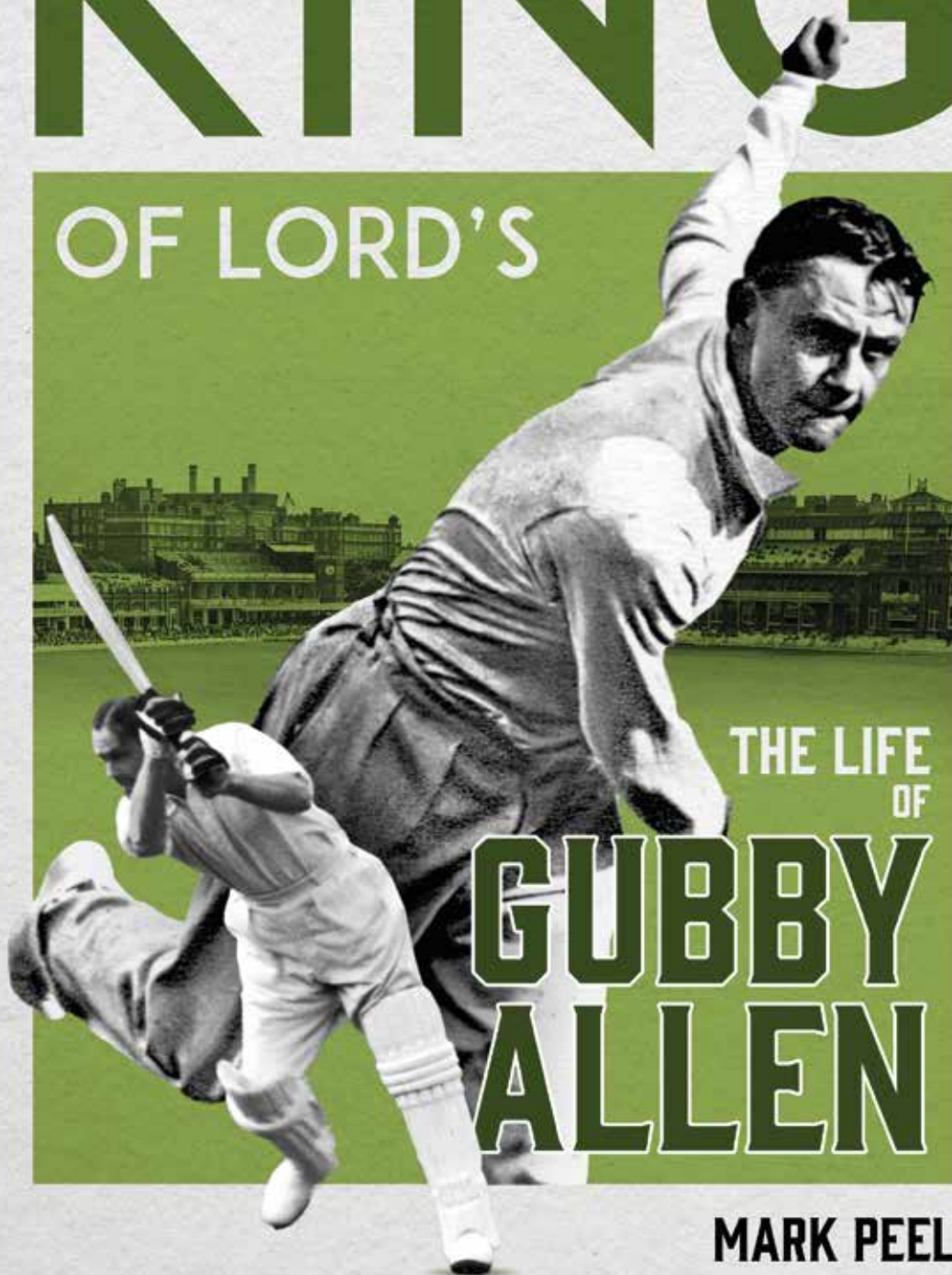


THE

KING

OF LORD'S



THE LIFE
OF

GUBBY ALLEN

MARK PEEL

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CHAPTER 1

PRIVILEGED UPBRINGING

GEORGE OSWALD Browning Allen was born in the fashionable Sydney suburb of Bellevue Hill on 31 July 1902 into a family steeped in eminence. (He was christened Browning after his godmother, who married a relation of the poet.) The roots of the Allen clan can probably be traced back to 16th-century Essex and, more definitely, to George Allen of Coolatore, County Wexford in southern Ireland. A staunch supporter of King Charles I in the British civil wars of the 1640s, he is believed to have fled his estates on the borders of Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire, following the defeat of the King by the forces of Parliament under Oliver Cromwell and taken up residence in Wexford.

