future, capitalising on opportunities and overcoming challenges and constraints. The development role of the ICC will of course be critical, although there have been dispiriting signs that they will withdraw active support for the majority of countries in the region. A transformative catalyst to increase the profile and recognition for the sport, and secure vital government funding and sponsorship for cricket, would be inclusion in the Olympics. This has traditionally been blocked by the Victorian governance and short-termism of the ICC, allied to the self-interest and greed of certain cricketing superpowers, but there are now signs that attitudes are changing and there is even the tantalising prospect of cricket in the Olympics if Rome win the bid for 2024. There have been some inspiring examples of development across the continent and these can form the basis of structured plans to grow the game and broaden its appeal.

However, while the big issues are important and can't be ignored I also want to paint a picture of the everyday reality of cricket on the continent. Every summer weekend the passion of cricketers across the region sees them travel up to seven hours to play a game, often on a rough pitch with no changing facilities. The leagues they play in are only made possible by the selfless commitment of a host of volunteers preparing grounds, officiating games and keeping the cricket community together. For have no illusions, cricket across much of Europe faces a constant struggle to survive. Being on the margins of the margins of the sporting scene means access to grounds and facilities is far from assured. In some countries an entire league is dependent on access to a single ground. If the lease expires, or it

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is developed for housing, cricket in the country is groundless and rootless. And grand plans to qualify for a World Cup, play Test cricket or get 10,000 participants are not as urgent as finding the money to keep bulldozers at bay. It is a different game to that played in England or Australia, where grounds are plentiful and investment assured. It is life on a cricketing frontier and like in all settler communities life is a compelling mix of threat and opportunity. It is this challenge that makes continental cricketers who they are: survivors, innovators, problem solvers. They may play cricket where cricket is largely unknown, but this makes them among the most driven and passionate champions of the game anywhere in the world.

Brief History of Cricket on the Continent

THIS first section of the book provides an overview of the development of cricket on the continent in the 19th and 20th centuries. Previous accounts have tended to be limited in scope to historical sketches of locations, teams, fixtures and players. While these have provided a rich source of information, memorable anecdotes and no little humour they have not attempted to define or analyse different models of development and explain how these applied in specific cultural and political settings within Europe. They have set out what cricket took place and provided a dramatic narrative of opportunity and challenge within which a compelling cast of missionaries and cricket tragics have been introduced. But they haven't asked those most important questions: how and why?

The development of cricket, more than that of any other major sport, has been studied through the lens of imperialism. And with good reason, after all the founding fathers of the international game were powerful and passionate imperialists who saw cricket as a means of pursuing their ideals and retaining imperial power and influence. When they constituted cricket as a modern, organised sport they did so on an imperial basis. There was no global remit or ambition. It followed therefore that cultural, sociological and political studies of the game focused on cricket and imperialism, its growth, impact and socio-political ramifications. The redoubtable shelves of the Lord's Library are crammed with such lofty tomes. But all this leaves studies of cricket in continental Europe conspicuous by their absence, the forgotten part of cricket's global jigsaw. And this despite the region having the greatest concentration of ICC membership in the world.

While continental Europe has for the large part been written out of an imperial-centric study of the game its close and complex relationship with England is nevertheless the starting point for understanding how cricket was introduced and developed in this geographically close but culturally remote corner of the cricketing world.

The Origin Story

LORD HAWKE, that most aristocratic and sartorially elegant luminary of the Victorian game, once remarked that 'wherever Englishmen go, they take cricket with them'. This simple statement is the basis for the most widely accepted development model for the sport. There is, as you'd expect, a very strong correlation between Britain's imperial control and influence and records of cricket being played. This wasn't merely a case of Englishmen continuing to play the sport they loved wherever they were posted, but part of a planned, systematic imperial strategy.

As Jon Gemmell noted in his study of the history of Irish cricket: 'Encouraged initially as a means to replicate the home environment in the colonies, cricket provided a vessel through which the ruling authorities could instil values firstly into settler communities and through them to the indigenous population.'

It is worth picking this idea apart, for it contains several key themes. At a fundamental level it is natural that people will want to play sports that they enjoy wherever they live, both for enjoyment and wellbeing, but also as an expression of their cultural identity. Therefore it follows that cricket would spread around the world as players who learn the game in a traditional centre of the sport migrate to other areas. This link between migration and development has been a consistent theme throughout the history of European cricket.

Another key aspect hinted at in the quote is class and social standing. It was the colonisers, naturally drawn from the ruling and educated classes, who sought to use cricket as a means of social cohesion and a re-affirmation of an ordered, civilised society. As cricket spread across the world the opportunity to play, in its founding phases at least, was linked with class and social standing. As with its geographical reach this was another form of exclusivity.

Applying this development model in a European setting requires a more nuanced approach. Understanding how cricket's strong links to class, social standing and certain virtues and values applied in Europe, a non-imperial setting that itself comprises of a complex and multi-layered cultural patchwork, is as challenging as it is fascinating.

Despite some persuasive linguistic studies that argue for French or even Scandinavian origins of the word 'cricket' there is no conclusive evidence that cricket existed in Europe before it was developed in England. It is likely that there were variants of similar games involving sticks and balls played across the continent from the early Middle Ages, and this may have influenced the extent to which cricket was welcomed and played by local people. But cricket in its modern form was undeniably an import from Britain or its colonies.

Within a continental European context there are several different forms of British influence ranging from direct control to the movement of people, ideas and ideals. Using this development model as the structure for an assessment of cricket's history on the continent helps to identify common themes and, critically, the extent to which development was inspired and implemented locally. Put another way, while the seed may always be imperial the fruit it bears is European.

I have used the year 1996 as the cut-off for this summary of the past as this was the year when the ICC first considered putting an objective and structure in place to support global development. Before that point any development was bottom up and decentralised. It was also the year a continental European team first featured in a World Cup.

The Colonial Model

Gibraltar

Although the targets for Britain's imperial expansion lay in distant continents where resources were plentiful and resistance limited, in order to exercise its global hegemony and grow prosperous from trade it needed centres of influence and control nearer to home, particularly in strategic arteries of commerce like the Mediterranean. It was for this reason that in 1713 they acquired Gibraltar, an area of less than three square miles at the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula. However, it was ideally situated to give England influence in both the Mediterranean and North Africa.

As with all colonial acquisitions the introduction of cricket was integral to the settlement strategy. Cricket was already firmly embedded within British military culture as a means of instilling unity, comradeship and the virtues of honour, discipline and fair play. It also played an important role in developing the identity and pride of different regiments.

Keeping the men constructively occupied when off duty was a way of keeping discipline and of course many would have been keen cricketers when they signed up for service and would have a personal commitment to continue playing, wherever they were posted. It was military sides that first played the game. In spite of the obvious

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challenge of playing cricket on a precipitous rock there are records of games from the late 18th century. Initially cricket was played exclusively by servicemen in fixtures organised within the military structure. But one of the roles of cricket within the imperial context was to forge links between the military and civilian administrators, helping ease the tensions that would naturally arise between different working cultures and outlooks.

