



# A Social History of English Cricket (Aurum Sports Classics)

*Derek Birley*

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Acclaimed as a magisterial, classic work, *A Social History of English Cricket* is an encyclopaedic survey of the game, from its humble origins all the way to modern floodlit finishes. But it is also the story of English culture, mirrored in a sport that has always been a complex repository of our manners, hierarchies and politics. Derek Birley's survey of the impact on cricket of two world wars, Empire and 'the English caste system', will, contends Ian Wooldridge, 'teach an intelligent child of twelve more about their heritage than he or she will ever pick up at school.' In just under 400 pages Birley takes us through a rich historical tapestry: how the game was snatched from rustic obscurity by gentlemanly gamblers; became the height of late eighteenth century metropolitan fashion; was turned into both symbol and synonym for British imperialism; and its more recent struggle to dislodge the discomforting social values preserved in the game from its imperial heyday. Superbly witty and humorous, peopled by larger-than-life characters from Denis Compton to Ian Botham, and wholly forswearing nostalgia, *A Social History of English Cricket* is a tour-de-force by one of the great writers on cricket.



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