George Allen's grandson, George, born in 1713, took holy orders and his only son, Richard, born in 1744, became court physician to King George III. Employment in royal service gave Allen a taste for high living and on his death in 1806 he left his second wife, Mary, and her five children, three from an earlier marriage, virtually destitute save for his vending machine business. It was managed by Thomas Collicot, a surgeon's mate in the navy and a widower, who married Mary Allen in 1809. Three years later he was found guilty of forgery for failing to place stamp duty on bottles of medicine and sentenced to hanging, a sentence later commuted to transportation to Australia, founded as a penal settlement in 1788. Aided by a gift of £200 from Robert Wigram, a close friend of Richard Allen, Mary, along with three of her children and three of Collicot's from his previous marriage, arrived in Sydney in 1816 with a letter of introduction to the Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie. An enlightened ruler, Macquarie received her kindly and arranged for her second son,

George, aged 15, to be articled to the Government Solicitors' Office. After five years of sustained application, George was admitted as an attorney and solicitor to the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 24 July 1822, becoming the first person to receive his legal training in the colony. The following day he founded his own firm Allens, which remains to this day Australia's oldest legal firm. Having won the right in the Supreme Court to equality against English-bred attorneys who desired to monopolise the practice, he built up an influential list of clients, becoming a wealthy man in the process.

Retirement from the law in 1855 allowed this high-minded man more time to devote to public life. Already chairman of the Gas Light Company, he became solicitor to the Bank of New South Wales in 1843, and later its director and president.

A foundation alderman of the Sydney City Council and a former mayor of Sydney, he was nominated to the Legislative Council, the upper house of the New South Wales Parliament, in 1846, remaining a member for the rest of his life.

A committed Methodist, a leading lay preacher and temperance campaigner and an active member of the Benevolent Society for over 50 years, Allen married Jane Bowden, the daughter of a Methodist minister, in 1823. Together they had 14 children, ten surviving beyond infancy, and in 1831 they moved to Toxteth House, Glebe, the beautiful family home designed and built by the architect John Verge. On his death in 1877, the *Sydney Morning Herald* called Allen one of the colony's foremost public citizens in its social and political life. His legacy lived on in the personality and accomplishments of his eldest son, George Wigram, born in 1824.

After a stellar career at Sydney College, later Sydney Grammar School, he served as an articled clerk and entered a highly successful partnership with his father in 1847 until the latter's retirement in 1855. Thereafter, he and his brothers Alfred and Reginald presided over the firm's expansion, its clients including the Bank of New South Wales, the Gas Light Company and the University of Sydney.

In addition to his legal work, Wigram Allen was a director of many public companies as well as insurance firms and building societies that helped make him an extremely wealthy man who left an estate valued at £300,000, worth in the tens of millions in 2026.

Elected mayor of Glebe in 1859, an office he held for 18 years, he was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1860; thereafter, he gravitated to the Lower House, acting as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction 1873–75; before becoming a highly esteemed speaker respected for his courtesy and knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

A generous benefactor to many educational institutions, he served as Commissioner of National Education 1853–67 and a trustee of Sydney Grammar School and was elected to the Senate of Sydney University. A committed Methodist like his father, especially active in the Church Missionary Society, he married Marian Boyce, the daughter of the Rev. William Boyce, the first president of the Australian Wesleyan Conference, who bore him ten children, six sons and four daughters.

In recognition of his life of service, he was knighted in 1877 and appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1884. On his sudden death the following year, the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote, 'Few men in the colony have been better known than Sir Wigram Allen and none have been more generally estimated.'

