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A hilarious odyssey in which an amateurish bunch of English eccentrics go cricketing across the globe

Penguins Stopped Play Details

Date : Published April 5th 2007 by Hodder And Stoughton (first published 2006)

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Author : Harry Thompson

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From Reader Review Penguins Stopped Play for online ebook

John Frankham says

A pleasant, mildly amusing cricket book about a group of English villagers who succeed in playing cricket in all continents - hence the title, from playing on the ice in Antarctica!

Joey Woolfardis says

[Short review from memory until I re-read and re-review at a later date:

I truly loved this book and it was so devastating at the end, but I can remember little of it, I think because it's not a novel but a story, really. It might take a while to re-read, though D: Sadness.]

Darkpool says

I'm so sad I finished this book. I just loved it. I loved the type of humour, the style of writing, and above all I loved the subject matter. I don't believe that anyone not fluent in cricket would enjoy this book half so much. As I drove back and forth to work over the last few weeks with this audiobook chuntering away in the CD player, I often found myself hooting with laughter. It was just as well I didn't have a paper copy, as I'm sure I would have been unable to resist carrying it with me so I could whip it out and read extracts to unsuspecting friends. And of course, this morning as the book reached its tragic conclusion I found myself crying as I drove (very dangerous, not recommended), even tho I knew what was coming.

If you're not sure if you'll enjoy this book, consider the following extract from the opening chapter:

A leopard seal, perhaps the most fearsome predator of the southern ocean, hauled itself up on an ice floe to take a gander. Ignore the "seal" bit — think "leopard"... Imagine the head of Ridley Scott's Alien atop the body of Mike Gatting after a particularly hefty tea.

If you snorted at the Mike Gatting reference, this book is probably for you.

I thought Glen McCready did a wonderful job of reading the book, giving us a range of accents for the great diversity of people we met.

(And a final note - I may be a bit cheeky adding this to my kiwi connection shelf, but if breakfast in Devonport doesn't count I don't know what would.)

Stephen Wallace says

This book has the ability to make you look very silly as you stifle a smirk on the bus so that people will not think you are mad - while reading on another joke makes you try and stifle the urge to laugh out loud causing

snot to shoot from one's nose, making you look extemely silly!

Great book, heart raching ending - even though it's the second time I have read this I laughed heartily and cried miserably once again.

I would recommend this to everyone who has a sense of humour, even if the subject of cricket puts you off. Yes, there are lots of bits about cricket - but there is alot more to it than that.

Read, enjoy and carry a tissue for the snot.

Steve Mitchell says

This is one of the funniest books that I have ever read; but it also has some parts that raise other emotions. Some of the reviewers have mentioned that you do not need to know anything about cricket to enjoy this book, and although this is probably true, a slight understanding of the game would be a benefit. A more essential experience would be ever trying to organise an event with a group of friends: a stag night, a group holiday or even a works outing all seem simple but the number of things that can go wrong is only ever surpassed by the number of things that actually do go wrong.

Much of the book covers the events and experiences of a very mediocre cricket team just getting together to enjoy playing the game for its own sake. Initially all thought of actually winning is a fantasy; many of the players actually take pleasure in sabotaging the match should a victory appear to be imminent in some hilarious and ingenious ways.

Nathan says

The author was an amateur cricketer and a writer of TV comedy. The book is his memoir of his cricket team, focused upon an all-continent tour taken by his team, playing a game at every stop. This book was laugh-out-loud funny at many points, but much of the humour would be lost on non-cricket fans. I suspect that some of the anecdotes are made up, and certain that others are exaggerated, but I'll forgive that. Thompson had a real issue with British Airways, and I really liked his account of their time in Perth. Not deep by any means, but one to pass around your friends. Rated PG for frequent coarse language. 3.5/5

Suhel Banerjee says

This is about cricket, yes, but primarily about humor. You will roll on the floor laughing without knowing almost anything about cricket, and if you know enough you will be chuckling a little more at the odd inside joke here or there. And that is the hallmark of a good sports book, the novice is equally enamored as is the connoisseur.

Harry Thompson started a village cricket team back in his school days, and all they did was lose. Miserably. Intentionally, and otherwise. Two decades of crushing defeats were never enough to crush their love for the game and he and his band of boys (middle aged men) finally decided to do something no one had done before - play cricket matches on every continent, yes, including Antarctica.

The characters are highly relatable if you've played any sport at any amateur level. The love for the game is admirable, especially after the string of misfortunes as has been brilliantly and hilariously described through the 300 pages. While a village team, but since from England, the home of the game and former rulers of the colonial world, they were greeted with an intense sense of history and competition. Thompson's team happily obliged by usually crumbling, and sometimes putting up a fight.

More than the what it's the how that makes this book so thoroughly enjoyable. Will keep an eye out on his next work.

Bettie? says

Read by Nicholas Boulton.

Broadcast on:

BBC Radio 7, 2:45pm Monday 1st March 2010

Duration:

15 minutes

Available until:

3:02pm Monday 8th March 2010

Categories:

Comedy, Sport, Cricket

Diptakirti Chaudhuri says

An utterly delightful book, about the (mis)adventures of a gang of English cricketers who went on the seemingly hare-brained mission to play cricket on every continent in the world.

It is part sports commentary, part humour and part travelogue as you slowly warm up to the rag-tag team, then get angry with them and then cheer them on with a fair degree of exasperation.

The droll humour stays intact right through as the book ends on an unexpected note. And gives you that fleeting glimmer of hope that maybe - just maybe - if we can get all those warmongers, terrorists and corrupt politicians to start playing cricket, all will be well with the world.

Gary Bonn says

Five stars? I shock myself. Let me explain. First, it has one of the most outstanding and memorable openings I've ever read. (Seriously - I rate it as good as the first paragraph of *Titus Groan*.) Second, it is a non-fiction account regarding a sport I neither understand nor like. However, the book is also about the people, the mad adventures they get up to, the triumphs and tragedies - and about sheer endurance and enthusiasm in the face of tribulation and frequent disasters. I love this book! and wish I hadn't read it so I can read it for the first time today.

Neeran says

Wonderful book describing the travels and travails of an English village cricket team. I've posted a more detailed review here:

<http://cricket-stalker.blogspot.in/20...>

Ruth says

[are an abrupt dip into tragedy as one of the author's team-mates dies, followed by the author himself. (hide spoiler)]

Carmie says

Loved it, if you love cricket you'll love this. Or even if you don't. It's very funny.

Bambola says

Oh I just loved, loved, loved this book. Laugh out loud funny in many places (but you have to be a cricket fan to appreciate it properly) but with the absolute saddest ending.

Phil Mc says

Greater than the sum of its parts and the closest a book has ever brought me to crying. One of the best sports books ever written.

This is part travelogue, part memoir of a village cricketer and part world record attempt handbook. It excels when describing and discussing that most writable of sports, cricket; however, in describing the colourful characters and cities that Thompson encountered it is no less impressive. The fact that it is factual belies the wonderful narrative of Thompson's cricketing life and, at times, it would have been more enjoyable if the tales it tells were fictional. Indeed, the end would have been immeasurably so.

To anyone who loves travel, boys on tour stories, well written non-fiction or, above all, cricket: Read this book. Read it now.