By 1800 cricket was obviously considered important and established enough to justify the investment in building a ground, just north of the rock itself, in one of the few areas of flat ground large enough. By 1822 there are records of civilians playing. This indicates that interest in cricket, or perhaps in some cases merely intrigue, had seen participation rise though it is not clear to what extent this was a stated objective of the military command. Nevertheless in the context of direct British control, a predominantly British population and British sporting culture it is natural that access to grounds, equipment and facilities notwithstanding cricket developed in a similar way and at a similar rate to any community in Britain itself. In fact it could be argued that a combination of battling homesickness and wishing to emphasise their Englishness in a foreign setting made Gibraltarian cricketers even more passionate to develop the quintessentially English sport.

In 1858 a club for civilians, the Calpe Cricket Club was formed, becoming the Gibraltar Cricket Club in 1883. This ran in parallel with the service and by the 1930s the sport was flourishing, attracting the occasional touring team to play 'the rock', a team drawn from the civilian and garrison clubs. Between the wars the number and quality of local players increased significantly. In the Second World War the ground was commandeered as a vegetable patch causing a long break in play. But when peace resumed a new ground, the Victoria Stadium, was built and became the focal point for the cricket community. The Gibraltar Cricket Association was formed in 1960 but when Britain reduced the size of its military presence there was a greater emphasis on local coordination, especially in schools.

Gibraltar became an associate member of the ICC in 1969, bringing with it a sizeable grant to complement funding for the sport provided by the government. At that time all associate nations received the same level of grant irrespective of size or population. Tiny Gibraltar had the smallest population of any associate nation enabling funding to stretch a long way, not only providing facilities and administration for a strong league structure but enabling an international programme.

Despite limited playing strength, not surprising given the tiny player pool, as an associate nation Gibraltar were eligible to play in

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the ICC Trophy, the premier international tournament for non-Test countries introduced in 1979. It took part in every trophy from 1982 but never progressed past the first round. The team consisted of a core of expat stalwarts like the Buzaglo brothers and Gary De'Ath, with some Gibraltar-born players like Christian Rocca. They were beneficiaries of the traditional system of an automatic right of qualification by virtue of their membership category. When this was changed early in the new millennium they failed to qualify for the 2005 ICC Trophy and their opportunities within a meritocratic international framework have largely been limited to regional tournaments.

In 1996 they featured in the inaugural European Championships but proved uncompetitive, losing to Denmark by 288 runs in a 50-over fixture.

But the importance of Gibraltar in a European context shouldn't be judged on their own success, whether on or off the field, but rather their role in helping establish cricket in southern Europe. Gibraltar could have served as a base from which cricket could spread north into the Iberian peninsula. However, it is clear that this was not an ambition of either the military or the administration, a result no doubt of political tension with neighbouring Spain over continued British control of the rock. Cricket was a way of celebrating difference from continental neighbours, emphasising British cultural distinction.

Since the 1960s southern Spain has become a popular destination for English expats searching for sun. This has led to the formation of a growing player base and many clubs in the regions that neighbour Gibraltar. While there have been a number of fixtures organised between these sides Gibraltar missed the opportunity to fund and implement a programme to develop cricket in Spain, not helped of course by animosity between respective governments. Some believe that one of the reasons for this was a fear that losing to Spanish sides would potentially threaten funding levels. But whatever the reasons this lack of collaboration is a missed opportunity.

Malta

In 1800 Malta became a British protectorate following a Maltese uprising against the French and the intervention of the British fleet in Sicily. A garrison was established under the administration of a civil commissioner. In 1813 the island was formally incorporated as a crown protectorate and the commissioner replaced by a governor.

As in Gibraltar the garrison would have played cricket, with one of the functions of the game to create a bond of unity between the troops and civil administration. Surprisingly the first reference to a match being played on the island isn't until 1887 when two regiments

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faced each other at the Floriana Parade Ground, lying just outside the beautiful city of Valletta.

One of the factors that led to wider take-up of the game on the island was the prominent location of the ground and easy public access, drawing local crowds to witness the spectacle. In the first decade of the 20th century this interest led to the formation of several local clubs, including the Colonials, Floriana, Dockyard Union, Silema and Kalkara. In addition to club activity cricket was also taught and played at St Edward's School.

Prior to this one of the most famous cricketers of all had played in Malta when en route to Australia. WG Grace was among Lord Sheffield's Ashes squad who defeated a locally based team comprising the best players from the fleet and garrison. With several grounds and a number of local teams cricket became established as a popular pastime, drawing together different parts of the community, British as well as local. But by the 1950s worsening economic conditions had put pressure on the local cricket community, forcing many to emigrate and others to work very long hours leaving no time to play. It was not embedded sufficiently within the local culture to withstand such pressures and by the 1960s the only cricket on the island was, once again, British. With this contraction to the British it lost its inclusive appeal, becoming a game of the commissioned classes in the military.

Britain withdrew from Malta in 1979 leaving only a handful of expats, some of Asian origin, arranging occasional games against touring teams like the Free Foresters. The game was close to dying out altogether until given a boost by returning emigrants coming home after economic conditions became more favourable. They organised local leagues and formed the Malta Cricket Association in 1989, playing in European tournaments in the 1990s.

Despite an organisational structure being established by the local population the small player base made it vulnerable to player losses, through either retirement or migration. However, the popularity of Malta as a touring destination for English clubs provides plenty of fixtures and impetus for the local players.

Corfu

Corfu, the best known of the Ionian islands, the northernmost island group in Greece, had for centuries changed hands between rival empires before Britain claimed control in 1815 at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars. It became a British protectorate and was governed by a Lord High Commissioner. Cricket was introduced in the garrison and a ground was established in the Esplanade in the centre of Corfu Town, in front of the governor's residence. The first reference of a game being played on this ground, undoubtedly one of

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the most historic and picturesque in Europe, was in 1823, recorded in the military memoirs of Major H.R. Lewin.

Corfu became an important naval base for Britain and the garrison arranged games with the crews of passing ships. In this sense the development of cricket followed the classic colonial model seen in Gibraltar, except that in Corfu the local population took to it quickly and enthusiastically. A mere 13 years after that first recorded game two sides had been formed by local Corfiots. It is not known what led to the formation of local teams, though intrigue of a novel game being played in such a prominent location in the town must have been a factor. Rather than being drawn from rival communities the two teams were based on social standing and class, with the nobility forming the *Megaloi* (big) team and artisans and middle class forming the *Microi* (small) team. This suggests that Corfiots saw the role of cricket in conferring respectability and civilisation, perhaps mirroring the structure the English garrison used to construct their teams.

By the 1830s, when curved bats and underarm bowling were still used, cricket in Corfu was played by a mixture of local sides, garrison teams, visiting ships and local residents. This relative complexity developing over a short period of time indicates that cricket was socially important. By 1864 when Britain transferred Corfu back to Greece cricket was well established on the island, with innovations, such as roundarm bowling, gradually introduced by visiting teams. However, there is no evidence that either the British or Corfiots sought to establish cricket further afield in Greece.

Unlike in Gibraltar where British presence has been continuous Corfu offers an example of cricket being introduced in a European colonial setting but then left for locals to organise. British withdrawal did see playing numbers reduce and the *Megaloi* club, having split into two teams, the *Gongakis Company* and the *Kamvisis club*, were forced to merge to form the *Gymnastikos* in 1893. It also had to widen its membership to attract more players, compromising the social exclusivity of its founding. This was a precarious period for cricket on the island and the *Esplanade* ground deteriorated, becoming strewn with stones. It is likely that without games against visiting British naval ships the game would have died out. There was enough local interest though for an annual festival to be organised.

