

**Teachers Notes**  
**by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright**

**Boomerang and Bat: the  
story of the real First Eleven**  
**Mark Greenwood and Terry Denton**

ISBN 9781743319246

Recommended for ages 7-12 yrs

Older students and adults will also appreciate this book.

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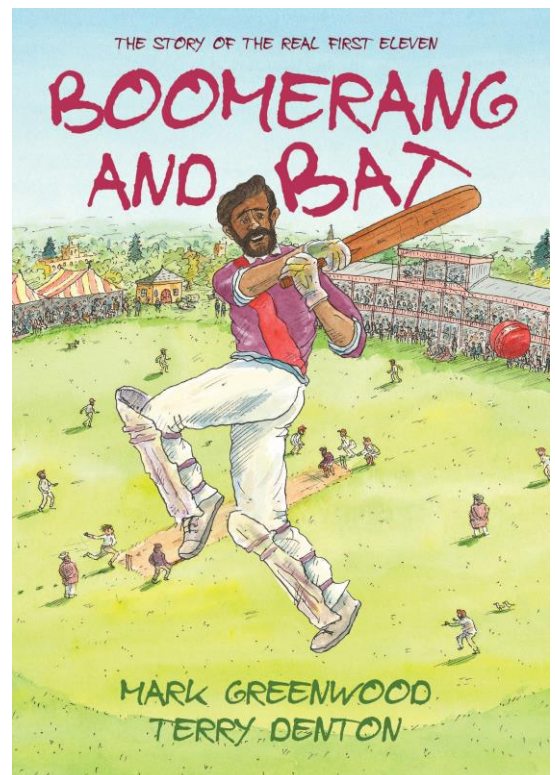
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## INTRODUCTION

'There was no triumphant welcome after the long voyage home.'

In 1868, a group of Aboriginal stockmen became talented cricketers after only a few lessons, and despite being denied permission by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines to travel overseas, they were encouraged by Charles Lawrence to secretly set off on a journey across the world to play against England's best.

Johnny Mullagh was the star of the team; an 'all-rounder' who led his men to victory on these foreign fields. The team wore caps decorated with the emblem of the boomerang and a bat, and they thrilled their audiences (both on and off the field) with their exceptional cricketing skills and also with their Aboriginal talents with boomerang and spear.

The quote above offers a poignant insight into the tragic 'forgetting' which has blighted our history of indigenous people and their achievements; a loss which successive creative and historical writers have attempted to address in texts like this one.

From the creators of *Jandamarra*, this is the remarkable story of the real first eleven.

Johnny Mullagh and his Aboriginal team-mates were denied their names, their country, and their traditions – but they showed the colonial settlers that, just as they had become talented stockmen, they could also become exceptional cricketers; they could take on the best in whatever 'skill' the colonialists called their own.

But the story is more complex than that. For just as they 'performed' as cricketers, they also performed traditional Aboriginal skills whilst on tour. This provided powerful evidence of the dual European and Aboriginal worlds in which they uncomfortably resided. For they possessed superior skills of both kinds, and enjoyed demonstrating both.

The story of the 1868 tour speaks volumes about Australian Indigenous culture in a white society, and this book will encourage any reader to examine this and other historical accounts of white/Indigenous contact more carefully.

## CURRICULUM AREAS

This book might be studied in lower and upper primary, and also lower secondary classrooms. It is relevant in two curriculum areas: **Arts** (Language and Literacy, Visual Literacy, Creative Arts); and **Studies of Society & Environment** (Themes, and Values). Within **SOSE**, it could also be used to explore **Themes** such as:

- The 1868 Aboriginal Team 'First Eleven' Tour
- Indigenous Culture, Identity and History
- National Heroes and Commemorative Celebrations of Australian Identity
- Sporting History

and to explore **Values**. [See notes under individual Curriculum Areas below.]

## ARTS

### LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- This book tells an inspiring story of a group of Aboriginal men mastering a traditional form of English sport in the hallowed grounds of Lords and other English cricket grounds. It is, like *Jandamarra*, which was also created by Greenwood and Denton, a true story in which they have elaborated on the text to create scenes drawn from their

imaginations, so that the story might be termed '**faction**'.

Invite students to tell the story in their own words. Compare these versions, to highlight the different elements of the story which have had the most impact on them.

