



## **Celebrating the Player – Honouring the Man**

**Sydney Cricket Ground  
2 November 2008**



## Victor Trumper Day

- \* A Twenty20 match at Sydney Cricket Ground between celebrities and former internationals attired in Golden Age of Cricket clothing and equipment.
- \* A Twenty20 final between NSW's top two cricketing schools for The Victor Trumper Shield.
- \* A historical and cultural retrospective of Australia's formative years on the Village Green of Sydney Cricket Ground.



## Who was Victor Trumper? Why celebrate the Golden Age of Cricket?



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Victor Trumper was a cricketing star of the Golden Age of Cricket (1890-1914) renowned for his stylish batting method and all-round athleticism in an age of uncovered wickets and the menace of arguably the world's greatest ever bowler, SF Barnes. Trumper's well known generosity of spirit and celebrated feats of batsmanship – being a master of every stroke according to his captain Monty Noble – endeared him to his young nation. His untimely death at the age of 37 during World War 1 stranded Trumper's fame and legend. Few Australians consequently know of Trumper's genius as a batsman, nor of his noble, altruistic character and sheer vision in guiding the creation of the breakaway NSW Rugby League competition in 1908 with JJ Giltinan and Dally Messenger. The Sydney Cricket Ground is synonymous with Trumper and the obvious first-choice venue for the event because of its historical ties with the Golden Age of Cricket.

The Golden Age of Cricket is the era of WG Grace, Wilfred Rhodes, the legendary Ranjitsinji, Archie MacLaren and CB Fry – slatted pads, spiked gloves and skull caps – and the birth of international cricket between Australia and England. It is a time of style and grace, athleticism and grit, long-handled bats and wrist power, the invention of the bosie and the genius of Sydney-born Victor Trumper.



### The Concept

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Victor Trumper Day is a celebration of Australia's greatest Golden Age cricketer and a retrospective of our nation's belle époque (1885 to 1915) to be staged at Sydney Cricket Ground on 2 November 2008. The day is structured around two core activities – bringing the Trumper genius to life and celebrating the Golden Age of Australian Cricket.

## Charitable Overlay

*Trumper's sportsmanship and altruism is an excellent example to young people pursuing a career in cricket who desire to make a positive contribution to their society.*

**Our aim is to promote an ongoing public association between the name of Victor Trumper and sportsmanship, charity and excellence.**



## Father Chris Riley's 'Youth Off The Streets'

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Father Chris Riley's 'Youth Off The Streets' is a worthy recipient of the proceeds raised from our tournament via gold coin donations and the auctioning of cricket equipment. The charity is a community organisation which supports young people who are homeless, drug dependent and victims of physical and psychological abuse. YOTS provides care for homeless young people with their outreach program, food van and youth refuge. Their work is complimented by the provision of a drug and alcohol program to a wide educational demographic. YOTS have furthermore established accredited independent high schools in Surry Hills, the Southern Highlands and Merrylands that provide educational opportunities for young people either living on the streets or unable to attend mainstream high schools.

Our stated purpose is to promote the legacy of Victor Trumper and thereby inspire young people to support charitable organisations, display acts of sportsmanship and achieve cricketing excellence through opportunity and hard work.

## Bringing the Trumper Genius to Life

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**A Twenty20 match between film and television celebrities and former international cricketers wearing Golden Age clothing and equipment. A net experiment involving first-class cricketers.**

Greg Matthews, Ross Barrat and the Australian Cricketers Association are assisting in the recruitment of celebrities, first-class and ex-Australian players to don authentic reproductions of Trumper's slatted pads, spiked gloves and long-handled bats to stage a Twenty20 match. The newly-popular abbreviated form would well have suited the style and method of Australia's most-underrated, fast-scoring batsman.

It will be an instructive exercise (and fascinating experiment to historians) when a handful of first-class cricketers demonstrate the difficulty of wielding bats and protective equipment of the Golden Age period against expert seam bowlers in the Sydney Cricket Ground nets.

The authenticity of the exercise will be complete with the importation of authentic reproductions from England and the sub-continent. We hope that the experiment will aptly demonstrate the expertise required to excel as a Golden Age batsman and underscore the point that to preclude 'the ancients' from our collective memory for not boasting high batting averages relies on deeply flawed reasoning.

**A cricket tournament between two of NSW's top high schools for The Victor Trumper Shield.** Two highly competitive cricketing high schools from NSW will be selected each year to play for the Victor Trumper Shield – the first regular Twenty20 match on Sydney Cricket Ground for schoolboy teams.

## Celebrating the Golden Age – setting the scene

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**A sporting and cultural retrospective of Australia's belle époque on the Village Green.** A further element for the staging of the event will be to erect stalls and displays around the Members area on 2 November each year celebrating the music, inventions, cricket equipment, cuisine and costume of the late Victorian and Edwardian age. The Sydney Cricket Ground furthermore has the infrastructure and architectural style to provide the appropriate backdrop for the historical atmosphere of the event.