After the First World War there was a revival. In 1923, a century after the first match was recorded, a new club was formed called the *Ergatikos* (artisans) giving opportunities to the same social strata as the original *Microi*. A name change in 1930 to the *Byron club* indicates the enduring link between cricket and British values. The club was run by Corfiots, but rather than seek to Hellenise cricket they deliberately forged a British identity, and in *Byron* associated themselves with a

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highly romantic and heroic idealism of virtue and adventure. The Ionian islands was part of Greece, but in incorporating cricket into their social and sporting culture Corfu was emphasising their distinct history. Between the wars matches against the British Mediterranean fleet were the only external fixtures played.

The Second World War had a profound effect on Europe and as with every other aspect of life cricket was impacted. Being associated so closely with English virtues and imperial power cricket was always going to be highly politicised as the continent was divided between Britain and her allies and the Nazi-led Axis powers. Unsurprisingly Hitler and his Allies were hostile towards any cultural allegiances with Britain they found in territories they occupied, and cricket was perhaps the most symbolic and emotive of these. It represented the arrogance of Britain's imperial mission and purported social and cultural superiority. They destroyed all cricket equipment on the island and few players remained. Once again the existence of cricket on the island was threatened.

But once again Britain came to the rescue following the end of hostilities. But this time the development model changed from direct colonial control to military influence. Rather than following a typical structural pathway the resurrection of cricket in Corfu was reliant on the passion and commitment of individuals. If the military mission sent to the island in 1946 had been led by different men, the history of cricket in Greece would have been different. As it was Corfiot cricketers had the luck of welcoming Major George Laing and Major Guy Thorneycroft, both keen army cricketers with a missionary zeal for the sport they loved. They provided equipment, started coaching sessions and encouraged the Gymnastikos and Byron clubs to renew their rivalry. Under their stewardship matches against naval sides recommenced.

Once again politics intervened when the British Mediterranean fleet was withdrawn following tensions with Greece over Cyprus. But another crisis brought yet another saviour, this time in the form of British Vice-Consul in Corfu, Major John Forte. Seeing cricket in a state of collapse he set up an appeal in the *Daily Telegraph* to save cricket on the island, and the £400 raised went towards equipment and the promotion of Corfu as a touring venue for English clubs. By the mid-1960s the island had a busy programme of fixtures against touring sides, providing an impetus for development. In 1962 the island played host to an International XI that included stars such as Wes Hall and Basil D'Oliveira that attracted much attention in the press and helped increase its profile as a touring destination. The links established were formalised in 1970 when an Anglo-Corfiot Association was created, co-ordinating tours, translating the rules

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of the game into Greek and providing leading domestic players with coaching opportunities in England. This would later become the Corfu Cricket Technical Committee, an organisation recognised and funded by the Greek Ministry of Sport.

By the early 1990s the Corfiots were playing as Greece in European tournaments. In 1995 Greece became an affiliate member of the ICC and the following year the Hellenic Cricket Federation was founded. The federation made limited attempts to reach out to cricket communities elsewhere in Greece, although several Pakistani residents of Athens were incorporated into the national team.

British influence has been critical to the development and survival of cricket in Corfu, through direct control, military presence and diplomatic zeal. But it is also clear that Corfiots adopted the game in part to emulate the social structure and virtues associated with it, as well as emphasise its unique culture and history to mark its difference and distinction within the Greek political sphere.

Croatia

Following victory over the French in the Adriatic during the Napoleonic wars Britain briefly took control of the Dalmatian coast. The governor, William Hoste, introduced cricket to the island of Vis. However, British occupation did not last long enough to establish the game and it died out when they left.

Cyprus

Like Corfu, Cyprus was another island of strategic importance to Britain. Benjamin Disraeli, the enigmatic prime minister novelist of the late 19th century, placed Cyprus under British administration and it was formally annexed in 1914. Cricket was played by the garrison with fixtures against both visiting ships and occasional touring sides from England.

However, unlike in Corfu it was not taken up by the local population. Without such local roots it died out after the British withdrew in the late 1950s, only revived after a wave of economic migration around the new millennium. The British had however provided the grounds to enable cricket on the island to be played.

Military Presence

While British colonial possessions in Europe were limited to Gibraltar and, briefly, Corfu, their military presence has been far more widespread, particularly in periods of war. This has brought players, grounds, facilities and organisation into a region where cricket had either never been played or was limited to small communities with little resources or structure.

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Corfu has already provided an example of how British military presence both during and in the aftermath of European conflicts to a large extent determined the development of cricket. But the legacy of British military presence in the major powers of mainland Europe is more complex. The first cricket in Belgium was played by English officers during the Napoleonic wars, including a famous fixture played on the eve of the battle of Waterloo. There are other fleeting references too, proudly acknowledged by cricket federations across the region.

British military teams in the Netherlands provided a much-needed boost to domestic cricket when the country was liberated from Nazi occupation in 1946, helping to schedule matches and strengthen leagues. The British Army of the Rhine brought players and attracted touring teams to the Berlin cricket scene after the First World War and the partition of Germany after the Second World War saw Britain establish a considerable military presence that remained in one form or another for many decades, and was central to the organisation of cricket in the country. Without the grounds they built the revival of cricket in Germany in the modern era would have been much slower.

Diplomatic Presence

The history of global cricket is littered with examples of how British ambassadors have introduced the game and provided facilities and equipment to help it grow. The first Afghanistan national cricket team, that embarked on a fairy-tale journey from refugee camps to the World Cup, had their kit and equipment provided by the British ambassador. In fact the consistent pattern of support across all corners of the globe suggests that establishment and promotion of cricket is an unwritten part of diplomatic training at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. As in the colonial context, cricket provides a conduit for the values that Britain wishes to promote in the international community.

In many European countries the first references to cricket being played are games organised by British embassies and in some cases these games sparked interest that saw small cricketing communities develop. In Latvia cricket was played by embassy staff in 1998 prior to a club being formed by Indian expats. Another example is British civil servants playing cricket in Luxembourg following the formation of the European Community in 1973.

Indirect Influence – Migration of People and Ideas

Britain only had political control in small, isolated centres at the extremities of continental Europe and therefore its direct institutional influence on the development of cricket in the region was limited.

However, the proximity of the continent made it a natural destination for English emigrants seeking employment or a different way of life.

Some of these emigrants would have been cricketers and while many would have left cricket behind when they left their homeland some were passionate enough to introduce it to their chosen destination. If they were teachers they had the opportunity to play a more profound role in developing the sport, introducing cricket to institutions both as a form of physical exercise but also as a means of promoting British virtues. In some instances the commitment of English teachers on the continent provided a similar missionary zeal to colonial administrators like General Forte. And their passion inspired a generation to ensure cricket spread beyond expat communities and was developed by the local population.

In most cases such emigration led to cricket being played but without the sport spreading into and capturing the imagination of local communities.