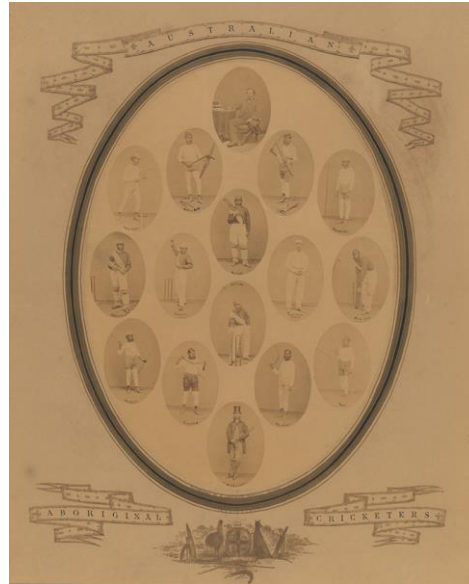
- The story employs a **third person narrative voice** allowing distance from the subject of the narrative.  
Re-write a section in Johnny Mullagh's voice and see how the story changes.
- Read other **life stories**/picture books by Aboriginal people e.g. Bronwyn Bancroft's *Remembering Lionsville* (2013), Ian Abdulla's *As I Grew Older* (1993); Elaine Russell's *A is for Aunty* (2000); Oodgeroo's *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (1993); *Maybe Tomorrow* by Boori Monty Pryor (2010); *Yumba Days* by Herb Wharton (1999).  
Discuss and compare them.
- Read and compare to Neridah McMullin's *Knockabout Cricket* Ill. by Ainsley Walters (One Day Hill, 2015).
- Test your students' comprehension after reading the story by answering simple questions. [See [BLM 1.](#)]

## VISUAL LITERACY

- This work is illustrated in a **picture book format**, using a varied format for each double page spread. Conduct a unit on picture books and encourage students to seek out similar examples of such art. [See [Bibliography.](#)]
- Discuss the **layout and design** of the book, and of the individual double page spreads within it. The format varies from page to page. How does this effect the reading of the book?
- The **title page** depicts a Clipper ship with some of the 'First Eleven' at the prow. This is quite an ironic image as the ship is taking some of Australia's first inhabitants to England aboard a ship like those which previously delivered their colonial masters (and oppressors) to our shores. What else does this image suggest? What feelings or themes might it evoke for a reader?
- Encourage students to **read for the 'sub-text'** and observe how the pictures and the text work together; how images illuminate meaning, complimenting and enriching the text. Examine several images in the book for their possible meanings. For example, the final frame depicts Johnny beside a billabong. What does it suggest?
- The artist's images are executed in **pen and ink drawings overlaid with painting**. Discuss these techniques and the artist's choice of mediums with your students and then encourage them to create a picture in the same style. [See also [BLM 2.](#)]
- What **colours** are particularly evident in this book?
- How does Terry Denton **convey emotions** in his images?
- Discuss the **format, and use of perspective and spatial relationship** in this visual text, in individual **double page spreads**.
- Examine the **front and back cover images**, and discuss their impact on reading the story. For example, on the front cover, Johnny Mullagh is depicted as if high above the other players on the Lord's Cricket Ground. On the back, a scene in which the Aboriginal team are clearly outplaying the local settlers is depicted. Read too, the text on the back cover, and discuss with reference to the topics raised in **SOSE (Themes)** below.
- **The front endpapers** depict a drawing of the team superimposed over a map of the world showing the journey they took from Australia to England. The **back endpapers** depict a series of oval images of each of the players (and the captain) with a caption

describing their Aboriginal and European names, key achievements or particular skills. These act as a framing narrative for the contents of the book. What do they suggest to you?

**Compare** the back endpapers to this display of photographs, below.



*This photo collage was created by Peter Dawson of Hamilton in Victoria to promote the 1868 Aboriginal cricket team tour. Photo: National Museum of Australia.*

- Create a **comic** version of one of the incidents in this book. [See [BLM 4](#) for template.] For suitable templates, consult webpages such as 'Comic Strip Layouts' <<http://donnayoung.org/art/comics.htm>>  
How important is it for author and artist to visit the actual locations depicted in the story? [See, for example, the photograph of Johnny's Waterhole below, which is illustrated by Terry on the last page of the book. Compare his illustration to this photograph.]



- **Examine** some contemporary Indigenous Australian writers' and illustrators' works and **discuss** the art techniques used in them. [See [Bibliography](#).]

## CREATIVE ARTS

This story might be used to encourage students to create their own version of the story in a range of styles, formats, and mediums, and in a range of other creative arts such as acting, improvisation, music and dance.

