

‘Every now and again a book crops up that can only be described as extraordinary, and *Too Black to Wear Whites* most certainly falls into that category ... what is remarkable is the man that authors Parry and Winch have chosen to write about, and the lengths that they have had to go to reconstruct his life.’

Martin Chandler, *Cricket Web. Net*

‘An immensely valuable piece of revisionist sporting history from a country still striving to make sense of the past.’

Paul Edwards, *The Cricketer*

‘Winch and Parry have done the game a great service by delving deeply into their subject to knot the loose ends of Hendricks’ previously barely-told story, and in the process weave a vibrant vision of the South Africa of the time.’

Telford Vice, *CricBuzz*

‘The authors have done South African, and world cricket, a huge service in articulating a non-White sporting heritage fraught with adversity, sacrifice, courage and humanity.’

Mushtak Parker, *New African*

‘In recording the true history of South African cricket, Parry and Winch are driven by a commitment to correct an injustice against a player such as Hendricks, who has been airbrushed out of history.’

Ryland Fisher, *Weekend Argus*

‘From a few footnotes a few years ago, we now have a rounded picture of an early South African bowling star and the almost unbelievable dramas that surrounded his life and career.’

André Odendaal, *Cricket World*

‘The central aim of the project, to recover the career of a player whom the authorities would rather have ignored, is resoundingly successful.’

Geoff Levett, *Sport in History*

‘This comprehensive piece of sporting history is a triumph of commitment.’

Nancy Richards, *South African Country Life*

‘Winch and Parry paint a picture of a vibrant and engaged cricket community, of which Hendricks was a part ... So much for the later narrative that people of colour are not interested in cricket.’

Firdose Moonda, *Cricinfo*

‘Had it not been for the forensic feat of Jonty Winch and Richard Parry, the compelling story of Hendricks and the nefarious shenanigans of Rhodes would not have been unearthed in their fascinating book *Too Black to Wear Whites*.’

Mushtak Parker, *Cape Times*

'Deserves to be read
by anyone serious
about cricket.'

