



**HORDERN, Herbert Vivian ("Ranji") 1884-1938.
At Shore 1896-1900 (Reg. No. 391)**

1st XI 1899/1900.

NSW 1905-1913, Australia 1910-12

Googly bowler, useful middle-order batsman.

First-class career. 35 matches: 721 runs (16.38); 217 wickets (16.79); 39 catches.

Test career. 7 matches: 254 runs (23.09); 46 wickets (23.36); 6 catches.

"Ranji" Hordern (strange that his nickname derived from his resemblance to the Indian prince who played for England) introduced the "googly" ("Bosie") to Australia, after seeing it bowled by its inventor, B.J.T. Bosanquet, for England in 1903/4. At school, he tells us in his autobiography, he began his cricket in the "scabbies" level, graduating from the "despicables" to the "in-betweens" and eventually to the First XI. For Shore he generally took 5 or 6 wickets per match, and figures such as 7-36 against University Vets and 7-76 against Kings indicate his quality as a schoolboy cricketer. As an Old Boy he came back to play against the boys in 1910, took 9 wickets (as you might expect – he had been playing first-class cricket for 5 years), and most notably, bowled the young Jack Gregory for 0. Young Jack may have been comforted by the knowledge that his conqueror had taken 8-81 against Queensland five years previously, and was on the verge of his debut for Australia against South Africa (he took 8 wickets in that match, including 5-66 in the second innings).

Hordern's pursuit of a career in dentistry took him away to America for a time, where he played for the then thriving club of Philadelphia. With them he toured Canada, England and Jamaica, causing havoc among his opponents with his "mystery ball". Returning to Australia, he played two Tests against South Africa in 1910/11. The following season England were the visitors, and Hordern took 32 wickets in the five Tests. The great England batsman Jack Hobbs was said to have rated him as good as, if not better than, Mailey and Grimmett: and he would have been as good an authority as anyone.

In 1912 Australian cricket was rent by dissension at the administrative level, and the side that went to England that year for the ill-fated Triangular Tournament was short of several of the best players – including Hordern. "Ranji" disliked the unpleasantness which was in the air at the time, and he was concerned to keep his hands undamaged so that his dentistry career would not be put at risk. He accordingly declined the invitation to tour. So ended the brief, but brilliant, career of a remarkable man and cricketer.