As the family firm continued to function under three of his sons, one of them gained renown elsewhere. A brilliant scholar at Sydney Grammar School and Sydney University, Reginald Allen was also a top-flight cricketer who played one Test for Australia against England at Sydney in 1887, scoring 14 and 30. Thereafter he became an enthusiastic breeder and owner of racehorses and was for 49 years a member of the committee of the Australian Jockey Club. His youngest brother Walter, born in 1870 and educated at Sydney Grammar School, left home for England with his widowed mother in 1886 to meet up with his eldest brother who'd settled there. Resuming his education at The Leys, Cambridge, a Methodist establishment, he excelled at cricket, spending three years in the first XI, before going up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to read law. A good-looking, affable personality who was well liked by all, he captained the college cricket team and could, with a touch more exertion, have won a Blue.

In 1896 he was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple but didn't join the family firm on returning to Australia. That same year he married Marguerite Julie (Pearl) Lamb, whose grandfather, John Lamb, was a

naval officer from Westmorland who emigrated to Sydney and was a member of the first Legislative Council of New South Wales. Her father, Edward Lamb, who was born and partially educated in England, became a pastoralist in Queensland. Appointed Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1862, he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly in 1867 and served briefly as Secretary for Public Lands.

The Allens had three children: Geoffrey born in 1898, Gubby in 1902 and Patricia in 1905. Known in his family circle as Obbie from his infantile attempts to pronounce Oswald, Gubby owed his popular nickname to his initials. Raised in the house built by his father overlooking Sydney Harbour, and surrounded by a profusion of relations, much time was spent at family gatherings. One of Gubby's earliest memories was playing cricket on the lawn with his father and uncles. Even his nurse was roped in to bowl at him with a soft ball.

He also formed a bond with two of his father's closest friends: Leslie Wilson, a decorated soldier who served as aide-de-corps to the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Harry Rawson, between 1903 and 1909, and Oswald (Toby) Watt, an English-born pioneering Australian aviator decorated for his gallantry in the First World War.

When Gubby was six, the family moved to England because his father wanted his children to have an English education like the one he'd experienced at The Leys. They were due to sail from Sydney on the SS *Waratab*, but Watt, a director of the Blue Anchor Line which built the ship, urged caution. Alarmed at how unstable it was when returning to Australia on her maiden voyage, he advised Walter Allen to rebook – advice well heeded because on its next voyage, the *Waratab* sank mysteriously in the Indian Ocean with no survivors.

On 30 January 1909, the Allens departed for England on board the SS *Pericles*, a UK steam ocean liner. On arrival, they lived briefly in London before moving to Murton, a Victorian house on Montagu Road, Datchet, a Thames-side village close to Windsor, with a governess, a nurse, a cook and a housemaid. Later they moved to Wyndelshore on Windsor Road, where they frequently entertained the families of Walter's two other brothers and sisters who lived in England. Raised in a typical Edwardian household, Gubby's life was shaped by the values of his class: courtesy, integrity, respectability,

discipline and sportsmanship. In the relaxed atmosphere of a loving home, he was encouraged to think for himself, so that from an early age he was known for his forthright nature that could stretch the bounds of diplomacy. Swanton relates the tale how, as a boy on holiday in the Isle of Wight, Gubby won a juvenile golf competition by five strokes. When he went up to collect his prize from the Scottish lady golf champion Elsie Grant-Suttie, she asked him whence he got his handicap. Resenting what he took as a personal slight, Gubby said to his father's embarrassment, 'I'm not interested in your prize,' and stalked off.

His natural talent and strong work ethic on the sports field helped boost his confidence but failure on the other hand left him prone to dark moods and a tendency to blame others.

It was at Datchet while flying model aeroplanes, a hobby inspired by Watt, that Gubby and his cousin Dick became friendly with a local boy called Sydney Camm. His expertise in building model aircraft so impressed Walter Allen that he introduced him to his friend Tommy Sopwith, the aircraft manufacturer, and taking his opportunity, Camm later won fame as an aeronautical engineer responsible for the design of many fighter aircraft for the RAF in the Second World War, most notably the Hurricane Hawker.

After two years of being educated by a governess, Allen was enrolled at Summer Fields preparatory school in May 1912, months before his tenth birthday. There, Allen IV, as he was known after his three cousins Bruce, Lawrence and Dick, was soon displaying his aptitude for sport, if not for work.

