



GREGORY, Jack Morrison (Jack) 1895-1973 At Shore 1907-1912 (Reg. No. 1239)

1st XI 1909-1912, GPS 1st XI 1911.

NSW 1919-1928, Australia 1920-1928.

Aggressive left-hand batsman, fearsome fast bowler, brilliant slip field.

First-class career. 129 matches: 5661 runs (36.52); 504 wickets (20.99); 195 catches.

Test career. 24 matches: 1146 runs (36.96); 85 wickets (31.15); 37 catches.

Jack Gregory was, with all due respect to the others, the greatest of all the cricketers who came from Shore. He was a member of one of the best-known Australian cricketing families: Uncle Dave was Australia's first captain, and cousin Syd played 58 Tests. Jack was a left-handed batsman who wore no gloves, and used the minimum of protective equipment. He specialised in low skimming drives which caused mid-off and extra-cover to look for somewhere to hide. As a fast bowler, he simply frightened the life out of all who had to face up to him, with his giant leap in the delivery stride and the lift he obtained with his great height. And, to cap it off, he was one of the all-time great slip fielders, as attested by his 195 first-class catches, many of them achieved by his spectacular reach and athleticism.

At school he was in the XI for three years, captain of Shore and the Combined GPS side in 1911-12. In fact his performance at school gave little indication of the heights to which he would rise in the 1920s. Nevertheless he took 6/18 and 4/31 against Kings in 1910; 5/37, and 82 runs, against St. Joseph's in 1911; 2/9 and 108 runs against High; and 3/19 and 89 runs against Sydney University. When he left school, Jack played minor grades for North Sydney before joining the AIF and going off to World War I. In 1919 he was chosen, and became a leading light, in the very successful AIF team which toured England and then played matches around Australia on their return home. In the AIF's English tour, Gregory scored 942 runs, and took 131 wickets, in first-class games. Not bad for a man who had come up from North Sydney 3rd Grade! Back in Australia, still with the AIF side, he took eight NSW wickets, and so was taken straight into the Australian side for the 1920/21 Ashes series. In the five Tests, all overwhelmingly won by Australia, Gregory scored 442 runs (73.66) and took 23 wickets (24.17). He made a brilliant century, going in at No. 9, in the second Test, and also took 7 wickets in the first innings. He had a major influence on every Test except the first, and established a moral superiority over the English batsmen which carried over into the return series in England in 1921 (the two teams travelled back to England on the same ship). In England the Australians won three of the 5 Tests, and were not beaten until the end of August; they lost one other festival game before departing as conquerors. Jack Gregory, with Ted McDonald, now in great form on the English pitches, carried all before them, and what remained of the somewhat timorous England batting was cleaned up by the whimsical "bosie" bowler Arthur Mailey and the giant captain Warwick Armstrong. Gregory scored 1171 runs on the tour, including 3 centuries, and took 120 wickets, and was a massive factor in the Australian success. It should be said, though, that his bowling figures in the Tests (19 wickets at 29.05) did not reflect his real contribution: McDonald took 27 wickets at 24.74, and would have been grateful for the fact that the much more frightening Gregory was maintaining the pressure the other end.

On the way back from England, the Australians played some matches, including 3 Tests, in South Africa. Gregory maintained his brilliant form, and took 30 wickets in the six first-

class matches; and he also scored the fastest-ever Test match century – 119 in 70 minutes, off 67 balls. This period was the apogee of his career.

Gregory played hardly any first-class cricket in the 1926/27 and 1927/28 seasons, but was picked for the first Test against England in 1928/29 after a fair performance in the Test Trial. In the first Test, which England won by 675 runs, he took the wickets of Sutcliffe, Hammond and Chapman, before he damaged his knee irreparably in attempting a caught-and-bowled from Larwood. It is said that he wept when the seriousness of the injury was realised.

Thus ended the cricket career of one of the greatest and most colourful of all Australian players. Sir Neville Cardus wrote of him: "He was a generous and likeable Australian. He enjoyed himself and was the cause of enjoyment in others. Gregory was young manhood in excelsis. All who ever saw him and met him will remember and cherish him."