Gideon Haigh

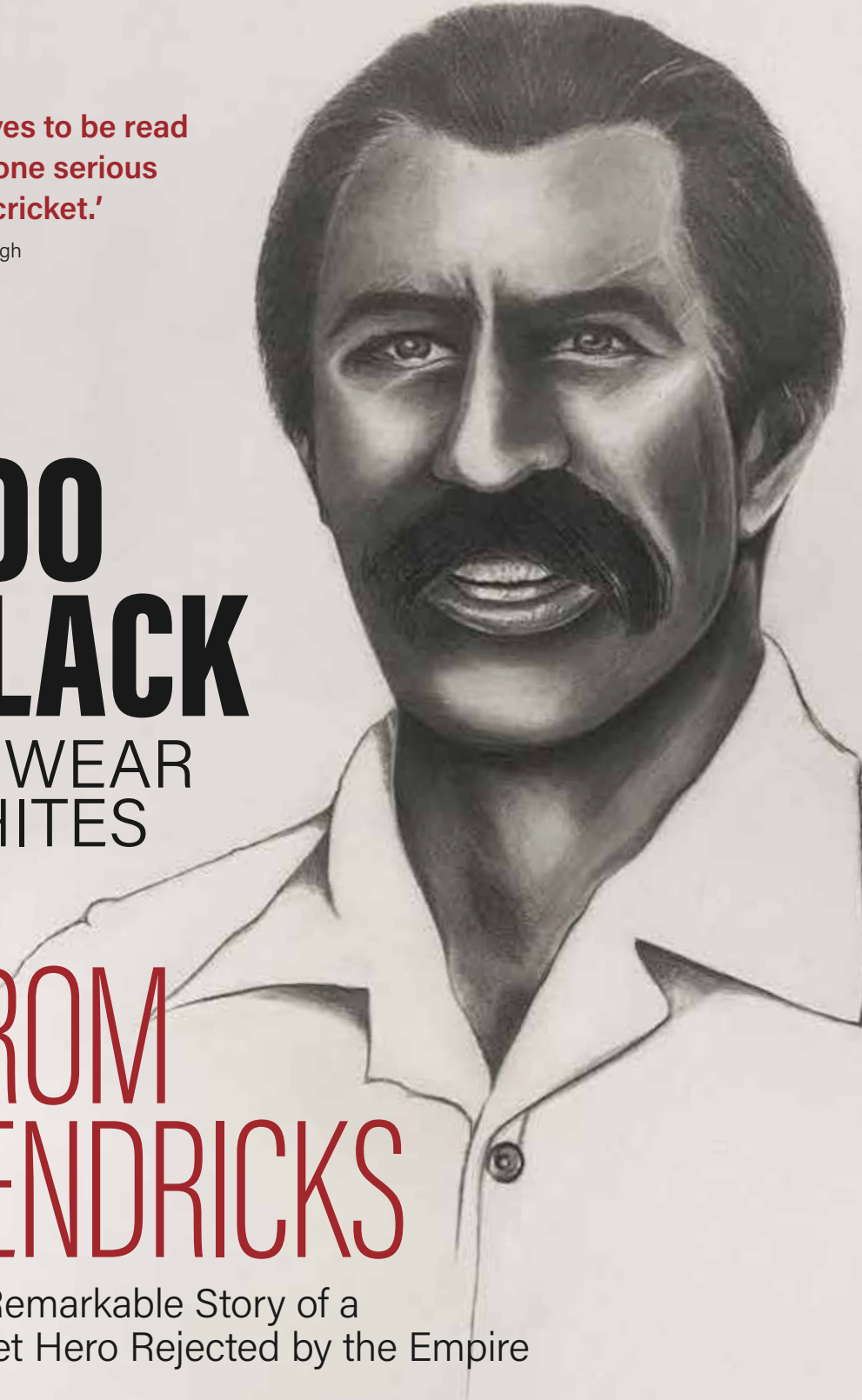
TOO BLACK

TO WEAR
WHITES

KROM HENDRICKS

The Remarkable Story of a
Cricket Hero Rejected by the Empire

JONTY WINCH | RICHARD PARRY



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TOO BLACK TO WEAR WHITES

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Contents

Foreword.	ix
Acknowledgements.	xv
1. Introduction	1
2. Origins of a legend.	11
3. 'A place not inhabited by white men'.	26
4. Opposition to the 'MCC of the Cape Colony'	40
5. The talk of the town.	52
6. 'Why am I termed a Malay?'	70
7. 'Courting a disaster for the sake of prejudice'.	90
8. The Hendricks controversy comes home	108
9. 'Let them look to God for justice for man has refused it' .	131
10. 'Any club could object to any man'	159
11. 'Cricket under a cloud with no silver lining'.	185
12. 'The great and mighty Hendricks'.	200
13. Hendricks and the world: An international perspective. .	218
Epilogue: Hendricks, D'Oliveira and a cricketing tradition . .	241
Notes.	256
Bibliography.	269
Index.	274

Introduction

‘The story of “Krom” Hendricks has assumed romantic and mythical proportions over the past few decades, both for those trying to gloss over past inequalities – “things weren’t always that bad in the past, there was this player, that match etc” – and those deeply angry about white domination and its impact.’¹

– Professor André Odendaal

‘KROM’ HENDRICKS WAS an exceptional cricketer in extraordinary circumstances. He was caught in a political machine that dehumanised him, denying his talent, his identity and his pride as a South African. His deselection for the cricket tour of England in 1894 by Cecil John Rhodes, the arch-imperialist bestriding southern African politics and finance, fixed the colour bar in cricket. Rhodes acted within a broader political alliance with J.H. (‘Onze Jan’) Hofmeyr, the leader of the newly formed Afrikaner Bond. Driven by labour demands and a class-based belief in social segregation, the Cape formalised racial exclusiveness into a concrete system of segregation that 50 years later would be ideologically encapsulated in apartheid. This book is not only about how Hendricks became the central figure in the genesis of sports segregation in southern Africa; it also rescues this most elusive of cricketers from historical anonymity.

It tells the true story of William Henry Hendricks, his cricket talent and his bravery over several decades as he fought the oppressive forces ranged against him. It provides insight into how he built the best life he could for his family in a time of frenetic and bewildering change, and above all as a cricketer whose love for the game shone through everything he did despite the efforts of the authorities. Hendricks's struggle exemplified the efforts of the coloured community in Cape Town to fashion its own destiny under the framework of colonial power.

The significance of the Hendricks affair in 1894 is well known to cricket historians, but there is little analysis of the political and institutional context within which this injustice was perpetrated, and nothing at all about Hendricks's personal history and the long struggle he waged against the cricket authorities.

Hendricks has been a footnote for 100 years as historians have sought to tell the story of South African cricket. Despite much interest, it is remarkable how few significant efforts have been made to establish who he really was, or even to confirm his name. At the Cape, Hendricks is a common name with spelling variants, notably 'Hendrickse', which was used in his own family. He signed himself 'H. Hendricks' in a letter to the *Cape Times* in 1894, but many contemporary sources simply referred to him as 'Hendricks', his fame perhaps sufficient for no other name to be needed.

After a generation of being ignored by cricket writers, Hendricks was discussed by Wally Hammond in 1949. Hammond described how it was 'typical of South Africa's perverse fortune that a faster bowler than Kotze or Ochse, a man who seems to have combined Larwood's accuracy with what was possibly the fastest trajectory ever seen on any cricket field – never came to England at all ... The bowler in question was a negro called Hendricks, a black Hercules about six foot four inches tall, with extremely long arms who was employed in some capacity by a Pretoria cricket club and displayed as a local wonder who could bowl down anyone's wicket, no matter how good the batsman, within half-a-dozen balls, because of his ferocious pace'.²

Hammond may have been hazy on the details ('Negro' and 'Pretoria' were a garbling of the truth) but Hendricks's significance

was clear. Nonetheless few showed any interest in following it up. Twenty years later, he was referred to as 'T. Hendricks' in 1970 by Rowland Bowen in *Cricket: A History of Its Growth and Development Throughout the World*.³ Other historians confused him with A. or Armién Hendricks, another talented bowler from the late nineteenth century. In 1977, South African cricket historian Syd Reddy was the first to mention his nickname 'Krom', and this is the name by which he is now most widely known.⁴ It is testament to how little is known about Hendricks that the origins of this nickname have never been discovered. Establishing the player's identity and his full name, William Henry Hendricks, has been a complex task.

The failure by previous historians to rescue the real Hendricks from the haystack of history is indicative of the failure of South African cricket writing prior to transformation to undertake detailed research into black and coloured cricket. It is a product of apartheid thinking that covered up the pain and inhumanity inflicted by the system and did not see such cricket as demanding of attention and analysis. This book, building on the recent insights of historian André Odendaal and others, plays a role in setting the record straight. It is the story of an unfulfilled cricket career but a fulfilled life, and Hendricks's indefatigable courage as both a cricketer and a man.

The historical record, however, is as elusive as the man. Contemporary documents have been culled from the archives of the cricket establishment by those who do not understand the importance of history or by those who understand its power as a witness to truth only too well. Any 'Hendricks' archival materials held by the Western Province Cricket Union were destroyed to cover up apartheid-era embarrassments or sweep out the dust of the historical record. And family and community memories 120 years later are often no more than a glimmer of light from a distant era, a star in a far-off galaxy.