Cricket in Portugal

Due to the fondness of the British for a post-prandial tippie, wine merchants settled in the cities of Oporto and Lisbon to keep the decanters of English drawing rooms flowing with port. Clearly these communities counted amongst them a fair number of cricket enthusiasts for in 1855 the Oporto Cricket Club was founded. Five years later a club was formed in Lisbon and from 1861 the two rivals played an annual fixture. A number of press reports survive from these early matches and they offer a fascinating insight into the reaction of locals, or at least journalists representing local attitudes, to the game. Within an understandably befuddled explanation of the rules it is clear that cricket was considered peculiarly English and unlikely to appeal to locals.

Of course the cricket that these journalists were witnessing was the traditional, structured English form, staged as much as an event to re-assert social norms and values as for fun. This social context would appeal to those wishing to appear sophisticated and civilised, but perhaps less to those seeking immediate, visceral entertainment. The social context of the game was a critical factor in how it developed in the region, not just in expat communities but also among locals who adopted it.

The description of the social setting within which the match took place provides a few tantalising clues to how cricket was played by these frontier communities and what function it served. The journalist's report emphasises that a long and sumptuous meal in a specially erected marquee was integral to the game. The match was clearly an important part of the social calendar and an opportunity to

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network, make introductions and talk business. And because cricket was the context it was culturally exclusive. It provided a natural bond between Englishmen, a way of asserting distinction, difference and perhaps, in the eyes of some, superiority.

The minutes of club committee meetings give credence to the theory that cricket was used by the English abroad as a way of demonstrating greater sophistication and civilisation than the locals they lived amongst. When the question was raised whether Portuguese should be encouraged to play the majority view was that the game was 'too complicated' for them. So while in British controlled corners of Europe introduction of cricket was seen as a civilising influence, there was no such political or moral incentive for small communities of traders. In fact the exclusivity of cricket may well have strengthened its appeal.

In Oporto the club played both cricket and lawn tennis and arranged fixtures with visiting British navy ships. These only provided occasional fixtures but adding football and athletics to their roster meant that the existence of the clubs was not pinned directly on the volume and variety of cricket available. But with the dual appeal of long hot days and free-flowing wine Portugal became a popular staging post for touring teams from England set for more established cricketing cultures. Records attest to famous cricket personalities including Pelham Warner and Percy Fender having turned out for visiting sides. This gave the clubs a steady flow of matches, not to mention social cache.

One of the problems the club faced was grounds, a common constraint across the continent. The decision not to reach out to local communities safeguarded their exclusivity, but it also threatened their existence. For they were only tenants and without either an understanding of the game or a strong case for the benefits cricket brought to their city the municipal authority of Lisbon took the decision to evict the English and use the space for a bullring. In the end the Lisbon team had to buy a piece of land for their own ground.

The clubs survived after the Second World War and touring teams included regular visits from Gibraltar, cricket providing a conduit for forging links between different, isolated English communities on the Iberian peninsula. But ultimately the exclusivity of the clubs was to prove their undoing. Remaining small and culturally isolated they became too heavily reliant on the presence and commitment of a small number of individuals. Once these retired or returned home there was no sustainable base from which to develop a new generation of players. The turf pitch in Lisbon, thought to be the southernmost on the continent for many years, would have been the envy of many players across the continent playing on crude matting on rough areas

of ground not considered worthy of any other use. But despite these advantages, a long heritage and ideal weather conditions, cricket in Portugal all but died out, only to be revived by cricketing immigrants from much further afield.

Cricket in Italy

Italy was a popular destination for the Victorian and Edwardian upper classes as they embarked on grand tours of the continent searching for adventure, culture and inspiration away from the stifling orthodoxy and restraint of British manners. It is inevitable therefore that cricket followed in their tread, attested by a game portrayed in the background of a 1772 painting. As in Malta and Corfu it was the Napoleonic wars that first brought organised cricket to Italy, with Nelson staging a game there in 1793, a fixture still proudly cited by the Italian Cricket Federation to show the country's historic links to the game.

Napoleon occupied the Kingdom of Naples and installed a garrison, headed by his brother in law, Joachim Murat. The new ruler asked his aide de camp to find constructive activity for his officials and being part-British, and a keen cricketer, Colonel Maceroni introduced cricket. It was organised in the Capodimonte Gardens, in Rome, and reputedly proved popular with officials from many different cultural backgrounds. However, it was a more orthodox English connection that was responsible for the first cricketing base in the country. The English college in Via Monserrato built a cricket pitch in the grounds of an old monastery it acquired on the shore of Lake Albano, to provide an opportunity for students to play in the summer.

At the turn of the 20th century sport was transforming from a recreational pastime to a more structured, codified and modern form. Drawing inspiration from the Olympic movement administrators sought to promote values, virtues, health and athleticism through organised sport. At this time cricket was the longest established of the major sports and English presence in major Italian cities saw cricket incorporated into new sporting clubs, many of which have now become internationally renowned.

It is hard to imagine that AC Milan, a club so synonymous with Italian style and passion, was actually founded by two Englishmen from Nottingham. At that time the Midlands town had strong links to lace-making firms in northern Italy which drew a small community of English industrialists to Milan. Two such men, Alfred Edwards and Herbert Kilpin, unwittingly created one of the highest profile and successful sporting clubs in the world. Lamenting the absence of the traditional summer game of their homeland they met with friends one evening in a tavern in the city and over a beer or two

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sketched out a charter for the Milan cricket and football club. It was two weeks before the dawn of a new century, a century that would see these sports become the most played and popular in the world with a defining impact on the development of modern culture. It is pertinent that cricket came first in the title, despite the fact that Kilpin was a talented amateur footballer and an influential pioneer. The famous sporting organ the *Gazzetta dello Sport* reported on the foundation, stating its aims as to 'spread the game of football and to play cricket as widely as possible'.

Edwards, known as 'papa' to historians of the club, became very wealthy indeed from interests in the Pirelli company. He was the first president of the club and bankrolled it, while Kilpin was the captain and star player. While there was an immediate impact on the football field, with AC Milan winning their first national title in 1900 and surpassing Genoa as the leading team in the country by 1906, the extent of their cricketing experience is a matter for speculation.

Two years before that fateful night in Milan Juventus had been formed in Turin by students of the Massimo D'Azeglio lyceum as a sporting club. Cricket is thought to be among those it planned to play, but by 1899 football was the sole focus and the name was changed to the Football Club Juventus. It can only be assumed that there was insufficient interest in cricket within the club for it to continue.

But the honour of the earliest multi-sport club in Italy goes to Genoa, still officially named the Genoa Cricket and Football Club. In 1893 the club was formed by British expats as the Genoa Cricket and Athletic Club. Initially its membership was restricted to British members. This mirrors the wish for exclusivity seen in the committees of the clubs established in Lisbon and Porto. That the club was a patriotic expression is seen from the choice of white shirts to match those of the England team. The club had grounds in the Combasso district, to the north-west of the city. One of the founding fathers of the club was Sir Charles Alfred Peyton, a diplomat who had been transferred from Mogador, Morocco, to the vice-consul in the city in the spring of 1893 and had joined others in the British community in founding the club.

For the first two years of its existence the club played cricket matches, mainly against the crews of visiting ships arriving in the harbour.

