T J (Tommy) Andrews
1890-1970

Tommy Andrews was Petersham DCCs greatest cricketer. While claims of this nature generally raise issues for debate, in the case of T J Andrews, there is no argument. He played his first game for Petersham in 1909 aged 19 and his last in 1944 aged 54. He retired in 1936 but made a comeback in 1941 at the request of the club. He was a powerful right hand batsman and leg break bowler who excelled as a close-to-the wicket fieldsman.

Thomas James Edwin Andrews was born at Newtown on 26 August 1890 and was immediately inserted into the 1st Grade team when he played his first match for Petersham in 1909-10. He made a half-century among his 125 runs but it was his performance in the Wednesday "Half-Holiday" competition which indicted his undoubted ability. He batted 12 times for 468 runs with a top-score of 201*.

The following season, after making a duck batting no. 10, another duck batting at 6 and 21 after opening the innings, Tommy was in at no. 8 against Redfern at the SCG. With the score 6-155 chasing 313, Andrews got together with Ernie Newton and the pair put on a club record 138 for the seventh wicket to take the match with a final total of 402. Tommy made his first century for Petersham that day scoring 108 with 14 fours in 115 minutes. He made 297 runs for the season and took 19 wickets with his leg-spinners.

In reporting on the match, the *Sunday Times* newspaper commented on Andrews' innings thus: *"It was a splendid and chanceless innings, the off-driving, square-cutting and forcing shots off his legs being worthy of a seasoned inter-State batsman".* It was a fitting description of Tommy's play. He possessed a range of attractive strokes which he delivered in stylish fashion. Not a tall man, he was thick set and developed much of his tremendous power from his wrists.

And while he didn't hit another century that or the following season, 1912-13 brought with it the start of an outstanding first-class cricket career when he was selected to play for NSW. Nine seasons later after WWI he made his Test Match debut for Australia on the 1921 Ashes tour of England. He toured South Africa in 1922 and England again in 1926. He played in 16 Test Matches scoring 592 runs with a highest score of 94. In his first-class cricket career he scored 8,095 runs in 151 matches at an average of 39.48 with 14 centuries, 43 half-centuries and a highest score of 247 against Victoria. He also took 95 wickets at an average of 32.10. His first-class career spanned 17 years between 1912 and 1929. He also captained NSW on four occasions.

Andrews did not set the first-class cricket scene alight in his early days. He played 14 first-class games for NSW between 1912 and 1915 for 636 runs with a top-score of 96 when he was lbw to Herbert Ironmonger playing Queensland at the SCG in just his second match. He also took 25 wickets and held nine catches. But the best of TJ Andrews was yet to come.

When first-class cricket resumed after the war, the 28 year old scored his maiden first-class century rattling up 112 in the second innings against Victoria at the SCG in January 1919. He showed how much he had matured as a player during the five years first-class break by hitting 103 in his next game just a few days prior to Christmas 1919 playing South Australia at Adelaide Oval. Then, a little over four weeks later in January 1920, he scored a brilliant 247 in a score of 521 against Victoria at the SCG. Batting at no. 4 in the order, he occupied the crease for 299 minutes hitting 33 fours in the process.

He was such a fieldsman that cricket books which refer to his playing career always make mention of how good a fielder he was. It seems he was in the Ricky Ponting mould in terms of his ability to throw down the wicket, achieving many run-outs in the process. It is said that even English legends Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe thought twice about running if the ball was speeding towards Andrews. No doubt his ability as a NSW representative baseballer was of value to him as a cricket fieldsman.

One of his greatest catches was picking up Patsy Hendren off Australia's Arthur Mailey in the Third Test at Leeds in 1926. Everyone at the ground was in a state of disbelief when he threw the ball up at silly point after Hendren had launched into a full toss which was "going like a rocket".

In his 30 seasons with Petersham, Tommy Andrews scored 11,719 runs in 1st Grade with 28 centuries at the excellent average of 36.73. His aggregate remains the fifth highest in the history of Sydney 1st Grade cricket. In 16 of the 24 seasons from 1910-11 he scored at least one century. With his leg breaks, he took 503 wickets at an average of 20.84 off more than 2,000 overs with 8-72 his best. He took eight wickets in an innings four times and five in an innings 30 times. In 1913-14 he took five in an innings six times while in two other seasons he took five wickets five times. He won the club's 1st Grade batting aggregate and average eight times each. Three times (1913-14; 1915-16; 1918-19) he scored 400 runs and took 40 wickets in a season—a rare occurrence. Tommy Andrews played no other grade but 1st Grade for Petersham.

His finest batting effort was against Sydney University in 1923-24 when he hit 271 with 42 fours and just one six in 215 minutes which was and remained a club record. *The Referee* newspaper commenting on his batting said *"His hits through the covers spun smartly to the fence and the pull was made with charming ease. No stroke was omitted."* His score was the highest in the history of Grade cricket after the 335 scored by Victor Trumper in 1902-03. Amazingly that was his third double century for Petersham having scored 232* in 1915-16 and 201 in 1922-23. Another outstanding performance was his 107 and 8-72 against Balmain at Balmain in 1918-19. At the end of that 1923-24 season he was awarded life membership of the Petersham club.

In the 1925-26 season he hit 102 and 110 in the same match against Cumberland at Parramatta Oval, a feat only achieved by one other—Victor Trumper in 1909-10. In 1929-30 at age 40, he created a Sydney Grade Cricket record when he scored 1,150 runs at an average of 88.46 which included six centuries, which is now the equal second highest (with Sid Barnes) in 1st Grade cricket history. Geoff Boycott hit seven centuries in 1976-77. Tommy's centuries were against ND's (102); Gordon (148*); St George (123); Waverley (119); Glebe (121) and North Sydney (118).

Despite his advancing years Tommy Andrews was far from a spent force in 1932-33 joining with Keith Lawson to put on a partnership of 243 for the second wicket in a match against Glebe which remained a record for the life of the club. He hit 151 in 125 minutes that day in an innings laced with 20 boundaries. Lawson scored 92. That performance broke a 17 year record which Tommy himself had created with Australian Test bat Johnny Taylor in 1915-16 when the pair put on 240 in a huge record score of 3-585 against University made in just 228 minutes. Andrews made 232* (35 fours; two sixes in 149 minutes) and Taylor 174.

While there may have been Petersham cricketers who went on to greater honours such as Sid Barnes and Ernie Toshack, there seems little doubt that the player who made the greatest contribution to the club throughout a sterling career was Tommy Andrews. Support for that suggestion may be found in the fact that it was T J E Andrews who was recognised by Petersham Council in 1936 when the scoreboard at Petersham Oval was constructed and named in his honour shortly after he retired from cricket.

Very few people in the inner-west of Sydney would appreciate the connection between the T J Andrews funeral vehicles running around the area and one of Australia's greatest post-WWI Test and NSW cricketers. The link however, could not be closer as the funeral business was established by Tommy's father Thomas James Andrews just five years after his son's birth in 1890.

The T J E Andrews Memorial Scoreboard at Petersham Oval will ensure that Tommy Andrews who passed away suddenly at his home at Croydon on 28 January 1970 aged 79 will not be forgotten.