But the reports in the press written contemporaneously on cricket, politics and Hendricks provide an entry point, even if the content needs careful interrogation. They provide a patchwork of his cricketing achievements, an indicative rather than compre-

hensive view of his career for ‘Malay’ teams, as a professional for ‘white’ clubs and his final long cricket swansong when he played again for a ‘coloured’ team in the community in which he felt most at home. Mostly, though, they document his ongoing struggle to comprehend and oppose the forces of the imperial and colonial establishment that stood against him; they describe the monstrous injustices that Cape politicians and cricket administrators systematically visited on him over two decades; they reflect the voices of the many people who recognised his ability and talent; and, on occasion, they demonstrate the sympathy of those who resented the segregation that deprived this great fast bowler of the chance to reach his potential and spectators to witness him in action on a wider stage. Hendricks and his struggle were part of the warp and woof of a society busy drawing its red lines.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the British Empire was a complex matrix of economic, military and ideological ties aimed at building a greater Britain, with the British establishment the spider at the centre of the web. Colonial outposts, initially established as refreshment stations for accessing the riches of the East, soon developed physical presences – convict settlements and trading posts – and their own independent interests. This inevitably encompassed a dual identity: the colonial settlements were part of the wider imperial family, but also became increasingly fractious separate entities, with their own economic and political imperatives competing against one another and the metropole. This created a clear tension between the English establishment and the colonial middle classes who saw their interests as being above those of the empire itself.

The British civil servants who administered the colonies were largely drawn from public schools, the source of the widely held theory that there was a strong link between the qualities that public schoolboys derived through games-playing and those they would need to administer the empire. The year that Hendricks was born in Bo-Kaap – 1857 – saw the publication of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, a novel that emphasised the doctrine of athleticism and helped

inspire the belief in public schools that team games were a key instrument in building character, manliness and an understanding of fair play. The most prominent late nineteenth-century figure in developing the imperial games in South Africa was William Henry Milton, who had played cricket for Marlborough College against Rugby at Lord's and rugby for England against Scotland and Ireland. Milton's sense of 'fair play', or lack of it, was shaped by prevailing assumptions of the moral and physical superiority of the white English race. At Marlborough, he came under Dean Farrar, whose work, *Aptitudes of Races*, gave clear expression to Semitic and Aryan superiority over the Mongoloid and, lower still, the Negroid. Milton's subsequent actions exposed the obvious hypocrisy of the self-serving creed that products of public schools were able to exercise authority over other races in a reasonable and selfless manner.⁵

That Milton was keen to transplant what was happening at 'Home' appealed to the influential editor of the *Cape Times*, Frederick York St Leger, who, like Milton, saw the significance of the colony as an imperial project. St Leger sought to impose English values and hegemony, and recognised the advantages attached to promoting 'Englishness' through imperial games. Milton would assist St Leger in helping southern Africa take its place in the cultural exchange that was being fostered within the empire and, in doing so, would become Hendricks's leading adversary.

The tendency towards increasing colonial independence was one reason for England's propensity to promote cricket. Entrepreneurs took their cricket shows on the road to North America, Australia and (for the first time in 1888/89) South Africa. These were financial gambles, but they provided significant rewards for participants who represented the British establishment, whether 'professionals', amateurs or 'shamateurs' (paid amateurs). From the perspective of the periphery, these tours promoted empire and were an opportunity to showcase the colonial environment to increase immigration and investment in a crowded field. They hoped the southern African colonies could demonstrate ability on the cricket field, as well as economic opportunities off it; in particular, they publicised the

extent to which the periphery was a repository of British values. It was this that lay at the heart of the Hendricks saga.

Milton, who headed the Western Province Cricket Union and organised the first English cricket tours, not only became the dominant personality in the South African game, but also headed Cecil Rhodes's Prime Minister's Department. He carried with him the baggage of empire with its focus on a hierarchy of races, arriving in a profoundly stratified society where social and economic segregation took place along class lines where the establishment was white. To his separatist thinking was added a direct political imperative. His rise in the political world coincided with the changing nature of Cape politics as Rhodes and Hofmeyr set out to replace mid-nineteenth-century Cape liberal notions of individual opportunity and advancement with a policy of segregation. Milton became Rhodes's subordinate in all matters, and his sometime spokesman. In turn, the Western Province Cricket Union slavishly followed its political masters, quickly ensuring that the process of segregation became an overriding philosophy of the game under its jurisdiction. It might have hoped the arrangement would fall into place seamlessly and unnoticed, reflecting as it did the organising principles of the establishment as well as the new political dynamic. That this did not happen can be largely attributed to Hendricks's personal qualities and successes, and the attention that was consequently focused on him as a household name created unprecedented controversy.

When the time came to select a South African touring team to England in 1894, there was almost universal support on cricketing grounds for Hendricks's inclusion. Those who opposed him constituted a small group of individuals who were influential in higher levels of politics and cricket administration in the Western Province, and who were not prepared to countenance a coloured player representing South Africa. A South African-born cricketer, agreed to be the best fast bowler in the country by a considerable distance, was thus omitted, while visiting English professionals were included in the tour party, along with an Irishman who had been in South Africa for four months. It was clear that Hendricks's selection

was not approved for political reasons. Had this not happened, the South African cricket landscape may have turned out differently.

This was just the start of the Hendricks saga. The Transvaal Cricket Union continued to press for the strongest South African XI and began a process through which it hoped to select Hendricks for the South African team against Lord Hawke's tourists in Johannesburg in 1896. But Milton once again intervened, and Hendricks was prohibited from travelling to Johannesburg. In the same year, the Western Province Cricket Union passed its infamous 'Hendricks resolution' (known as Bye-law 10), which refused to allow coloureds to play 'championship' cricket in the Western Province. This was challenged by Woodstock in 1897, but the governing body proved its intransigence and, despite Hendricks's personal qualities and demeanour, would not consider a special exemption for him.

Hendricks was the first cricketer to be banned from playing the game at a senior level at the Cape and in South Africa as a whole, and probably the first in the world to be formally excluded from playing because of his colour. He would be followed by thousands of coloured and black players. They suffered huge injustices, being denied access to opportunities, adequate facilities and the right to play representatively. In this setting, Hendricks's history is one among many – the fate of most South Africans who, over hundreds of years, were faced with the tragedies of conquest, slavery, segregation and apartheid. But Hendricks's story is also peculiar to the Cape in the 1890s: it involved a dividing line being drawn between white and coloured. It was a matter of complexion, but perhaps more fundamentally a matter of economics, culture and community.