Peyton's posting to Calais in 1897 may well have been critical for cricket's future in the city. A year before James Richardson Spensley, a doctor, had arrived in Genoa charged with tending to English sailors on the coal ships. He took responsibility for leading football in the club, becoming its first manager. Acknowledging the burgeoning interest in football amongst the local population and under pressure

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from the city authorities the club opened its membership to Italians. The locals clearly wanted to play football rather than cricket. In 1898 Spensley established the Italian league and led his team to victory. Although it is uncertain whether cricket was still being played by the club after 1897 it is interesting to note that when a name change was voted for in 1899, cricket remained while athletics was dropped. This may have been in deference to the club's founding purpose, but indicates a willingness for cricket to remain part of the club's activities.

Meanwhile back at AC Milan cricket was being marginalised as the seeds of football fever that would capture Italy's soul were sown. The English founding fathers walked away from the club in 1908, perhaps frustrated that it had not embraced cricket as originally intended. In a few years at the dawn of the 20th century three of the richest and most influential sporting institutions in Italy had played cricket. If only it had survived for a few more years and captured the imagination of Italians the clubs would have provided the organisational capacity and financial clout to establish cricket in the country. This missed opportunity is particularly the case in Genoa, formed before football was widely known outside England and before a national infrastructure for the sport was established. For the first five years of its existence cricket had the upper hand, the bigger profile. But in these crucial years the club didn't allow Italians to join, protecting the exclusivity of their English sport. Cricket in Italy would never have such opportunity again.

With Italians adopting football as their national passion cricket was limited to pockets of English and Commonwealth communities. If any local interest was inspired the fascist government under Benito Mussolini suppressed any cultural or sporting links considered unItalian as they sought to remould Italy with the strength and grandeur of ancient Rome.

Naturally Rome proved the strongest draw and there are records of cricket being played between the wars in the grounds of the Villa Doria Pamphilj. The expats had found a sympathetic benefactor, but they lost their ground when it was dug over during the Second World War. As in Portugal the failure to involve locals and earn their support meant cricket was vulnerable to such whims of land-use. After the war the British and Commonwealth community in Rome was sufficient to generate interest in forming a cricket league. A British official was overheard voicing his frustration at the lack of a ground during an embassy function to celebrate the Queen's birthday in 1962. He was fortunate that the couple earwiggling were Princess Doria Pamphilj and her husband, the British admiral Frank Pogson. They invited him to their estate to see if there was a suitable space for a ground.

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Once a site had been identified a tournament was devised featuring teams from the British Embassy, Australian Sports and Social Club, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, two colleges and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. The body to coordinate cricket in the city, the Rome Cricket Association, was founded and to generate interest and mirror the rivalries from competing teams the series was dubbed the Rome Ashes.

The initial focus of the association was to make improvements to the ground. Such was the level of interest that the association incorporated other sports and the name was changed to the Rome Sports Association. Efforts were made to attract touring sides to the city for fixtures. This yielded a spectacular result as the Australian touring team, featuring Bill Lawry and Bob Simpson, stopped off to play a match en route to England. But once again these cricketing expats lost access to their ground when the Villa Pamphilj was turned into a public park in 1972.

The revival of cricket in Italy in modern times can largely be attributed to two factors, waves of economic migration from Commonwealth countries and the passion and dedication of Simone Gambino. The former provided the opportunity but the latter has been the driving force.

Gambino grew up in Rome but spent his boyhood summers in England with his maternal grandfather, an American who was an art dealer in London. His grandfather introduced him to cricket and he soon became a regular visitor to Lord's, forming a deep and lasting affection for the game. When he returned to Italy to study history in Rome he was an obsessive follower of the Ashes and played recreational cricket. He was one of the founding fathers of the Italian Cricket Association formed in 1980 by enthusiasts and players. There were no stated objectives or targets but rather a commitment to providing a structure within which cricket could be encouraged while ensuring that it was played in the best possible conditions.

The Doria Pamphilj club had been resurrected a few years before and included four players who had previously competed for the Rome Ashes. The club later changed its name to Capannelle, one of the most famous clubs on continental Europe.

Following the legal process for regulating sport in Italy the federation actively sought to form new clubs. By the spring of 1981 five clubs had been formed in Rome and a league established. These included two teams from English schools in the city. One side was comprised solely of Italians and by the mid-80s these local players had formed two new clubs, Lazio and Roma. In contrast interest in the English-dominated expat teams faded with the college teams slowly dropping out of the tournaments. By 1983 clubs had formed in other

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regions and a national championship was established, with the winner of a semi-final contested in Lombardy meeting the winner of the Rome competition.

Gambino attributes further growth of Italian cricket to summer tours of England scheduled from 1984, where around half the players were Italian, which attracted considerable media interest. Over time this interest translated into teams being formed in other cities and a subsequent increase in participation, and competition, in the Italian league.

In parallel to domestic development Italy also sought official recognition in the international cricket community. Although an associate membership category had been introduced in the 1960s many emerging cricket nations could not meet the membership criteria and so were left out of the fold. Bertie Joel, a legendary figure in London cricket and creator of the popular home counties cup that bears his name, regularly toured Rome in the early 1980s and sought to use his influence and connections to further Italy's cause. Pressure on the ICC led to the creation of the affiliate membership category in 1984. Beyond Italy being officially welcomed into cricket's global family this brought few practical benefits, in the short term at least. There was no development blueprint or targeted support provided by the ICC and participation in the ICC's showcase event for non-Test teams, the ICC Trophy, was limited to associate members. But Italy's fight was to pave the way for many other European nations in the years to come to access funding, support and a tournament structure.

Simone Gambino became president in 1986 and introduced reforms to the league. It became a requirement of clubs' participation in the National Championships to field seven Italians in their teams, later increased to nine. The strategy was clear, to ensure that the game in Italy was not limited to expats. The board wanted Italian cricket to develop, not just facilitate cricket in Italy. This policy was challenging to implement as the majority of interest in joining clubs was from the rapidly growing expat communities. Clearly by proscribing what players must be picked, the clubs were not always able to field their strongest teams.

The same approach was adopted for selection of the national team. Gambino insisted that the entire XI was Italian, despite ICC guidelines that enabled players to be selected for international games based on residency or holding a passport. It was a show of faith in the development of Italian cricket but such a policy was always going to impact performance in the short term. This was demonstrated in 1989 when Italy lost a one-day game to Denmark by a frankly absurd margin of 409 runs. The philosophy behind the policy was laudable and initially it served to encourage participation by Italian players

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because they had the strong incentive of representing their country. This may have been a factor in them committing to cricket rather than other, more popular, sports. But countering this was the risk that such crushing defeats would dent morale and enthusiasm.

In 1992 the selection policy was relaxed to a requirement that a player had to have an Italian passport to represent the national team. This policy was to significantly improve their performance on the field in years to come. In 1995 Italy secured elevation to associate status. This provided a significant funding boost thanks to the membership grant. It also gave them access to the ICC Trophy and therefore an opportunity to qualify for the World Cup. In 1995 and 1996 they toured Argentina, South Africa and Namibia. This served as preparation for the European Championships in 1996.