Founded in 1864, the school, situated in north Oxford, catered for the social and intellectual elite. Not only were Sir Archibald Wavell, a distinguished commander in the Second World War and later Viceroy of India, and Harold Macmillan, prime minister between 1957 and 1963, educated there, but it was also the favoured school of the offspring of the 1906–1914 Liberal government. They included Anthony Asquith, later an illustrious film director, the youngest son of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, a frequent visitor.

As was the tradition of many a pre-war boarding establishment, Summer Fields was notorious for its spartan conditions and severe

discipline. The writer and politician Christopher Hollis recalled the occasion when Allen called a boy slightly older than him a 'damned fool', an offence deemed sufficiently serious to warrant the elder boy reporting Allen to the headmaster. The headmaster thanked him for his public spirit and beat Allen.

That summer his father took him to The Oval to watch his first Test. After England dismissed South Africa for 95, Gubby enjoyed watching his hero, Reggie Spooner, a close friend of the family, bat until he was caught at square leg off a full toss for 26. Seeing his son reduced to tears by his dismissal, Walter remarked, 'Old boy, I don't think you ought to cry just because a friend of yours got out,' to which Gubby replied, 'It wasn't because he got out but because he played such a terrible shot.'

Having played for the second XI in 1913, Allen was promoted to the first XI the following year. To celebrate the school's golden jubilee, the boys beat the fathers in a game in which both Allens distinguished themselves, Walter hitting 52 not out and Gubby taking 6-41. This, however, was light-hearted stuff compared to the serious business of beating their fiercest rivals, Horris Hill, near Newbury, captained by Douglas Jardine.

With both sides unbeaten, there was more hinging on the game than usual, so much so that 'Bear' Alington, Summer Fields' cricket master, vowed to do whatever it took to deny Horris Hill victory. Consequently, after Jardine elected to field first, Summer Fields, playing at home, batted almost the whole afternoon, leaving their opponents a mere 20 minutes to bat. According to Summer Fields' prosaic account of the match, 'Horris Hill won the toss, put us in, but on account of the goodness of the bowling, and the difficulty of moving the ball on the slow ground, nine wickets fell for only 112 before the innings could be closed; in the time which remained two wickets fell for 19 runs ... Jardine took seven wickets for 30; he bowled with great control over the ball and variety of pace; his swerve also induced three batsmen to stop the ball with their pads.' One of those victims was Allen who was lbw Jardine 2, the beginning of a love-hate relationship between the two that lasted a lifetime.

For some time afterwards relations between the two schools remained distinctly frosty and Jardine bore a grudge against Alington for the rest of his days. 'If the school can be criticised, it can be criticised

for a great concentration on results,' wrote Hollis. 'Mr Alington had little hope that we would beat Horris Hill. Therefore ... he made us bat all day, so we were able to make a draw of it.'

During the summer of 1915, after a year in the football XI, Allen was captain of cricket. In a season decimated by an outbreak of measles in the school, when the XI only played four matches, he established himself as the side's leading batsman, averaging 48.33 with a top score of 78 not out. 'Promising with bat and ball,' was the school magazine's bland assessment of his ability.

Allen was destined to join his brother Geoffrey at Haileybury, but a chance encounter between their father and Cyril Wells on the golf course at Datchet changed all that. Wells, an old friend of Walter Allen's from Cambridge, was not only master in charge of cricket at Eton but also a housemaster, and when he heard of Gubby's cricketing pedigree, he suggested to Walter that he alter his plans. Despite his concern about the financial implications of such a move, and Gubby's reluctance to be separated from his revered elder brother, Walter succumbed to Wells's persuasion with all that it entailed.

Founded in 1440 by King Henry VI for poor scholars, Eton had evolved into the nation's foremost school, a nursery for sons of the British establishment. Because of its sheer size, wealth and competitive edge, it could be an imposing place, but, equally, its emphasis on individual development provided fertile ground for mavericks to flourish. Aside from the 70 King's Scholars housed in medieval buildings known as College, the remaining 900 Etonians, known as Oppidans, were lodged in houses around the town of approximately 40 each with each boy allotted his own room. In an institution which prized leadership and self-reliance, boys were primarily responsible for maintaining discipline, organising games and running societies. At the pinnacle of the college hierarchy was the Eton Society, known as Pop, a self-electing oligarchy whose garish waistcoats and sponge trousers were symbolic of their immense power and prestige. While the exercise of such authority at a tender age promoted a sense of entitlement in some, for others it instilled a sense of responsibility.

