



## Shortlist announced for The Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year Award 2019

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- Six books, with a vibrant mix of writing about cricketing personalities and the sport's history, form the short list for the coveted Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year Award 2019
- The winner of the £3,000 prize will be announced on Tuesday 16th April in the Long Room at Lord's. Writer and former award winner Simon Lister will give the keynote address

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The 2019 Cricket Society and Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) Book of the Year Award shortlist is announced today.

Contrasting forms of biography feature strongly with books about Moeen Ali, iconic commentators John Arlott and Jim Swanton, and English cricket itself included.

Completing the list are a collection of essays from Mike Brearley, a look back at English touring sides in the period after 1945 and, well timed as another Ashes summer beckons, a press insider's forensic analysis of Australia's fall from cricketing grace.

This year's Chair of Judges Robert Winder said: "There was plenty of head scratching before we could agree on a shortlist. Several good books were unlucky to miss out. No doubt there will be more strong conversations to be had before we pick a winner – the Decision Review System will be busy. But the range of titles under consideration, from club to country, from fiction to non-fiction, from Sydney to Swansea via Durban and Delhi – reminds us that cricket is a game that hums with fine writing."

The competition, run by the Cricket Society since 1970 and in partnership with MCC since 2009, is for books nominated by MCC and Cricket Society Members, and is highly regarded by writers and publishers.

Last year's winner was Harry Pearson's *Connie: The Marvellous Life of Learie Constantine*. Mark Nicholas won in 2017 with *A Beautiful Game: My love affair with cricket*.

The £3,000 prize for the winner, and certificates for all the shortlisted books, will be presented at an awards evening in the Long Room at Lord's on Tuesday 16th April.

A sell-out audience of 200 people will comprise Members of the Cricket Society and MCC, the shortlisted authors, publishers, and some of today's finest cricket writers and journalists.

**Notes to editors:**

**The six books on the shortlist (alphabetically by author):**

- Moeen, Moeen Ali with Mihir Bose, Allen and Unwin
- On Cricket, Mike Brearley, Constable
- Arlott, Swanton and the Soul of English Cricket, Stephen Fay and David Kynaston, Bloomsbury
- Steve Smith's Men, Behind Australian Cricket's Fall, Geoff Lemon, Hardie Grant
- Ambassadors of Goodwill: On tour with the MCC 1946-71, Mark Peel, Pitch Publishing
- England, The Biography: The Story of English Cricket, Simon Wilde, Simon and Schuster

**The other twelve books considered (alphabetically by author):**

- Ivon, The Games are Everything. Play is Dead, Michael Aylwin, RedDoor
- The Haywards: The Biography of a Cricket Dynasty, Keith and Jennifer Booth, Chequered Flag Publishing
- Across the Oceans, With the English cricketers to Australia and New Zealand 1861-1962, Andy Collier, self-published
- Cricket Ball: The heart of the game, Gary Cox, Bloomsbury
- The Test: A Novel, Nathan Leamon, Constable
- Eleven Gods and a Billion Indians, Boris Majunbar, Simon and Schuster
- Cardus Uncovered: Neville Cardus, The Truth, the Untruth and the Higher Truth, Christopher O'Brien, Whitethorn Range Publishing
- Murder at Lord's, Harry Oltheten and John H. Worries, Rupa Publications

- Pep: The Story of Cec Pepper, The best cricketer never to represent Australia, Ken Piesse, cricketbooks.com.au
- Pushing the Boundaries: Cricket in the Eighties: Playing Home and Away, Derek Pringle, Hodder and Stoughton
- No Spin, My Autobiography, Shane Warne, Ebury
- Pavilions in Splendour, The Cricket Pavilions and Grounds of Cheshire, Geoff Wellsted, Max Books

Eighteen books – nominated by either Cricket Society or MCC Members (not publishers) – were accepted for the long list and whittled down to six by a panel of judges. The judges are Robert Winder (Chairman), Mike Selvey, John Symons and Chris Lowe. Nigel Hancock, Chairman of The Cricket Society, is the competition's administrator.

### **About the Cricket Society**

The Cricket Society – [www.cricketsociety.com](http://www.cricketsociety.com) and Twitter @CricketSociety – encourages a love of cricket through playing, watching, reading and listening. It supports young cricketers, makes annual awards, holds regular meetings, publishes an acclaimed Journal and Bulletin and has its own cricket team.

It is a national organisation with 1,700 members across the UK and beyond. It also has branches based in Bath, Birmingham and Durham. This year's key events include the annual Spring Lunch at The Oval, member 'days at the cricket' at two Specsvers County Championship matches and, in August, a film night and social with the Australian Cricket Society hosted by David Frith. Future plans include a developing focus on women's membership and cricket.

### **About Marylebone Cricket Club**

MCC is the world's most active cricket club, the owner of Lord's Ground and the guardian of the Laws and Spirit of the game. There are 18,000 Full and 5,000 Associate Members of MCC.

The Club plays more matches than any other – around 480 each year, against schools, universities and clubs in the UK, and between 20 and 30 as part of its overseas touring programme which aims to develop cricket abroad.

MCC has a World Cricket committee, which is chaired by Mike Gatting and contains eminent current and former players and administrators – including Sourav Ganguly, Ricky Ponting and Shane Warne. It has a remit to act as an independent think tank, debating issues and making recommendations about the health and state of the game.

MCC owns the most comprehensive collection of cricket artefacts and books in the world, housed in its museum and library at Lord's.

**For more information please contact:**

**Adam Matthews**

MCC Media and Communications Officer

Lord's Ground

Direct Line: 020 7616 8699

Mobile: 07929 348074

Email: [adam.matthews@mcc.org.uk](mailto:adam.matthews@mcc.org.uk)

**Robert Winder**

Chair of Judges, The Cricket Society and MCC Book of the Year Award

Mobile: 07775 892067

Email : [robertwinder1@hotmail.com](mailto:robertwinder1@hotmail.com)

**Nigel Hancock OBE**

Chair of The Cricket Society

Mobile: 07885 733320

Email: [nigelhancock@cricketsociety.com](mailto:nigelhancock@cricketsociety.com)