By this time the focal point of Italian cricket had shifted from Rome to Bologna. The university city, known as *Bologna the Fat* due to its love of food, had not adopted football quite as passionately and all-consumingly as cities like Milan. This gave cricket a better chance of generating local interest and participation. The Bologna club was founded in 1983 and six years later in the nearby Apennine hills the picturesque Pionoro ground was built. It was Bologna that had the greatest number and concentration of grounds, making it the de facto capital of Italian cricket and the natural home for national and international tournaments.

Cricket in France

There is a theory, enthusiastically advocated by some, that far from being a quintessential English invention cricket had in fact originated in France. A letter written to Louis XI in 1478 makes reference to a game of 'cricquet' being played in the northern French village of Liettes. Given that an exhaustive search has unearthed no other reference to or description of the game in France prior to the 18th century it is likely that the game in question was an early form of croquet. Nevertheless, it has given tiny Liettes a certain degree of fame and the local tourist board have sought to capitalise on the story by promoting it as a place of pilgrimage for cricket fans.

But theories aside, the first attested reference to cricket being played in France is in a letter written by Horace Walpole dated 1766, around two hundred years after evidence of the game being played in Guildford, Surrey. Eleven years later a match at Saint Omer was recorded. The revolution followed and gentle pastimes gave way to political upheaval and bloodshed. There are no references in French sources to the game at this time, which indicates that it must only have been played occasionally and exclusively by English residents or travellers.

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The opportunities provided by proximity were largely negated by the traditional enmity between the two nations. Following the revolution Napoleon seized control and the two great powers went to war again. In this context any sympathy or cultural affinity with England and Englishness would have been actively discouraged. This sentiment must have been hardened by the famous fixture on the eve of Waterloo that ensured that cricket became indelibly linked with England in the French national consciousness. And England was the enemy. It is difficult to assess how lasting and significant a factor this was in determining the extent and pace of the sport's development in France, but it may well help explain why very few native Frenchmen have taken up the game in comparison, for instance, to the Dutch. Cricket's association with class and social order would have jarred too with those who had overthrown their king, humiliated their aristocracy and proclaimed the virtues of 'égalité and fraternité'. While the social base of cricket in England was broadening, it is likely that those with the wealth and leisure to play the game in France were drawn from a class many French had come to despise.

Given this historical and ideological backdrop it is not surprising that references to cricket in the remainder of the 19th century are limited. English communities continued to arrange matches and there are games recorded in Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe and St Omer in the 1820s and 1830s. As in Italy many of the players were drawn from the lacemaking profession. But economic shifts saw them return to Nottingham and surrounding areas in the 1840s, and without them cricket died out in these towns. However, in the final decade of the century sport in its modern, organised form was born and pioneering administrators were spreading the gospel through the foundation of clubs. Mirroring the formation of clubs in Genoa and Milan a group of English businessmen established the Standard Athletic Club in 1892. In Paris the English community was sufficiently large for a 12-team league to have been formed by 1900. Importantly this included an all-French side, Sporting Athlétique Garrenois, indicating a degree of cultural assimilation for the game.

In 1900 the city not only boasted a 12-team league but also hosted cricket as an Olympic sport, with a British team defeating a French team consisting entirely of Englishmen in the final. This rather jolly footnote in Olympic history is often used to emphasise the amateur ideal of the Olympic movement at that time, contrasting with its slow but inevitable shift towards professionalisation in the modern era. This high profile event didn't appear to leave a legacy to cricket in France or capture the public imagination. Cricket was played by the English who lived there. From 1906 annual fixtures were arranged with English players living in Belgium and Brussels hosted a cricket

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tournament in 1920 as part of the world's fair, in which a French team took part. But ten years after the Olympics and almost two decades after the founding of the Standard Athletic Club there were still no Frenchmen in the XI. In fact only one Frenchman was known to have turned out for the club by 1968 and he had been educated in England. It can only be assumed that the club simply did not attempt to broaden its appeal and player base, or if it did its efforts were disappointed.

A game was reputed to have been played atop the Eiffel Tower with an orange as a ball, but such quirky anecdotes only serve to deflect attention from the lack of development of the sport in England's nearest continental neighbour. In 1922 the cricket community was drawn together under the aegis of the Federation Francais de Cricket that organised and supervised a league structure. Nazi occupation in the war both restricted opportunities and saw many players either return to England or join the military. This led to many clubs folding. Standard Athletic lost their ground to allotments, though they reclaimed it in 1947. After the war an influx of potential new players was presented through the founding of offices for NATO and military organisations. SHAPE was based at Roquencourt and the Allied Forces Central Europe at Fontainebleau. These new teams compensated in part for the loss of most of the pre-war teams in Paris, but when these were withdrawn cricket in France was in danger of disappearing. By the late 1960s cricket activity was limited to a few fixtures for Standard Athletic against English touring teams along with the occasional tour to Germany, Holland and Switzerland.

Cricket was saved in France not by another wave of English settlement but by cricketing immigrants from South Asia in the 1980s. Having come to the country to earn a living they naturally wanted to play the game they had grown up with and by 1987 there was sufficient interest to reform a cricket federation. Over this period and into the 1990s new clubs sprang up, such as Saumur and Chateaux Thoiry. The annual fixture against Belgium was revived in 1991 and a new league structure created. But that revival is part of the story of cricket's new Europe.

Cricket in Belgium

To an even greater extent than in France cricket was only ever the preserve of English residents in Belgium. Other than the famous game at Waterloo and a cricket scene depicted in Spa in 1840 the first notable date in Belgian cricket was 1865, with the foundation of the Brussels Cricket Club. Papers from the foundation meeting remain and show that membership was restricted to British residents. A watercolour of the Brussels Cricket Ground painted in 1870 hangs in the Lord's pavilion. As with examples in Portugal and Italy this

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was an English sporting club that just happened to be located abroad. Cricket was exclusive and the community that played it insular. In 1893 a club was formed in Antwerp.

Despite a determination, a deliberately stronger choice of word than reluctance, not to reach out to the local community links were established with neighbouring Holland, where the game was played by the Dutch. Annual fixtures were staged from 1905–1937 and direct links established between clubs. This suggests that cricket was not considered a game only the English could play, but rather that playing cricket was considered sufficient judgement of character for links to be established. Or it may have been far simpler, and the clubs merely fancied a cricketing tour to see more of the continent.

Though it must have been difficult, given the exclusivity of cricket in Belgium, one local at least did play the game. His name, or to be more specific, title, demonstrates both what kind of people cricket appealed to and who would be accepted into such a closely guarded brotherhood. The Count of Oultremont, no doubt picking up from the English the sophistication and social standing playing cricket conferred, became a champion of the game. There are parallels here perhaps with the legendary figures of Ranjitsinhji and the Nawab of Pataudi, notables of empires who went on to play Test matches for England. They may have been born into a different culture but their social standing, and the innate sophistication this imbued, was sufficient to be embraced in cricketing circles.

The venerable count aside cricket in Belgium remained an English pursuit and therefore the path of its development diverged markedly from that of its northern neighbour. As many clubs across the world have found, a limited pool of players leaves the club ever vulnerable to departures and generation gaps. Following the Second World War, where the Nazis are thought to have destroyed records of cricket in Brussels, the clubs reformed and through a combination of attracting visiting teams from England and playing teams from British military stationed in Grobbeldonk and Olen put together a spasmodic assortment of fixtures to provide sufficient impetus for the clubs to continue. The transitory membership saw some clubs form and then disband but the Brussels and Antwerp clubs were given stability by an invitation from the Dutch cricket board to join their league.