Allen's entry into the college coincided with the bleakest period of the war, which helped boost recruitment to the Eton Officers' Training

Corps (OTC). The weekly ritual of the reading out in Chapel of the names of Etonians killed on active service (1,157 overall in the First World War) provided a salutary reminder of its pitiless legacy, along with the shortage of food and heating and the blackouts. Yet austerity aside, school life continued relatively unaffected with the daily programme of lessons, sport and prep in houses.

Unhappy about being sent to Eton, Allen's start in September 1915 was far from auspicious. Plagued by two bullies, he fought back when one of them tore up his divinity essay by squirting ink into his face and punching him as hard as he could. Thereafter, he was left well alone and gradually began to settle in league with his best friend David Bowes-Lyon, who roomed next door to him. With the coming of summer, survival turned to pure pleasure as Allen flourished in the junior house cricket competition, Wells's winning their first ten matches.

The following year he and his good friend Willy Hill-Wood were primarily responsible for Wells's winning the Junior House Cup, and, in 1918, Allen, as captain, recorded figures of 647 runs at an average of 40 and 75 wickets at 4.70 each. In the first game of the term, new boy Frank Pakenham, later the eccentric penal reformer Lord Longford, was grateful for his tolerance when misfielding at long leg and the ball trickling over the boundary for four. Many years later, when Longford was a minister in Clement Attlee's Labour government, Allen was kind enough to support his membership of Rye Golf Club.

Allen was fortunate to have as his housemaster Cyril Wells, a man who inspired devotion from his charges. Short and stocky with an Elgarian moustache and an eyeglass, Wells was a classical scholar with catholic tastes. A brilliant teacher, he was also an authority on butterflies, the stock market, fishing and wines, and possessed a stamp collection second only to King George V. A Cambridge double Blue, an England rugby international and a Surrey and Middlesex cricketer with a top score of 244, he'd run the cricket at Eton since 1898 with conspicuous success. To emphasise the boys' own responsibility, he expected a daily invitation from the captain to run the practice, otherwise he wouldn't attend.

A man of few words and a prickly temperament, he once placed Allen in an unenviable position when they were watching a house

match together. Indignant at the sight of headmaster Cyril Alington breaching the playing area to talk to umpire George Lyttleton after the latter had given a boy out, Wells said, 'Allen, go over and ask the headmaster to leave the field. I will not have him interfering in a game in which my pupils are engaged.' 'I'm afraid I can't do that, sir,' retorted Allen, whereupon an irate Wells jumped on his bike and rode off. That evening in contrite mood, he popped his head round Allen's door and said, 'You were quite right, Allen. Good night.'

An illustrious cricket coach who demanded high standards, Wells's reaction to Eton dismissing Charterhouse for 13 in 1918 was, 'All right, but it should have been nine.' According to Alec Dunglass, later Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who played in the 1921 XI, Wells sharpened Allen's instincts and convinced him that a cricketer who used his brains was more likely to succeed than one who did not. A measure of Allen's regard for his housemaster was the annual dinner party he used to give him at the Carlton Club in his later years, where Wells, no respecter of rank, once remarked, 'They tell me Allen is writing a book. I never knew he read one.'

Not surprising perhaps, Allen's clearest memory of Eton was Armistice Day, 11 November 1918, when German resistance finally collapsed. Victory was marked by wild celebrations at Eton as elsewhere. Boys walked down the High Street and over the bridge into Windsor eight abreast with linked arms, waving union jacks and singing patriotic songs. As they crossed the Thames, they saw H.K. Marsden, one of the college's most notorious disciplinarians and known as 'Bloody Bill', and the cry went up 'Throw Bill in the river,' whereupon Marsden quickly retreated.

Allen also happened to be present the following May when the college welcomed 19 Old Etonians of the rank of major general and upwards, including Generals Sir Herbert Plumer (2nd Army), Sir Henry Rawlinson (4th Army) and Sir Julian Byng (3rd Army). After Plumer's tribute to the greatness of Eton and the part it had played in the nation's history in School Yard, the generals inspected the 600-strong school OTC.