The Cape community at that time was an amalgam of dozens of different identities and hundreds of histories. It included remnants of indigenous hunter-gatherers (San and Khoi peoples), white settlers, Xhosa immigrants from the expanding eastern frontier, and freed slaves from Batavia and Madagascar. Many of the latter were Muslims and became identified as Malays at the Cape, their non-colonial culture and traditions defining the whole blended community in the mind of the colonial establishment. But what of those who were part

of the Christian community who happened to live in predominantly Malay or mixed-race areas, such as Bo-Kaap, and who played cricket for local community teams? They were generally perceived as part of the greater coloured identity, occupationally often interconnected with the white working classes. When it suited the establishment, an individual could be treated as racially inferior, denied opportunity, relocated or exploited. Such was the fate of Hendricks and, some 70 years later, that of Basil D'Oliveira.

This racial exclusivity was as painful to individuals and families as any of the other community-slicing devices used by the white establishment to maintain their social, economic and political control. In fact, by sundering one from another on the flimsiest of excuses, according to a set of undeveloped values and prejudices, it was arguably the worst kind of discrimination – arbitrary in form, substance and impact.

William Henry Hendricks was brought up by his mother who was from St Helena (which meant that she would be considered coloured in the Cape's complex informal racial tapestry), and it is possible that he did not know his father. His marriage in 1880 would subsequently produce 11 children over more than 20 years. He would also delight in his more than 40 grandchildren, one of whom would go on to play football for Liverpool. They were a happy, close-knit family who regarded themselves as European.

In the aftermath of the vicious Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902, little changed for Hendricks, at least on the cricket field. There were crucial developments taking place in South Africa: when the exhausted troops finally laid down their arms and (much later) the concentration camp survivors returned to their burnt-out farms, the war had claimed more than 100,000 victims in and out of uniform and the empire had won political control over the goldmines. The long-suffering black and coloured populations, who had fought on the side of the British, gained nothing from the peace and were to lose even more in the reconstruction of the country in the interests of the mining industry.

In 1904, at the age of 47, in the year in which he was promoted to foreman in the Salt River railway works and his eldest daughter

married an English soldier, Hendricks again applied for the right to play senior cricket, previously denied under Bye-law 10 of the Western Province Cricket Union rules. He argued that his parents were European and that in any event there were coloured cricketers playing at senior level without challenge. The union, composed of the same establishment figures as in the 1890s, simply ignored his claim to have European status and, without discussion, refused to accept his application.

In the end, the question of race was a subjective rather than an objective classification. Whether or not Hendricks was of European stock was irrelevant; he was not treated as such by the Cape cricket establishment. They did not care whether he was coloured or not, or even how this was to be defined. The committee said it could not make any exceptions, while praising Hendricks personally in its infuriating and hypocritical manner. They had no idea how to answer the question that the one delegate who supported Hendricks asked: 'Where is the line of colour to be drawn?' The committee had already decided he was coloured. There was no suggestion that they should be looking to achieve some measure of belated justice or right a long-standing wrong.

One might wonder as to the intransigent racism of the Western Province Cricket Union. The common view was that current players serving as delegates, such as Murray Bisset (erstwhile captain of South Africa), were scared of facing Hendricks's express pace bowling – he regularly demolished senior clubs when he had the opportunity, invariably making a point of dismissing those who had been selected for the provincial or Test teams. There was no delivery more dangerous for an incoming batsman than a yorker from Hendricks. A remarkable feature of his bowling figures was the number of times he hit the stumps, while some of his feats would not be matched in South Africa for many years. Whether or not leading Cape batsmen were frightened of his pace, they were certainly unhappy at being shown up by a coloured player.

And it was not just Hendricks. There were plenty of other good coloured cricketers around: the Malay side that won the Glover

Cup in 1891/92 could all have challenged for a place in the team of the Western Province Cricket Union, and several – Krom Hendricks, Ebrahim Ariefdien, Edward Adams and Lamarah Samsodien – would have been certainties in a fair, non-racial system. Cricket as the elite symbol of white social status, or ‘snobbery’ as the locals called it, could not risk anything other than racial segregation. Rhodes, with Milton as his right-hand man and the Western Province Cricket Union as his loyal servant, moved the Cape rapidly to a segregated society where race became congruent with class in a political economy based on cheap black labour and endless efforts to co-opt the white working class into the establishment.

This process occupied the next decades of Hendricks’s life. He continued to play cricket into his sixties, and while his performances as a grandfather may have been less eye-catching than in his glory days, his reputation as the ‘great and mighty’ Hendricks shone as brightly as ever. He was not a man driven by fame or glory, but by personal integrity. The representative honours that he deserved were denied him in the cruellest way imaginable, but he played on, his enthusiasm and passion for the game undiminished.

Origins of a legend

‘The very ablest bowler he had ever met he believed to be, not Spofforth, but a South African black, [Krom] Hendricks.’¹

– William Chatterton (Derbyshire and England)

ON THE EVENING of 3 January 1892, more than 3,000 jubilant cricket fans streamed towards Cape Town station. Elated Malay supporters came from Bo-Kaap, District Six and Woodstock to celebrate the triumphant return of their Union Cricket Club (CC) from Kimberley. Cricket was a ritual as well as a recreation and provided the social glue that bound together the community. Male choir clubs and bands in elaborate costumes led processions down the narrow avenues. The station was alive with song and music, interrupted by the wild cheering that greeted the arrival of the Kimberley train. Fans crammed the station platform, jostling for position to welcome back their cricket heroes, who shook off the dust and soot of the long journey and tumbled into the throng of well-wishers.

