

EXPLODING THE MYTH

By
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Radio Sports Cameo Puts Cricket Giant of Past In His Place

ONE can imagine the old doctor tugging at his beard and giving a snort of rage:

"Averages? There's more to cricket than averages. These young fellows like Hobbs and Bradman may have the biggest averages, but who has the biggest personality?"

"What's the name that is graven on dusty pitches wherever the game is played, in memory of a high, chuckling laugh, of a consummate shrewdness and a native wit that seemed to come down from the generations of English rustics? For his bigness, apart altogether from petty averages! What's the name?"

And no doubt he himself would supply the answer.
"Dr. W. G. Grace."

ONE can hear the doctor's high voice in complaint as he listens in some Elysian sphere where batsmen never get run out and cricketers make centuries all day long... He will make it after listening-in to the NBS radio broadcast from the world below on the eve of the first cricket Test at 8.45 p.m. next Thursday from 2YD, and later from the main National stations.

Hearing the broadcast, "Talking of Cricket," in a radio preview last week, I was amazed to find how low the great doctor's ranking was in the batting averages for England-Australia Test matches. Head of the list came Bradman, next Sutcliffe, then Hammond, Hobbs, Leyland, McCabe and Ranjitsinghi. Grace came only eighth.

IT is a good, typical broadcast, presented in the form of a discussion between several voices. Four men are arguing on the question of the greatest batsman of all time.

Faded into the argument comes an NBS interview with Fairfax, the Australian cricketer, recorded some time ago.

"Who is the greatest batsman of all time?" asks the interviewer.

"Without doubt, Bradman," says Fairfax.

He gives his reasons, and then the four voices again take up the argument, hotly sometimes, in a way that gives the illusion of a real discussion that you can hear any day in a pavilion, on a street corner, in a bar.

AFTERWARDS comes the flood of statistics, a bit overwhelming to a listener, but all through them rings the name of Bradman, Bradman, Bradman.

The name sounds again and again like the refrain of a chant by worshippers.

FAVOURITE literary pastime of the 20th century has been the wholesale destruction of the giants of other days. Now radio does it with an NBS broadcast in the sports interview series which already has a history of its own... a history that includes bringing the voice of a dead man to his relatives... and a remarkable interview with "a New Zealand lady called Cuddle."

Highest individual score in first-class cricket, 452 not out... Bradman.

Greatest number of scores over 300 in first-class cricket... Bradman.

Highest individual score in England-Australia Tests... Bradman.

Second highest individual score in England-Australia Tests... Bradman.
And so on.

WITH the long fuse of facts, the myth of Dr. Grace's greatness as a batsman is exploded.

The whole piece ends with a burst of music, as if the moderns of this century, having bowled out the great giant of the last, were marching off in triumph.

This broadcast is the latest addition to the intriguing list of sports interview recordings made by the NBS in the last few years.

JUST lately one of these sports interview recordings had a strange outcome.

Before Christmas, in the series, a recording was made of an interview with Mr. H. Spurdle, one of the best-known sports secretaries in New Zealand.

He was the only man in New Zealand who had given 50 years' continuous service as secretary to a rowing club. It was the Clifton Club in Waitara. He had been secretary to the Clifton Rugby Football Club and the Waitara Racing Club, and Mayor of Waitara.

He died just over a fortnight ago.

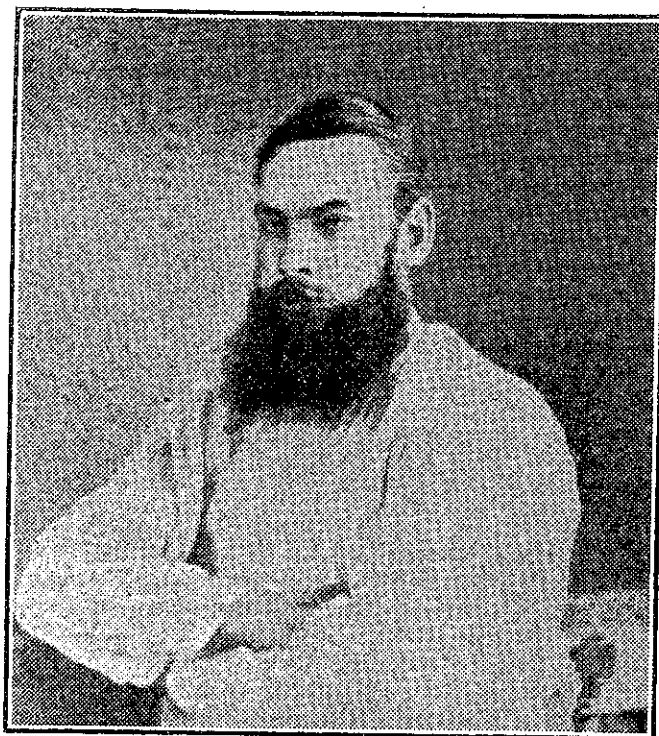
LAST week officials of the service were making arrangements to grant the request of his relatives that they might have a copy of that sports interview record.

The man is with them no longer, but they can still have his voice.

THERE are many recordings of interviews with famous sporting personalities in the NBS shelves. One, I am told, is taken out again and again on request. It is an interview, punctuated with neighs, with one of New Zealand's most famous ladies.

She won the New Zealand Cup in Christchurch, and twice won the Auckland Cup. Her name is Cuddle.

FOR a pleasant, whimsical recording, I have heard nothing better made in New (Continued on page 37.)



DR. W. G. GRACE.
... Is bowled out.