Allen's ambition to make the Eton XI began in contentious circumstances at the Lord's Easter class in 1919. When repeatedly told

to alter his grip on the bat by Major Teddy Wynyard, a fine attacking batsman in his day but something of a martinet, Allen stood his ground. He said he would continue with the grip recommended to him by Wells, a rejoinder that earned him a broadside from MCC secretary Francis Lacey. He told him that he wouldn't get into the Eton XI unless he did as he was told, but Allen assured him that he would, knowing that he was Wells's blue-eyed boy. Making his debut against RMC Sandhurst, he scored 13 and when opening the batting against MCC he looked the part in making 29, but there was little else to cheer about. Forced to miss the two-day Winchester game because of injury, his failure to score against I Zingari on his return appeared to have scuppered his chances of playing against Harrow at Lord's. The fact that he was selected by captain Clem Gibson, a superb fast bowler who later achieved fame for his part in the defeat of the 1921 Australians at Eastbourne, owed much to the recommendation of Wells, who viewed Allen as a genuine thoroughbred who had the character to go far.

The Eton XI of 1919 was one of the best in their history with eight of them destined to play first-class cricket. After four years away from Lord's, the match against Harrow resumed its leading position in London society with large crowds in attendance, the men dressed in top hats and frock coats, the women in flowery dresses. While for many the occasion overshadowed the cricket, the game stirred fierce emotions between the two tribes, and it wasn't unusual for a 'rag' to break out at close of play in which top hats were destroyed.

Receiving a word of encouragement from his idol Reggie Spooner as he walked out to bat with Willy Hill-Wood, Allen suffered the mortification of being run out backing up without facing a ball. After Eton were all out for 176, Harrow were routed for 76, Gibson taking 6-18, so that come late afternoon Allen was batting again. This time it was Hill-Wood who was dismissed for nought and while the rest of the Eton upper order contributed little, Allen survived to stumps, undefeated on 34. The next day, after a delayed start because of rain, he continued to bat faultlessly, winning loud applause on reaching his fifty, and carrying his bat for 69 at the declaration.

Set 244 to win, Harrow quickly folded to Gibson and Hill-Wood for 41, prompting jubilant scenes from Eton supporters in front of

the pavilion. Shouting for Allen, he was brought out on to the field, half-changed and raised shoulder high in triumph. The *Sunday Express* declared that he had done much to justify his batting reputation, showing real skill in defence and getting his runs without blemish; the *Sunday Mirror* alluded to his 'wonderfully steady innings of 69', and *The Sportsman* thought him the best batsman on either side.

Eton's thumping victory over Harrow marked the end of Wells's 22-year stint as master in charge of cricket and Mat Wright's 35 years as coach. They were replaced by Dick Young and George Hirst, the former Yorkshire and England all-rounder, respectively. While Young, a double England international at football and cricket and scorer of a century for Sussex against the 1921 Australians, was deemed too theoretical for some – although Allen rated him – Hirst was an inspired appointment. A Yorkshire legend for 30 years, he not only performed the double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets 14 times, but he also scored 2,000 runs and took 200 wickets in a season, the only man ever to have achieved this, which he accomplished in 1906. Yet his uncompromising will to win was tempered by his humour and integrity. According to Allen, he was the kindest, nicest man in the world, who won the affection of everyone at Eton. Equally telling was his outstanding ability as a coach, conveying his expertise in simple, blunt language and encouraging his charges to give of their best. During his 19 years at Eton, they were unbeaten against Harrow and lost only once to Winchester, in his first year.

Out of form with the bat, out of luck with the ball and hampered by a sore side, Allen was contemplating giving up bowling until Hirst intervened. Noting the pain in his face, Hirst invited him to Sunday tea at his home, and asked him to reconsider his position, alluding to his great attributes as a bowler, especially his natural rhythm and ability to make the ball hurry off the pitch. 'Well, George, if you put it like that,' retorted Allen, 'I suppose I must try and stick it out.'

Weeks later his perseverance was rewarded in dramatic style in the Winchester match. In front of a large crowd at New Field, Winchester, the home side began in sprightly fashion before Allen, coming on second change, bowled Fraser for 59 and Claude Ashton for 25. With little help from the pitch or from the other end, Allen continued to cut a swathe through the Winchester innings and finished with 9-34

in 19.1 overs. *The Times* correspondent wrote, 'Allen's bowling calls for special praise ... He has a beautifully easy action for a fast bowler, and he keeps a splendid length, bowling very few loose balls.'