An account from the 1960s of the Antwerp cricket club provides an insight into how the club was run and the challenges it faced. Struggling to attract players it made do with a squad of 15 for the entire Dutch league season of 1966 and had to advertise for players. Those interested were asked to declare their interest to the British vice-consul of the city. The British links continued as the home ground moved from the Rasante Club to the British School in Tervuren. Ted

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Heath, the UK Prime Minister, was made its first honorary patron. In 1975 there was a further move, to a site in Blanden. In 1977 the club was bestowed the honour of a becoming a royal society. In Belgium as in Holland cricket was clearly respected by royalty, even if not widely adopted by the country at large.

As well as attracting players, a problem of course largely of their own making, the club also struggled to find and retain a ground. Their original ground was forfeited by the police after a local resident had complained of a ball flying into her toilet window, evidence enough to declare cricket too dangerous for the neighbourhood. Since that time the club have moved to anywhere vaguely suitable.

The formation of the European Union provided the influx of players required as governments, businesses and organisations set up offices in Brussels. This, allied with economic migration from South Asia, saw interest in cricket increase. When Ken Farmiloe, a long-standing chairman of Belgian cricket, moved to the country from England in 1988 he found immigrant communities playing the game 'to a surprisingly high standard'. Some coordination was clearly required and he was influential in the formation of the Belgian Cricket Federation in 1990.

Cricket in Switzerland

The development of cricket in Switzerland followed a similar pattern to that seen in France and Belgium, with English communities playing in several major cities with a boost in interest and participation following Geneva becoming the seat of the League of Nations.

However, away from the major cities a different development model was applied in a small rural village on the banks of the river Inn. Here cricket was introduced through an institution rather than by migration. When Gordon Spencer moved to Zuoz college, an exclusive boarding school, as its games master in 1923 he introduced cricket, supported by the English groundsman, Mr Parslaw. He would remain at the school for 40 years and under his stewardship cricket became a major sport with fixtures organised against English residents in the nearby valley. In 1927 the school employed a specialist cricket coach brought in from Cambridge University. With this commitment and resource cricket was in secure hands within the school itself but it was the old boys that created a greater legacy within Switzerland as a whole. Having been inspired in their schooldays many boys naturally sought opportunities to play beyond their alma mater and some went on to play cricket in Berne and as far afield as Holland.

The Geneva Cricket Club was founded in 1951 by four men drawn from large industrial enterprises and global organisations based in the city. Although Geneva was blessed with many sporting grounds the

club failed to secure an area exclusively for cricket and therefore played on matting wickets on football fields. The club found opposition from teams formed by organisations such as the Nuclear Research Agency, International School and British civil servants. But their main rivals were the Standard Athletic Club from Paris. Being the base for the UN Geneva had a very cosmopolitan population by the standards of the day and this was reflected in the ethnic mix of the team.

Cricket in Germany

The history of 20th-century Europe has served to emphasise the cultural and political differences of Britain and Germany. The silver-haired amongst us growing up in England were raised to view Germany with mistrust and suspicion. The propaganda posters on both sides accentuated cultural differences and contrasting values. It is perhaps surprising therefore that cricket took root in Germany to a greater extent than most other countries on the continent. Of course the divide and polarisation was largely the making of one man and in the 19th century, amongst the upper classes at least, there was considerable cultural affinity. Royal bloodlines were linked, after all. Modern Germany was forged on principles of order, respect and discipline. These principles find a very natural home in cricket, as demonstrated by its high popularity and participation in the military. It is perhaps these subtle similarities that help to explain why the game had more appeal in Germany than in France.

In the 1880s groups of British students were playing both cricket and football in Berlin. Following a trend seen elsewhere this interest consolidated with the formation of the Berlin Cricket Club in 1883. Football was the more popular of the sports amongst the locals but unlike in Italy the local football teams were inspired by cricket and by 1889 four of them had incorporated cricket into their clubs. This meant that football and cricket leagues existed in parallel with many club members playing both sports. Organisation of the two sports was linked and although cricket was the junior partner it nevertheless could draw on the infrastructure, resources and backing of clubs rapidly growing in scale and influence as the popularity of football surged. In 1891 the German Football and Cricket Association was formed to organise the games. The German approach to regulating and structuring these modern forms of sport was to provide them with a classification and status. Cricket was given a high status in this process and cricketers within clubs given significant responsibility within the association.

Meanwhile in Hamburg football had been introduced into the secondary school curriculum by educationalist Dr Rudolf Heegmaan who had also championed cricket's inclusion. It is a measure of how

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much the game was known and respected that the Minister for Sport gave his blessing to this aim. A record of a fixture against a touring team from Copenhagen shows that the majority of the Berlin team were of British origin, suggesting that few German cricketers had yet mastered the game, but despite this cricket had won influential supporters in education and politics. In similar circumstances this had been conspicuously lacking in France and Italy. By 1896 there was a cricket league in Berlin and evidence of clubs composed solely of German players scheduling cricket matches as part of football tours.

Cricket continued to grow in Berlin in the first decade of the 20th century, albeit at a considerably slower rate than football. A Dutch team visiting in 1906 were surprised by the need to line up 15 minutes before the start of play to be inspected. It seems order and discipline were seen as critical facets of cricket by the association. By 1908 there were six teams in Berlin and slow yet steady growth was being maintained. By the outbreak of war this number had doubled and in 1913 a dedicated Cricket Association (the Deutsche Cricket Bund) had been created that not only encompassed Berlin but teams in Nuremberg, Furth, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Hamburg. While not the level of growth seen in the Netherlands and Denmark cricket was nevertheless increasing its profile, participation and geographic spread. It was not sufficiently widespread or popular to form part of the national sporting consciousness but it was officially recognised, endorsed and supported by German-run organisations.

The advent of the First World War could not have come at a worse time for German cricket, just as it was claiming a foothold within a fast developing sporting and cultural landscape and a year after a dedicated organisation had been established to drive development. Unfortunately the DCB didn't survive the war. However, recovery on the resumption of peace was encouraging, helped by the impetus and players provided by the British Army of the Rhine who remained in Germany to oversee the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. They were influential in attracting teams to play in Germany, including Dutch clubs, touring sides from England and British military teams. This influence carried the risk of re-anglicising cricket after it had been taken under the wing of German backers before the war but in fact by the late 1920s there was a much higher proportion of locals playing than prior to 1914, although the number of clubs in Berlin had reduced to four. This boost in local participation came in spite of the anger and resentment that must have followed defeat in the war and the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany had to submit to occupation by its victors, crippling financial reparations and tight controls over its financial and military recovery. And yet sportsmen were being drawn to an English game.

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In 1930 a team consisting of German nationals drawn from Berlin clubs, as opposed to a team of Englishmen that happened to reside in Germany, went on tour to England. Unfortunately their arrival didn't generate the interest or media coverage they deserved, as their visit coincided with that of a certain Donald Bradman. But they made a sufficient impression to encourage the Gentlemen of Worcester to tour in 1936.

