



the cricketer

ESTABLISHED 1921

Vol. 103 No. 10 - December 2023

ENGLAND HUMILIATED

Why they made a feeble defence of World Cup

By George Dobell and Vic Marks



YORKSHIRE CCC: WHAT NOW?

with Rob Bagchi, Darren Gough
and Finlay Bean

STUART BROAD OPENS UP



£5.99





Tanya Aldred

Boundary view

A change of gear

All around the country, bags of cricket gear have been dragged up to the attic or stuffed under the bed – waiting for spring or the cold sports hall of winter nets. But in some households, that cricket bag won't appear again – as older players hang up their boots, younger players have children and find their priorities have changed, and teenagers discover other, more instant, distractions. Those lonely bags of pads and gloves are one of the things discussed in the Centre for Sustainable Design white paper: *Findings, Learning and Implications for Policymakers and Other Stakeholders related to Sustainability and Cricket Gear*. In other words, how cricket gear can be designed and manufactured within a circular economy, to encourage reuse, repair and refurbishment.

The report found, to no one's great surprise, that there were huge amounts of waste involved with the production of cricket gear: with opportunities missed not only to reuse unwanted clothing, but in recycling parts of more technical gear at their end of life – for example reusing the internal components of batting gloves and pads to make new products. Gray-Nicolls are singled out for praise, having shown such innovation to be possible with their upcycled batting gloves.

A more innovative approach to what seems eminently sensible – making sure unwanted stuff gets a second life – would also help reduce cricket's exclusivity problem. The recent ICEC report pointed out that the cost of cricket gear puts the game out of reach of some stratas of society – and most state schools. The use of second-hand equipment, and its cultural acceptance, would lower those thresholds. The white paper notes that Lord's Taverners, who do a great job in collecting unwanted kit, send the vast majority of it – 95 per cent – overseas. Co-operation between different stakeholders should be possible to make cricket more accessible for all.

The authors stress that trying to create a bank of reusable gear is not a war on manufacturers, as second-hand equipment is likely to be passed on to children trying out the sport, or those who would otherwise be priced out of the game. There is a



There is very little awareness of sustainability issues shown by cricket manufacturers

reason why there are no longer adverts for washing powder where the mum has to wash the kit for the whole team – today young and old, players increasingly want to follow in the footsteps of their heroes, with their names on the back of their shirts. This makes Saeo or Sam instantly more identifiable on the pitch, but their shirts instantly more difficult to reuse. The report suggests ways to get around this problem – repairing and patching over logos, names and sponsors – and recommends the

establishment of a network of repair and refurbishment workshops, which would also provide employment.

At the moment, there is very little awareness of sustainability issues shown by cricket manufacturers – for example an unwillingness to consider using less high-impact materials including plant-based vegan leather – but they do not stand alone in their ignorance. It is estimated that 92m tonnes of textile waste is produced annually by the fashion industry – which, depressingly, is set to increase by 60 per cent between 2015 and 2030.

The paper offers governing bodies and manufacturers, expert and detailed advice. It's something the ECB, whose own long-awaited sustainability report is due to be published by Christmas, should grab onto with both hands. As Professor Marin Charter, the director of the CfsD says, the world's second largest sport has so far "overlooked the environmental and social impacts of cricket gear". That needs to change.

BUTTLER'S WINTER WOE

I'm halfway through *Wandering* by Katherine May, a fabulous memoir of both a mental and physical retreat. She talks of how, in the 21st century, we tend to see life as linear – a process whereby we become increasingly more powerful until old age eventually neuter us. She contrasts it with folklore, when life was seen as cyclical, strown with retreat and renewal. "Life meanders like a path through the woods," she writes. "We have seasons when we flourish, and seasons when the leaves fall from us, revealing our bare bones. Given time, they grow again." It made me think of Jos Buttler's England, stuck in a nightmarish World Cup, where everything they touch turns to dust. Wishing them a peaceful winter to lick their wounds, before the spring returns. **E**