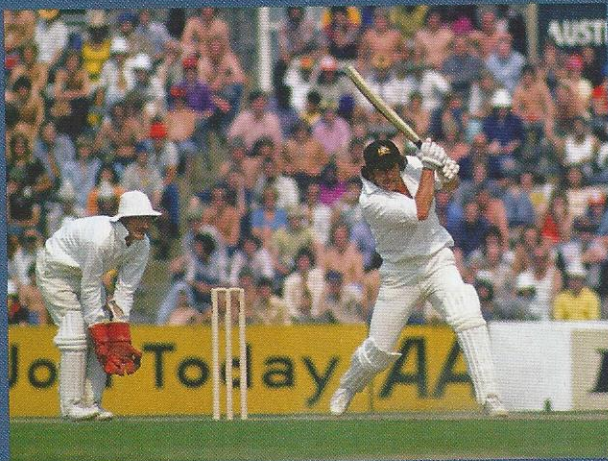


## HIS WAY WAS THE ONLY WAY

He took no prisoners and didn't care who he upset, that's why *Crispin Andrews* admired Ian Chappell

PHOTOS BY PATRICKEAGAR



**M**y earliest memories. Digging up a dinosaur bone, or should that be a dog's bone strategically placed in my granddad's vegetable garden. Riding around on a plastic orange racing car with our pet crow sitting on the bonnet. And rushing home from school, one afternoon, to watch the 1975 Ashes. Ashley Mallett was bowling. Just before tea. I was four.

Ian Chappell was at slip. Australian captain. Best bloke on the field.

My friends were out playing football, but I was cricket mad. Football meant running around in the cold, getting sick on those pink bubble-gum strips that came with collectable cards of Alan Hudson and Frank Worthington, and watching Derby County slide around in the Baseball Ground mud. Cricket was

all about sunshine, back garden Test matches, and Ian Chappell's Australians.'

In those days, England were more Dad's Army than Barmy Army. A kid who grew up around Donovan, flares and centre partings could not identify with '60s straights like Derek Underwood and David Steele. Brian, Barry, Colin and Geoffrey. Those were old men's names. Roscoe (Edwards), Bacchus (Marsh), Thommo and Chappelli: modern-day monickers bursting with passion, energy, and a two-finger salute to the stuffed shirts who ran the game.

Why waddle up like Arnold when you could roar in like Lillee. What price a John Edrich nurdle when you could step back and carve it through the covers like Ian Chappell? Back-garden Test matches did not last that long. In 1975, Ian Chappell's Australians could beat anyone.

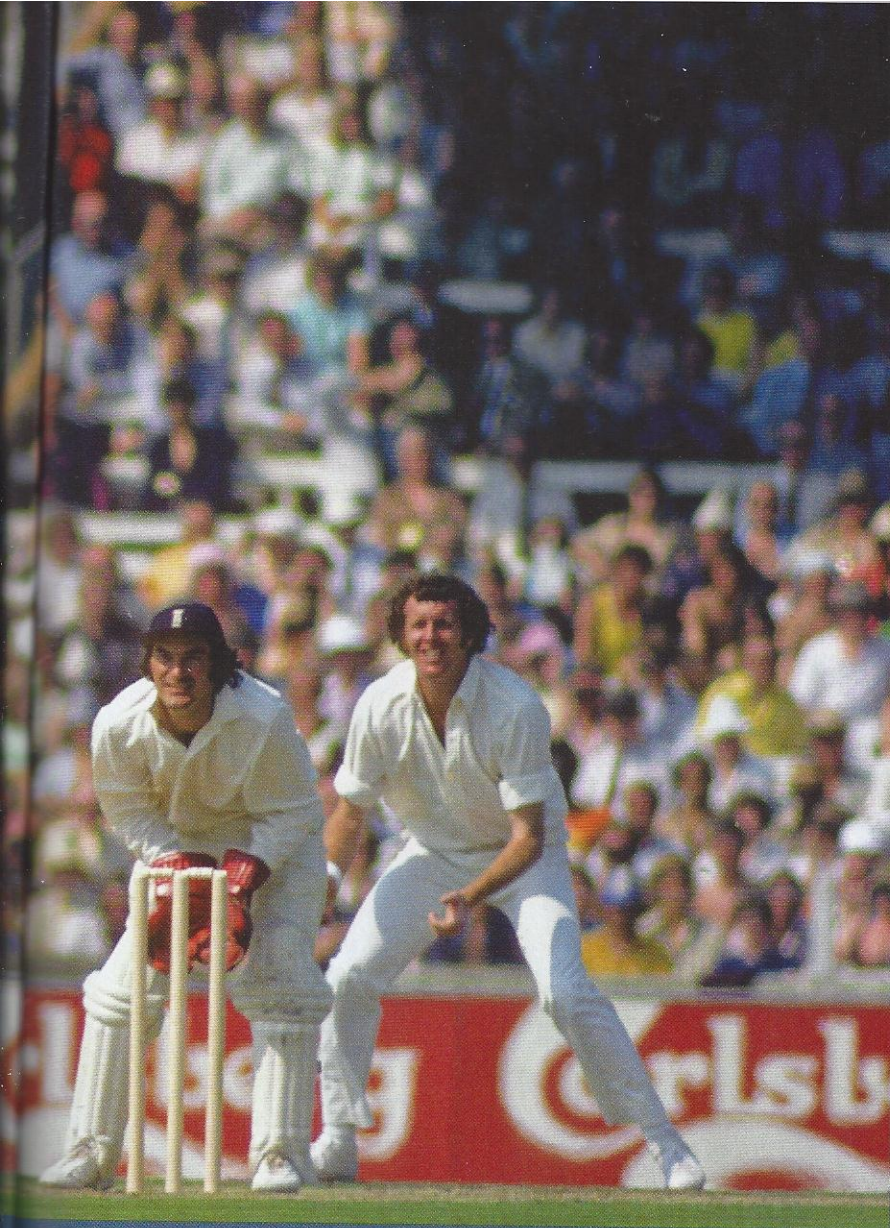
Chappell was good with the bat, too. At his best when he was captain,