The **grand scale retrospective on the Village Green** of the Golden Age of Cricket will feature first-class cricketers costumed in Edwardian and an actor as Victor Trumper circa 1910. Albion are recreating pre-baggy green Australian 'skull' caps with the permission of Cricket Australia for the event; 19<sup>th</sup> century fare including cottage pie and Toad-in-the Hole will be served; an 1886 carousel will be operated for children; Mounted NSW Police and Australian Army officers attired in period costume will stroll the lawns; Kingsgrove Sports Centre will import reproduction 19th century equipment to stage a Golden Age batting experiment involving first-class cricketers; a carpenter and signwriter will reproduce the shop-front from Trumper and Carter's Market Street sports store; the Australian International Conservatorium of Music will provide musicians to play Australian music of the period; Tom Keneally will address the crowd on the poetry and literature of Australia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; and the National Institute of Architects will address the audience on Sydney's architectural trends during the belle époque.



## **Event Supporters**

The Hon. Rodney Cavalier

David Frith

Gideon Haigh

Ashley Mallett

Ian Chappell

Greg Chappell

National Rugby League

Greg Matthews

Mike Coward

Adam Spencer

Sir Tim Rice

Tim Trumper

Peter Roebuck

Malcolm Knox

Harry Solomons

Ian Heads

Dally Messenger III

JJ Giltinan family

Peter Sharpham

Greg Page

Bruce Edgar

Tom Keneally



### Trumper Day gives priceless perspective

Mike Coward | *February 23, 2008* The Weekend Australian.

**THE prospect of an annual celebration of the life of the immortal Victor Trumper lifted the spirits in a week devoted to the coarse pricing, auctioning and trading of elite cricket stock.**

Given the assault on so many of the game's values and conventions, it was as reassuring as it was fascinating to learn of one man's dream of creating Trumper Day.

David Strange teaches Shakespeare and Conrad to Year 11 and 12 students at the International Grammar School in Sydney by day and reads Fingleton, Mallett, Moyes and Sharpham on Trumper at night.

Strange, 36, married with a three-year-old son named Victor, after the master batsman of the Golden Age, refers to his Trumper passion as a magnificent obsession. "I have to refrain from talking about it all the time," he said.

From the time Strange's grandfather regaled him with tales of the artistic batting of Alan Kippax and Archie Jackson he has been fascinated by the game's stylists and at the age of 15 began devouring all that had been written about Trumper the genius batsman, hero to the young and champion of the poor and downtrodden.

That Trumper's name has faded from the consciousness of the contemporary cricket follower distresses Strange and he has the backing of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust to organise the inaugural Trumper Day for November 2, the 131st anniversary of the birth of Victor Thomas Trumper.

"I think it is curious we have overlooked Trumper," Strange said. "I believe it is time to consider what he achieved, to look at the photographs and piece together the way he batted and ask ourselves have we selected the right hero.

"While Don Bradman is deservedly loved and respected and will always have a place in the Australian psyche, there are other batsmen out there who can also fit the bill. What I want is to hold an event that will make people stop and think and reconsider Victor Trumper; make them consider his qualities as a batsman and the conditions he batted under.

"But I also want people to consider his qualities as a man. What is so moving reading about Trumper is his generosity of spirit."

Strange is keen to ensure the celebration of Trumper's cricketing life is placed in context. To this end, Trumper Day will be a cultural event and visitors to the Village Green at the Sydney Cricket Ground will experience Australian life as it was when Trumper was in his pomp.

If Strange has his way actors will be dressed in the fashions of the day; police and army personnel will wear appropriate uniforms; novelist Thomas Keneally will speak from a marquee about the literature of the age; children will play on a carousel constructed to an 1866 design; and passersby can tuck into cottage or rabbit pie as they listen to melodies from students at the Conservatorium of Music or examine a reconstruction of the front of Trumper's sports store which stood in central Sydney.

Contemporary players of renown will wear an 1899 baggy green cap, the sausage batting gloves and the slatted pads of the period and wield bats reproduced to the dimension and design favoured by Trumper throughout his first-class career which spanned 1894 to 1914.

In 255 matches he accumulated 16,939 runs at 44.57 with 42 hundreds and in 48 Tests from 1899 to 1912 he gathered 3163 runs at 39.04 with eight centuries and 13 fifties.

Strange concedes his undertaking is ambitious and that he is in need of a sponsor. But by no means is he deterred that he does not have the \$75,000 to \$100,000 he believes will be required.

"If need be I will borrow against our home to get the marquee and meet my obligations to the SCG Trust which has been so supportive," Strange said.

"Rest assured I'm not going to let this fail."

Such is his commitment to Australian cricket's past that Strange believes if Trumper Day resonates with the cricket community and beyond it can become an annual event. Furthermore, in time, he sees the occasion as an opportunity to honour the memory of other legendary players whose deeds have been lost in the mists of time. He can envisage Archie Jackson, Syd Gregory, Stan McCabe and Bill O'Reilly and a host of others being feted.

Strange believes such an initiative would be appropriate as Trumper was the most self-effacing of men.

Four outstanding secondary schoolboy teams will be assembled to play a Twenty20 tournament at the SCG.

Strange dismisses the notion that this is something of an anomaly as he is convinced Trumper, who had a penchant for scoring boundaries from the very start of an innings, would have been a dab hand at the most abbreviated form of the game.

And, unlike Bradman, Trumper was happy to hit the ball in the air.

Trumper Day will conclude with a dinner at which cricketers and critics of renown will discuss Trumper's place in the game's rich history and the schoolboy who has undertaken the most meaningful charity work in the lead-up to the occasion will be presented with a special award.

Given Trumper's interest in and care for the young, homeless and dispossessed it is appropriate that proceeds from Trumper Day will benefit the admirable Youth off the Streets organisation.

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## **Contact Information for Event Organiser**

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