Despite Allen's heroics, Winchester made 242 and went on to win comfortably but Eton redeemed themselves with a nine-wicket victory against Harrow.

A versatile all-round sportsman, Allen was active in the winter terms, participating in the Wall and Field Games, forms of football peculiar to Eton, and playing two years in the rugby XV, the first one at scrum-half and the second one at stand-off. His athletic prowess helped him win election to Pop for his final two years, as well as being captain of his house.

For the 1921 season, Eton welcomed back seven old flannels (colours) for the XI captained by opener David Brand. Still troubled by his side and short of runs in the early games, Allen reacted badly to failure, berating those who spilled catches off his bowling, including Alec Dunglass who fielded to him at first slip. Once again, he reserved his best form for the Winchester game, one of the most remarkable in the history of schools cricket.

On a fast pitch at Agar's Plough, Eton dismissed Winchester for 57 in 80 minutes with Allen the main destroyer with 5-20, before establishing a first-innings lead of 198. Beginning their second innings that evening, Winchester continued to struggle with the bat except for captain John Guise, who raced to 87 by the close. The next day he continued to carry all before him, decimating every bowler, Allen excepted, with the audacity of his strokeplay which brought him 45 boundaries. Thanks to his 278, one of the finest schoolboy innings ever played – the next top score was 21 – Winchester made 381, but with Hill-Wood hitting a century, Eton won by seven wickets.

With five future Blues in their line-up, Harrow were a useful side that year, but, once again, they proved no match for Eton. Fielding first, Allen, swinging the ball both ways, took the early honours, bowling Bennett, Enthoven and Leonard Crawley, the first three Harrow batsmen. All out for 64, they never recovered and, despite a gallant second-innings century from Crawley, they still lost by seven wickets.

As Allen took his bow on the Lord's balcony from the cheering Etonians below, he could rest content in the knowledge that he'd

topped the bowling averages in his final term. Although ready to move on, he had grown to love the school and remained a devoted alumnus thereafter. Presenting Canberra Grammar School with a piece of carved Eton stone in 1937, he told the boys that Eton would ever be to him the best place in the world, and he hoped that they would think the same of their school. While academia hadn't featured highly in his priorities, his Eton education had given him many benefits. First and foremost, it gave him a set of lifelong friends such as David Bowes-Lyon, the brother of the future Queen Elizabeth (and mother of Elizabeth II); David Brand, later Viscount Hampden; Alec Duglass who, as Sir Alec Douglas-Home, became prime minister in 1963; Ronnie Aird, later secretary of MCC; and Willy Hill-Wood, later director of Morgan, Grenfell and Co. Second, it gave him the confidence to mix easily in society, be it in city boardrooms, London clubland, debutant dances or country-house weekends. Third, it equipped him for a life of leadership as England captain, in the military or within the higher echelons of MCC. Fourth, he absorbed the cult of athleticism and the amateur ethos that he fervently embraced throughout his life, although he was no mere throwback to the game's golden age when artistry was valued as much as winning. For behind the ethos of chivalry and good sportsmanship there lay a more ruthless streak to the games cult that reflected the intense one-upmanship of the Victorian public school. And Allen was nothing if not competitive. A stickler for practice, he gave his all in the middle, openly cursing when he bowled a bad ball and was not averse to intimidating a batsman when riled. He was also a non-walker, perhaps reflecting his Australian background.

Yet Eton with its glorious setting, medieval buildings and rarefied atmosphere, was an unreal preparation for dealing with the outside world. Pampered by a life of power and privilege, Etonians could be haughty, snobbish and hidebound, defects to which Allen fell prey as he continued to live a charmed existence. According to Richard Robins, son of his good friend Walter Robins, 'Gubby ... was an astonishingly rich man. Very narrow-minded, bachelor all his life, with the old patrician view of how the game was played,' while to the writer Charles Williams, a former Oxford cricket Blue, he was 'an inveterate snob'. In a game riddled with class divisions, it proved to be his biggest flaw.