The tidal wave of humanity swept towards the Parade where a chorus of demands to display the newly acquired silverware punctuated the warm summer air. Abdol Burns, the half-Scottish half-Malay president of Union CC, delightedly held aloft the

gleaming Glover Cup to riotous cheers and applause. The underdogs from Cape Town had dramatically defeated the might of Kimberley in its own backyard. For Burns, the victory was a combination of talent, team spirit and the passionate support received from those gathered on the Parade. But it was also a triumph for unity beyond religion. Cricket was a means of breaking down barriers and strengthening the coloured community, both Muslim and Christian.

Burns hailed the turnaround in fortunes since the first Glover Cup contest, played at the Diamond Fields (as the region around Kimberley was known) some nine months earlier. In that inaugural inter-town competition, Robert Grendon – a Christian of Irish-African parentage – had scored a brilliant 111 out of a total of 191 to lead Kimberley to a convincing victory. This time, Burns had decided to fight fire with fire and called upon Krom Hendricks to strengthen his Union club against Kimberley's best players, mainly drawn from the Red Crescents. Hendricks, a Christian from Bo-Kaap's Star of South Africa CC, formed an unstoppable strike force with the impressive Ebrahim Ariefdien. They destroyed the strong Kimberley batting line-up, steamrolling them for 41, Ariefdien claiming 6-13 and Hendricks 4-24. Cape Town replied with 106 (Ariefdien 26), which provided a commanding if not unassailable 65-run lead. It gave Hendricks the chance to become a new star in the cricket firmament. His intimidating deliveries flew from a length off the matting laid on rolled red earth, forcing his opponents on to the back foot and opening their defences to a venomous yorker. In an innings analysis of 6-39, all six of his dismissals were clean bowled, including the classy Grendon who top-scored with only 24 in Kimberley's 91. Cape Town were left to knock off 27 runs to secure victory and won with nine wickets in hand.

The bare details of the game do not describe its intensity or its drama and excitement. Rivalry on and off the pitch between Cape Town and Kimberley was exacerbated by incidents in a game that was played at fever pitch. The umpires (the Powell brothers), who were pillars of the white Kimberley cricket establishment, stoked the strength of feeling among the Cape Town travelling support. They

had apparently planned to neuter the visiting side by no-balling both of their match-winning fast bowlers, Hendricks in the first innings and Ariefdien in the second, for throwing. This tactic failed to win the game in the end, but it clearly upset Ariefdien, who bowled just five overs in the second innings without taking a wicket.

'Feeling ran very high,' said the *Cape Times*.² Such outrageous partisanship demonstrated the lengths that Kimberley – or, more accurately, the tournament sponsors – were prepared to go to keep the trophy on the Diamond Fields. The Glover family, who ran a sports and entertainment business based around the Pirates ground, was only too keen to expand its market and encourage cricketers of whatever race or religion to spend their money at the club. The Glover Cup, which the Glovers valued at 50 guineas, was intended to attract lucrative cricket business to Pirates. They had no desire to see their investment head south in the hands of their bitter rivals and to lose control over the Glover Cup competition and the lucrative inter-town coloured cricket market.

Under Abdol Burns's effervescent leadership, the coloured cricket community in Cape Town was a force to be reckoned with in a sport that the colonial establishment held in almost sacred regard. Malays had always been subject to social and economic segregation, which separated them from the middle classes. As descendants of freed slaves, they had few economic resources to challenge the colonists, and theological differences meant they were permanently at odds. Nonetheless, Burns sought to simultaneously support the Malay community and build a broader coloured base. He was the community spokesman and fought the city council for decades to retain a cemetery on Signal Hill near enough to District Six and Bo-Kaap to allow bodies to be carried on foot by mourners, as required by Cape Muslim tradition. He encouraged regular cultural performances based on Turkish Muslim traditions, including music and Khalifa. He also worked to strengthen the wider community of Christians and Muslims who lived, worked and played together in Bo-Kaap, District Six, Woodstock and across the Cape peninsula. He strove for community acceptance, combining active engagement in the political process

– supporting liberals such as Saul Solomon – with a focus on celebrating empire as good imperial citizens.

The casual, deeply entrenched racism of the ruling-class establishment meant that whites generally paid little attention to either Muslim or coloured culture. They made no effort to consider who was of ‘Malay’ descent, who was Muslim and who was Christian. Members of the coloured community were heterogeneous by racial background, culture and class grouping. They were categorised less by what they were than by what they were not – that is, middle-class Anglo-Saxon immigrants or their descendants. Coloureds populated Cape Town’s lower social classes, but some, through religion and skin colour, assimilated into the skilled or unskilled European working classes.

Cricket was one means through which coloureds might have sought the economic advantages that followed entry into the white working class. When the first Malay inter-town cricket tournament was organised by Burns in January 1890, it prompted an editorial from the *Cape Times*. The newspaper commented on ‘olive-complexioned cricketers’ whose younger generation had taken enthusiastically to the game in recent years and would be observed with interest. The ‘Malay people’, said the writer, were ‘capable of a higher degree of civilisation than the simpler African races, of that there can be no doubt’. He admitted:

However we may have lamented the spread of the Asiatic influence in Cape Town, we have always had a saving cause for the Malays. They have not come here to try their own fortunes against the Europeans; but their fathers were brought here against their will as slaves for the convenience and comfort of our predecessors, and they have the same right to regard this country as their home.³

This leader article, probably written by the editor, Frederick St Leger, was characteristically condescending in tone and its racist rhetoric followed the prevailing model of higher and lower standards of civilisation. Where the coloured community stood was the essence

of the Cape Town social battleground. For the 'liberal' St Leger, the Malays had become 'an integral part of the population of Cape Town ... they have proved themselves most worthy'. But being an integral part did not mean unqualified acceptance. The arrangement through which Malays played at Newlands was contentious. The *Cape Times* reported that 'several people occupying some standing in Cape society have indicated their disgust and others their surprise at the action of the Western Province CC in allowing the Malay cricketers the use of Newlands'. Some were 'perfectly scandalised at the idea that so large a number of respectable persons actually found their way to matches and so gave countenance to the action of the Western Province CC'. There were other comments in the columns:

'What next?' exclaimed an indignant dame. 'Where will respectable people be able to go? I expect the Malays will go and call on the Governor next'. A shrill voice was heard in the carriage-park: 'Oh I say, it is a decided shame to allow the Malays to play on the beautiful ground at Newlands. Let them go to the Flats that's their proper place.'⁴

William Milton's spokesman on cricket matters, Thomas Lynedoch Graham, answered the complaints in a letter to the newspaper. A decade later, Graham would become the colonial secretary responsible for overseeing the removal of hundreds of mixed-race residents from District Six, an action repeated several times until its ultimate demolition. But, as secretary of the Western Province CC, he could not afford to ignore the bottom line. After all, Newlands had been purchased a mere five years before and financing was proving to be difficult. He noted that an estimated 5,000 spectators attended the tournament, adding that their conduct 'has been admirable ... an entire absence of rowdiness, not a single policeman employed on the ground ... In no case was the rules of cricket infringed or the decision of the umpires criticised.' He defended his club against the criticism it had received in the press, openly stating that they needed to pay for the ground. He did not ...

...in any way regret their action in lending the Malays the use of their ground, whereas the share of the gate money has been a welcome and needed assistance to the funds of the club. As to the cricket itself, the comparatively high standard of excellence attained is a matter of surprise, considering that it is only within the past few years that cricket has been played by the Malays as a body... I may add that the get up of the players, barring an odd pair or two of braces was flawless.⁵

Times would change, but in the early 1890s there was no reason for Krom Hendricks to believe that he was jeopardising his future in the game by playing with Malay cricketers. He had grown up in Bo-Kaap with the players and was part of the community. Abdol Burns had offered him the opportunity not only to play representative cricket to a high standard, but also to impress at Newlands. Hendricks's ability as a fast bowler was attracting attention and he was playing matches before large crowds. Further opportunities were to come his way.

Walter William Read's English team toured South Africa in 1891/92, an arrangement that had been agreed to at the eleventh hour. Milton exercised rigid control over the whole project as president of the Western Province Cricket Union, as chief clerk and accountant of the Cape Civil Service, as Rhodes's private secretary, and last but not least, on the pitch as captain of the South African team in the Cape Town Test match. Nineteenth-century cricket tours were entrepreneurial exercises and teams required a delicate balance between being strong enough to provide a drawcard for spectators, but not too strong that they simply annihilated the opposition. Given the role that gambling played in the success of the enterprises, the popularity of the cricket depended on a contest with an uncertain result. After significant interest in Cape Town where the venture began with two draws, the tour proved a failure at the turnstiles. Read's negative tactics and the restrictions on batsmen facing 18 or 22 men in the field were important factors in the tour's lack of popularity. Invariably, shot-making was nullified against odds

and batsmen reduced to ineffective plodders. On this tour, the only batsman to enhance his reputation was the patient and phlegmatic professional William 'Bill' Chatterton. The bowling was spearheaded by J.J. Ferris, a left-arm swing bowler who had represented Australia with distinction and scythed through an almost endless procession of ill-equipped batsmen in various southern African teams.

Milton was assisted in the organisation of the tour by Frank Hearne, the Western Province CC professional who had been part of Major Warton's 1888/89 tour and had settled in Cape Town. Hearne was considered by the Cape Town establishment as part of the working-class aristocracy, rising in due course to lower-middle-class status through his ownership of a sporting-goods shop. He was a friendly man as well as one of the best cricketers in the country. Within a month of his arrival in Cape Town, he had already developed a strong rapport with the coloured cricket community.

The final match of Read's tour, in March 1892, was the only game played on even terms against a representative South African team. Given Read's plain sailing so far, few were anticipating a strong showing by the locals. The English team came into the game unbeaten and determined to preserve their record. Ferris, as he had throughout the tour, again proved too good for South African batsmen, most of whom were not from Cape Town and were less familiar with the Newlands matting-on-grass surface than the visitors, who had already played several games on it. Ferris exploited his knowledge of the local conditions taking 6-54 out of South Africa's first innings of 97.

The crowd sat back expectantly awaiting an English run-fest, but the intensity of the response took them by surprise. Dante Parkin and English professional Charles Mills dismantled their top order, which had three wickets down for less than 40. They received excellent support from the fielders, particularly the athletic Charlie Fichardt at cover point. Then Harry Wood, in a classic cricket reversal, came in at 144 for six and hit South Africa out of the game. His 134 not out was scored out of his side's commanding 369. South Africa, clearly shell-shocked, replied with 83 – Frank Hearne top-scoring with 23 – and were defeated by an innings and 189 runs.

Ferris was again dominant with figures of 7-37 in 25 overs. He lifted his final tour tally to an outstanding 234 wickets.

This heavy defeat has been presented as evidence of the weakness of South African cricket and the Marylebone Cricket Club's (MCC) mistake in belatedly awarding the match Test status.⁶ This may be true, but it is interesting that Lord Sheffield's English team, with W.G. Grace, began a Test against the Australians less than 48 hours later and won by an even greater margin – an innings and 230 runs. Johnny Briggs, who had humiliated South Africa at Newlands in 1888/89, once again created havoc, this time claiming 12-136 on a rain-affected wicket. Remarkably, the Australians, with C.B. Turner prominent, still won the series by two games to one.