By the early 1930s the Nazi party had come to power and Hitler was, it seems, distinctly unimpressed by cricket's lack of physical contact. In his view stronger, more powerful games were better suited to the Aryan ideal. Cricket was actively discouraged by local Nazi officials, which clearly compromised management of the sport and threatened the very survival of the game. But remarkably in such circumstances cricket continued. This was in part due to the tacit support of the *Reichsportfuhrer*, who as strange as it might seem was something of an Anglophile and had enjoyed watching cricket on a visit to England. While not actively supporting cricket he didn't act to prevent games against Denmark taking place and even several sides touring Berlin.

Felix Mendel

The leading German cricketer of the inter-war period was Felix Mendel. He first appears as an opponent of Leicester Cricket Club's tour of Berlin in 1911. A jeweller by profession, he was to prove an influential champion of the game in what were to become increasingly challenging circumstances. He is reputed to have hit the biggest six ever seen in Germany but his strongest suit was devilishly nagging medium pace. In 1930 he was the star player in a German team that toured England, led by his brother Guido. Had the tour not coincided with the presence of a man who was famously to finish his career with a Test average of 99.94 the German visitors would have excited considerable interest in the media. Amongst his team-mates on the tour was the goalkeeper of the German hockey team and Pastor Harold Polchau, who would later become a leading opponent of the Nazi regime. Mendel took 24 wickets at an average of six on the tour.

Though Hitler was not yet in power the tour was nevertheless not without diplomatic tension. The worthies at the Oval barred him from the pavilion, only later to apologise and offer a conciliatory meeting with the great Jack Hobbs. His ambition and drive to develop the game in Germany is shown by his request to the MCC that they organise a tournament for developing

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cricketing nations on the continent. The *Daily Mail* reported on the proposal but it seems there was never a response, or at least not a positive one.

Following the 1930 tour Mendel worked tirelessly to entrench the game in Berlin and arrange fixtures against visiting teams to galvanise the cricket community. His influence must have been considerable for despite the Nazi party's active opposition to the game teams continued to tour right up until 1939. He exerted this influence from outside the party having never become a member. It is likely he used his business connections to smooth over any problems and get the tacit permission he required to ensure tours were if not welcomed then at least tolerated by the authorities.

During the war the Nazi party banned any contact with the forced labourers who were brought to the country from occupied territories. But Mendel defied this and skilfully and secretly arranged casual games with Dutch and Danish. There is a great story that after the war the officers stationed at Checkpoint Charlie, the border between east and west when the city was divided, were amazed to be approached by a German civilian asking if they fancied a game of cricket. With his home city in ruins around him and his country on its knees, Mr Mendel remained focused on cricket. Such commitment to the game surely pulls at the heartstrings of all who have the game in their soul. He was influential in rebuilding the Berlin league and even after he moved to Frankfurt in middle age he returned each year to Berlin to play cricket into his seventh decade.

As Dan Waddell, who became fascinated by Mendel when researching his book on the 1937 tour to Berlin by the Gentlemen of Worcester, concluded:

'He made sure cricket survived in Germany despite the death of his friends, the annihilation of his city by war, and hostility from the most despicable regime the modern world has seen.'

In the late 40s the cost of the war to cricket across the continent was clear. In Germany, where Bomber Harris and his Lancasters had systematically laid to waste many of its cities, cricketers had died and grounds been destroyed. Many in the cricket community had left the country, while others had matured past a playing age. Ironically given the destruction of the city they had overseen, it was once again the presence of the British Army that provided an impetus for recovery. An insight into the challenges German cricket faced at this time is

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provided by an account by Mr E Abbotts, an official in the British military government, who noted that 'the almost complete lack of grounds and even the provision of equipment presented almost insuperable difficulties'.

In the desperate circumstances they found themselves in the remnants of the German clubs looked to the British military for support. They provided equipment and helped the four pre-war clubs, Berlin, Germania, Preussen and Victoria reform. Karl Reitz, a teammate of Mendel, reformed the Berlin league. Reitz had learnt the game in a prisoner of war camp in the Great War and became a successful all-rounder in the league in the thirties. But it was his commitment rather than his ability that left the greatest legacy to German cricket. He recognised that the local player base was diminishing with the remaining players entering the venerable veteran stage, and set about campaigning for cricket to be introduced to schools in order to inspire a new generation of players. He identified growing obsession with football as a major threat, especially as the winter season was extended to 11 months! This encroachment of football remains one of the biggest challenges to cricket on the continent today.

A constant theme in the history of continental cricket is the critical role of individuals in protecting cricket from oblivion in a region where the game is not well known or understood. This is attested in a reflection in 1967 by Mr Drummond, coordinator of cricket for the British Army of the Rhine:

'As I see it there is very little hope for cricket continuing in Berlin as far as the German side of it is concerned, should anything untoward happen to Reitz. The main core still rally to him but they are so few, and, unfortunately, are so divided without him that some would be persuaded to withdraw their support.'

But although a cricket structure had been reformed the level of German participation was minimal, with the vast majority of players drawn from the British military. Although stalwarts like Mendel and Reitz remained involved cricket was no longer attracting German players as it had before the First World War. In the first decade of peace the British military played over a hundred games against German clubs, encouraging the attraction of younger players. But very few were found to replace those with terminally creaking knees. In fact by 1966 there was no longer enough local Germans to field a team in what was now a British league, so they had to recruit Indian students to field an XI.

The influx of men from all branches of the British military saw clubs founded in Cologne and Rheindahlen. But as their foundation was reliant on British players so was their continued survival.

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Undoubtedly German notions of nationhood and cultural identity had developed over the course of the 20th century, for much of which they had been in conflict, both militarily and ideologically, with England. Perhaps this cultural divergence and a re-alignment of Germany's class consciousness reduced the innate appeal of cricket. Though in practice the surging popularity of football, the lack of a powerful and resourced governing body to spread the game in local and educational institutions and limited access to grounds were also key factors.

By the late 1950s the cricket community was heavily reliant on British military bases, for players, administrative zeal to arrange matches and for the grounds to host them. This offered clubs opportunity for fixtures and grounds to play them on, but was masking a decline of cricket in local communities. The construction of the Berlin wall in 1961 saw clubs marooned and six clubs reduced to two. Soon there was only one club left in the city. German cricket had been reduced to an English game played by the British military in British military camps. Cricket was played at a school in Husum, South Schleswig, but this was isolated.

However, the 1960s saw the first wave of immigration to Germany from the subcontinent as students from India and Pakistan enrolled at German universities and brought cricket with them. Their enthusiasm attracted fellow scholars to the game and over time new clubs and local leagues emerged incorporating the British military teams and clubs founded by British servicemen. This conglomeration of players and institutions created a demand for games and events. An example was the forming of a six-a-side tournament in 1964 that attracted 16 teams. In 1988 interest had recovered sufficiently to reform the DCB. The following year a tour to Denmark was organised and in 1992 a German national team entered in the European Cricket Federation's Nations Cup in England. While there they earned a creditable draw against the MCC at Lord's.

In Germany a batsman is a *Schlagman* and an umpire a *Schiedsrichter*.