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Bro. THOMAS ROBERT McKIBBIN (1870-1939) TEST CRICKETER

Tom McKibbin was born at Raglan, some 5 km east of Bathurst on 10 December 1870. He was educated at All Saints College, Bathurst where he was a brilliant scholar and an outstanding athlete.

He studied for the law and was articled to Bro. Sydney Smith, a Bathurst solicitor.

He was a crack rifle shot and he represented Bathurst at tennis and rugby football.

At the beginning of the 1894-95 summer, a Country Week Cricket Carnival, arranged by the New South Wales Cricket Association, achieved its objective. Two of the country players were destined to become test cricketers. One of them was the bowler Tom McKibbin who found himself playing for Australia before the season was over.

The year before he had impressed a NSW Selector, Frank Iredale, in a match at Mudgee between Western District and the New South Wales Cricket Association.

The NSW Selectors were keen to see Iredales' discovery, however, when he bowled in the Country Week game in November 1894, he was no-balled for throwing by two of the umpires. His career may have ended before it started but the selectors were so impressed that they were prepared to overlook the problem and he was immediately chosen to play for New South Wales.

He was a right arm medium paced leg spinner and could turn the ball considerably but often lacked control.

Bill O'Reilly and Kerry O'Keefe bowled in similar fashion in later years.

Against South Australia, he took 14 wickets for 189 for the match and against Queensland he took 5 for 19 and 9 for 68 which were his best first-class figures. Tom McKibbin was selected to play for Australia in the fifth test in Melbourne.

In 1896, he was chosen to tour England where he played in the second and third tests.

He had a mixed tour. Against Lancashire he took 6 for 27 and 7 for 11. Against Yorkshire he had 7 for 23; against Hampshire 5 for 41, 7 for 80 against Surrey and against Gloucestershire, Hugh Trumble and Tom McKibbin dismissed the legendary Dr W.G. Grace and his team for just 17.

On the way home to Australia, the team played matches in Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand. McKibbin and fast bowler Ernie Jones, who

had both been heavily criticised in England for throwing, continued on their winning way. McKibbin took 8 for 94 against Philadelphia and 27 New Zealand wickets at an average of 7.7 against teams of 15 or, sometimes, 22 players.

He played in the first two tests against England in the 1897-98 season and, in 1899, he took 7 for 30 against a touring New Zealand side at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

During his somewhat patchy test career, Tom McKibbin had 17 wickets at an average of 29.18 and 88 runs at 14.67.

After he retired from the game, he briefly returned to Bathurst where, it was suggested he was seen tramping about the country with a swag on his back repairing shearing machines. He certainly obtained a position with an engineering firm for whom he travelled to all states of Australia. He was engaged in the gold mining industry in Western Australia where he managed cyanide plants and did some prospecting. It was here that a leg injury ended his cricket career, but not before he had scored a century and taken all 10 wickets in a special match at Derby arranged in his honour.

He again returned to Bathurst in 1914 and went into partnership with his brother Samuel on a property named 'Strattord.' Later, they purchased 'Macquarie Plains.'

He had married an Englishwoman, Miss Edith Collins while she was on a visit to Australia. They had no children.

McKibbin was well known for his remarkable wit and sense of humour and, with his happy manner, he was well respected in the community.

In the last years of his life, Tom McKibbin suffered a series of illnesses and he died at Bathurst on 15 December 1939. He was buried in the Presbyterian portion of Bathurst Cemetery.

Bro. Thomas Robert McKibbin was made a mason at Bathurst in Lodge City of the Plains No. 607, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales on 9 February 1929. He remained a member until his death.

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