he had Geoff Boycott's permanence at the crease, without the Yorkshireman's stodginess. He was the gunfighter who would take on the meanest quicks and the trickiest spinners. Only when conditions dictated would Chappell dig in. He hated giving his wicket away.

As captain, Chappell batted at No.3 and averaged 50. His runs set up matches. Like at The Oval, in 1975, when he batted England out of the Ashes. Australia were 1-0 up going into the final match, but pre-match momentum was with Tony Greig's men. The previous game was abandoned after the friends of George Davis the jailbird had vandalised the Headingley pitch.

Chappell scored 192, all but 50 of them on the first day.

Eleven of Chappell's 14 Test hundreds came in Australia's first innings. He averaged 48 in the first dig, compared to 33 in the second. Eight of those hundreds came in the



Individual: Ian Chappell bats at The Oval in 1975 during his 192, taking Australia to 532. The match ended up a draw, with the series going to Australia 1-0

**AT A GLANCE**  
 Teams Australia, South Australia, Lancashire  
 Tests 1964-65 to 1979-80, 75 matches, 5345 runs @ 42.42, HS 196, 14x100, 26x50; 20 wkts @ 65.80  
 ODIs 1970-71 to 1979-80, 16 matches, 673 runs @ 48.07, HS 86, 8x50  
 First-class 1961-62 to 1979-80, 262 matches, 19,680 runs @ 48.35, HS 209, 59x100, 96x50; 176 wkts @ 37.57, best 5-29, 2x5wi



first two Tests of a series. In series openers he averaged 55. In fifth Tests, only 30.10.

Chappell won half his 30 games as Australian captain. Never lost a series. From him, I learned that a captain should lead from the front, not pull the strings from the sidelines. That he should go in first, score big or, if a bowler, take crucial early wickets to inspire his team.

As long as you were successful, loyal to your team-mates and true to yourself, it did not matter who you upset. In Chappell's case, Sir Donald Bradman and the Australian Cricket Board, who would not pay his team what Chappell thought they were worth, officious umpires, and two-bit West Indian administrators who tried to manipulate his team into playing in the rain.

All demanded deference and adherence to convention. All could go get f\*\*\*\*\*.

Ian Chappell doffed his Baggy

Green to no one. He valued honesty, directness and loyalty, and disliked poseurs and bull\*\*\*\*\*. No matter how big your name, you got the time of day only if Chappell believed you deserved it.

Chappell was never afraid to give his opinion, and if necessary, to act on it. Sometimes he was hasty, often he was volatile. Usually he was right.

Two years after that inaugural summer of 1975, the Australians were in England again for another Ashes series. There was something wrong with the team stepping out at Lord's for the Jubilee Test, though. Not only was not Ian Chappell captain, but he was not even playing.

Without their captain, Australia lost its backbone. Get brother, Greg, and you had the lot of them. Boycott returned, Australia could not get him out. England won 3-0.

England won the return leg, in 1978-79, 5-1. But as I told anyone who would listen back then, this

was only because Ian Chappell and the proper Australian team were off playing World Series Cricket for Kerry Packer. Without those champions, back-garden Test matches became a struggle for survival. The underdog would strike back from adversity, or hold out, against a superior foe, until the full-strength side was available.

The following year, aged eight, I had one last glimpse into a magical past. World Series Cricket was over and highlights of England's 1979-80 tour of Australia were on BBC2. Thommo, Bacchus, Lillee and the other heroes of 1975 had returned. And there at No.3, was Ian Chappell, setting everything up; holding everything together. Australia beat England easily. Just like I had said.

It was business as usual in the back garden. 📺

*Crispin Andrews is a freelance writer*

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