The Cape Town Test may have concluded the official programme, but it was not the end of the tour, because a team described as the 'South African Malay XVIII' took on Read's 11 professionals. The game started about an hour after South Africa's final wicket fell and was played on the same matting. Later efforts to denigrate the significance of the fixture described it as an 'unplanned arrangement' to entertain the paying public when it became clear that the Test was going to end early. It was in fact the culmination of much organisation – it would be a benefit match for the English professionals. They would play against the Malay team that had won the Glover Cup, the *Cape Times* adding, 'Doubtless the Mohammedan community will turn out in great force in addition to the Europeans who will get to see the conclusion of the present match.'⁷

Frank Hearne had hatched the plan for the benefit match with Abdol Burns and the Malay team. There was a clear class basis to this. During the 1888/89 tour, the professionals had sat with the Malay community in the ground, and Hearne and his colleagues had apparently developed a friendly relationship with Cape Town's coloured players, who performed much the same working-class tasks – groundsman, caretakers and particularly net bowlers – as the professionals did in England. The closeness of the relationship was illustrated a few days after Read's team arrived at the Cape in

December 1891. The professionals in the tour party were invited to a Malay wedding feast at Hearne's behest. Not surprisingly, no amateurs attended.

The day after the wedding, the English cricketers headed for Newlands. The professionals observed the trial match for the Glover Cup team at Cape Town CC's ground, which was shared with the Western Province Rugby Football Union, while the amateurs headed across the railway line to watch a match at the elite Western Province CC. One of the professionals noted in *The Sportsman* that the Malays 'seem to have a fair amount of knowledge of the game, the bowling and fielding reminded one of the style of the Parsees'. He added: 'The bowlers go in for pace, disregarding their fielders entirely, and just pelting as hard as possible at the wickets.'⁸

The coloured cricketers staged another 'trial' fixture on 14 March with the intention of extending their Glover Cup squad to 18 players. The Union CC, captained by Ariefdien, played against the Star of South Africa led by Hendricks at the Cape Town CC ground while the white Western Province XV simultaneously challenged the English on the Western Province CC ground.

Armien Hendricks from Kimberley was selected as captain of the Malay side to play the English a week later. The side would have been further strengthened if it had included Robert Grendon, who smashed 187 out of 260 for the 'Malays' against the 'Europeans' in Kimberley at the New Year, but he was not available.

Excitement among the coloured community was intense in the period leading up to the fixture. At last they would have a chance to test their skills against an international team. Thousands of excited supporters poured into the mountain-framed amphitheatre, filling the ground with colour in contrast to the more sober dress of the white spectators. All 11 professionals in the touring side played. Frank's brother George Hearne stepped in as captain and lost the toss to Armien Hendricks, who decided to bat.

'Naturally the crack professional bowlers were not put on first,' said the *Cape Times* of the Malay innings. Bill Chatterton and Victor Barton opened the bowling, and Lamarah Samsodien made solid progress. The Hearne brothers (Frank's brothers George and

Alec, both making their debut for England) soon joined the attack. Meanwhile, Samsodien was getting his runs ‘in fine fashion cracking the bowlers for threes and fours to the great glee of the majority of the spectators’. Jack Hearne (a cousin of the Hearne brothers), who had taken 162 wickets on the tour at an average of less than 7 runs, was spanked for 10 in a five-ball over. Eventually, Samsodien was induced into spooning a catch to Edwin Leaney behind the wicket off Alec Hearne’s bowling, having contributed an invaluable 55 in a total of 113. Remarkably, this was the highest individual score against the visitors in all 21 tour games.

In reply that evening, the English found the going more difficult than anticipated. The large coloured crowd delighted in seeing the professionals struggle to cope with the extreme pace of Krom Hendricks and the nagging accuracy of Armién Hendricks and Ebrahim Ariefdien. They bowled five consecutive maidens before a run was scored. When Chatterton hit out in frustration, he lifted a ball from Ariefdien towards square leg. It ‘was being cheered for a “sixer”’, reported the *Cape Times*, ‘but [Krom] Hendricks finely caught the ball close on the boundary’.⁹

Krom Hendricks bowled even faster the next morning, with speed and power generated effortlessly off a relatively short run. Press reports described him as ‘loose-limbed’ and ‘a regular “demon” with his very swift deliveries’. The batsmen attacked the bowling in fear or desperation, and several shots fell just out of reach of the fielders. Unfortunately, the fielding of the Malays did not match their bowling – Barton was missed three times and too many runs were given away. The most memorable moment, however, was the dismissal of Jack Hearne for a brave 67. The *Cape Times* recalled the crowd ‘gasping in astonishment when J.T. Hearne, who had been very venturesome, had his off-stump shot some yards out of the ground in trying to drive a fast ball from [Krom] Hendricks’.¹⁰

It was more than ironic that the South African team had failed in the Test primarily because of the lack of a penetrative fast bowler who could put pressure on the English batsmen. With ball in hand, Hendricks would make this point many times over the next decade. The English captain, George Hearne, described him as ‘the fastest

bowler in South Africa'. He spoke about the match in an interview in *The Cricket Field*:

A Malay named Hendricks was very fast indeed. In our last match against the Malays, the wicket was very bad and we didn't like facing the man at all. I was captain during the match and everybody began to ask me to let somebody else go in his place. [Harry] Wood, for instance, [the century maker the previous day], was rapped on the glove and said I ought to think of the danger to his fingers but I told him to get double figures and then he might get out which he did very promptly [retired hurt]. [William] Brockwell, however, managed to slip off. He said that he absolutely must go into Cape Town – on business which would brook no delay – and he went, coming back just after the game was over, cheerily waving his handkerchief. I was in a long time with Jack Hearne but it wasn't pleasant. The balls flew over our heads in all directions and we exasperated [Krom] Hendricks by telling him that we had been told that he was quite a fast bowler and were surprised to find that he was only medium. Of course, he bowled faster than ever then but couldn't get them straight which was what we wanted.¹¹

Over the two days, the Malays had performed well in comparison to the other opponents faced by Read's team, scoring 113 and 70 in reply to the tourists' 176 and 8 for no wickets.

After the match, George Hearne recalled being surrounded by the Malay team. 'One of them begged for a piece of my necktie which has in it the team's colours. I cut off a piece and pinned it to his coat and he said afterwards that it would be buried with him.'¹² The match was a huge boost as coloured cricket came under the spotlight and the community, aware of the historic nature of the occasion, rendered enthusiastic support. The thoughtful Bill Chatterton also provided a positive view of coloured cricket: 'The Malays ought to have a future ... they are exceedingly earnest in their desire to play the game properly, and the bowlers try to make better

use of the ball. The worst of it is that the colonists will not play against them and so they do not get opportunities of measuring themselves against others.¹³

William Milton, whose South African team had been annihilated earlier, was almost certainly closeted in the pavilion with members of the South African Cricket Association. The governing body of cricket, including Transvaal and Orange Free State delegates for the first time, was due to meet in the course of the day. Milton presided over the meeting and may also have watched the Malay match with some ambivalence. He must have wondered what might have been when he saw the torrid time that the English professionals were being given by the Malay pace bowlers. He should have been aware that Krom Hendricks – and others – would be an asset to the South African team. But, despite the added attraction of a large crowd witnessing aggressive cricket from a local side, he was reluctant to see his side infiltrated by the lower orders.

The game involving the Malays made sure that paying punters could not reasonably demand their money back for the last day of the Test. In fact, it was considerably more competitive and entertaining than the official match had been. It also enabled the professionals to squeeze a last few shillings out of the tour. And it was a handy means of diverting attention away from the compelling drama that surrounded the arrest of the English captain, Read, and the tour manager, Edwin Ash. On the day they were due to return home, they were served with a sheriff's order refusing to allow them to leave without a legal promise to repay a £1,000 loan from James Logan. After being forced to kick their heels for several hours, a local businessman, Jack Richards, finally did the necessary and Read and Ash arrived humiliatingly by rowing boat to climb the ladder up the ship's side and find Milton with their farewell party in full swing. They would all be meeting in the High Court in the following year.

The administration of cricket in the Western Cape had been criticised rightly and regularly over the years. The main complaint invariably concerned the unilateral manner through which Milton and the Western Province CC – the 'MCC of the Cape' – controlled

the game. The latest gripe involved the clubs objecting to their not being given a voice in the costs of hosting Read's team. They declined any responsibility for expenses incurred, notably 'a large amount for rent of the ground charged by the Western Province CC'. The *Cape Times* vented its spleen on being unable to gain entry to the meeting and decided to investigate the way cricket was being administered. It referred to 'some little friction in the Western Province Cricket Union arising again out of some disagreement with the Western Province CC who possess a distinct preponderance of voting power on the Union which is therefore a union in name only'. There were further complaints that all Western Province Cricket Union meetings were held in camera and that there needed to be a fairer distribution of club representation. The report concluded: 'The Province club will take a step forward if it works in the same direction instead of attempting to wreck what may be made a very useful organisation.'¹⁴

The following day, 'Longstop' submitted a damning indictment of Western Province CC's strategy to the *Cape Times*. He provided an accurate assessment of the administration of the game as it stood in 1892:

Everything considered there can be no question that the Union is, as a union, a complete fiasco. It is really the old thing over again for the Western Province CC cannot be outvoted. Worked on equitable representation from all clubs wishing to join as at Kimberley and elsewhere – the Union – which it would be then – must succeed; but at present it appears to be the strengthening power of our strongest club. That club has never shown a desire to be the nursing club it should, and in the Cape under notice we have it further exemplified that it has no intention of becoming so.¹⁵

Beyond the ivory tower of the Western Province CC, coloured cricketers were desperate for the facilities to improve their game. Abdol Burns wrote to the *Cape Times* on behalf of 'the Mahommedan community' to thank the English players and to congratulate their own players for 'the fair stand they made against the professionals,

considering the drawbacks they have as regards practice grounds, etc.’ Although they were grateful that they were able to play at Newlands, they hoped that ‘local cricket teams will, in future, show us a similar kindness in allowing us a better field to practise on’.¹⁶ It was a reasonable request; the facilities for coloured cricket were limited and nets and practice grounds non-existent.

It encouraged a less than positive response. ‘Straight Tip’ condemned the Malay ‘impudence’ and regretted the indecent encouragement they received to take part in matches with senior players: ‘they will ask for the Cathedral next for their singing clubs to practise’.¹⁷ ‘Son of Japhet’ skewered the correspondent by suggesting that if ‘my little brother Straight Tip’ should become a Muslim then he might have a chance of making the highest single score against the tourists, ‘which is the sore point when you knock all the padding out of it’.¹⁸

The bittersweet nature of this game gave way to the tragedy of South African cricket history. Straight Tip was eager to condemn the coloured population to an ignored and oppressive isolation. Tragically his was to be the way of the future, produced by empire and directed by Rhodes. The result was the indescribable loss suffered by the many thousands of black cricketers who lost their birthright – the chance to be citizens of, and to represent, their own country. It was a huge loss to South African cricket as well. South Africa’s Test team had struggled for pace and paid the price at Newlands. The same day, on the same surface, the two Hendricks had proved there were fast bowlers ready to lead the South African attack.

The most striking feature of the match – the lightning pace of Krom Hendricks – would become the major focus of debate in South African cricket for more than a decade. Albert Knight, an England player and author of *The Complete Cricketer*, recorded a conversation he had with the touring team’s opening batsman, Bill Chatterton. The latter mentioned that he had ‘played at home against Richardson, Lockwood and Mold, and against the greatest of Australian genius, Spofforth and Turner’. According to Knight’s impressions, Chatterton ‘shook his head as the great name of Spofforth passed his lips and agreed that much might be urged on

his behalf in a claim as the world's greatest bowler ... Yet the very ablest bowler he had ever met he believed to be, not Spofforth, but a South African black, Hendricks. The memory of this man's pace from the pitch, his quick swing away, alternating with a fine break back, stirred a cold and critical nature to enthusiasm.¹⁹