- **Listen** to 'From Little Things Big Things Grow' by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody. Research its origins. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From\\_Little\\_Things\\_Big\\_Things\\_Grow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From_Little_Things_Big_Things_Grow)> Read the book based on this song. Discuss its meaning. Relate it to *Boomerang and Bat*.
- Have the class **create a mural** on a wall in your classroom; invite students to create different panels telling Johnny Mullagh's story. The mural might be painted on butchers' paper and then displayed.
- Secondary students might **watch classic films about white encounters with Indigenous culture** such as 'The Tracker' (2002) directed by Rolf de Heer; 'Walkabout' (1971) directed by Nicola Roeg; *Yolngu Boy* (2001) directed by Stephen Johnson; *Samson and Delilah* (2009) directed by Warwick Thornton.
- Secondary students might **watch** David Bowie's iconic 'Let's Dance' (1983) video. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2HWuR2mq5M>> What does it suggest about relations between white and Indigenous Australia?

## STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

### SOSE (THEMES)

#### The 1868 Aboriginal Team 'First Eleven' Tour

The story of this 'legendary' team is one of triumph and tragedy.

- Aboriginal people were routinely given Anglicised or European names by their colonial 'masters'. **Johnny Mullagh** (13 August 1841–14 August 1891)'s real name was Unaarrimin, but his European surname was drawn from the name of the station where he worked. He was born, a member of the Jardwadjali people, about 10 miles north of Harrow, Victoria, and learned to play cricket whilst working on the adjoining Pine Hills agricultural property. He was given the name "Black Johnny" to distinguish him from a "White Johnny". Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre <[http://harrow.org.au/?page\\_id=270](http://harrow.org.au/?page_id=270)> His friends were given station names such as Tiger, Sundown, Mosquito, Cuzens, Bullocky, Dick-a-Dick, King Cole, Red Cap, and Charley Dumas. When Johnny (Unaarrimin) became a member of the First Eleven he toured using this European name, as did his team-mates.

#### **What might this change of name have indicated to these men?**

- Perceived wisdom would suggest that Johnny Mullagh's tour of England was a triumph: *Spectators considered him the equal of any English batter... Few contemporary cricketers better merited the title of all-rounder. His performances were impressive enough for him to join the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) as a professional, although he did not remain there for long*  
(Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre <[http://harrow.org.au/?page\\_id=270](http://harrow.org.au/?page_id=270)> )

But Sampson's research reveals another story:

*In summary, the tour of England might not have constituted for Mullagh the shining moment which is indicated by public transcripts. Despite the absence of squatters, sheep and colonial governments, he had abundant opportunity to learn that a different range of hardship, humiliation, and exploitation accompanied the life of an indigenous performer in England. Judging from his pattern of behaviour, his response would have been to turn his back and return to circumstances in which he could regain self-sufficiency.*

(Sampson, 2000, p.360)

For Johnny Mullagh remained a divided figure when he returned home; working for European bosses as a stockman; used to wearing European clothes; and plagued by illnesses that stemmed from 'first contact'.

Following the tour, Johnny Mullagh (Unaarrimin) and Twopenny (Murrungunarriman), both continued to play cricket.

*Mullagh never played intercolonial cricket but he represented Victoria in 1879 against the All England 11, scoring 36. Until the 1890 season he played regularly with the Harrow Club, a member of the Murray Cup competition. His prowess apparently overcame racial barriers and he was widely respected.*

(Mulvaney, 1974)

In short, he didn't play at the level he might have. He died one day after his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in a rabbit's shack at Pine Hills Station. Read more about Johnny Mullagh's life in this sensitive article written on the second centenary of his death: Sengupta, Arunahba 'Johnny 'Unaarrimin' Mullagh — the greatest Aboriginal cricketer of his day' *Cricket Country* August 13, 2014 <<http://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/johnny-unaarrimin-mullagh-the-greatest-aboriginal-cricketer-of-his-day-170788>>

**Discuss** Johnny Mullagh's achievements.

- Johnny Mullagh played 47 matches on the English tour:

*At his best against fast bowling, Mullagh batted high in the order and completed 71 forceful innings, averaging 23.65 from 1698 runs (94 highest score). Underarm bowling was then optional but he favoured the round-arm delivery, with a 'free wristy style'. His 1877 overs included 831 maidens and numbered twice those delivered by any other Aborigine. He is credited with 245 wickets for an average of 10, although he captured 257 wickets. In addition he often kept wickets. His performances won him a cup at Reading and sundry monetary presentations, but his great match was at Burton-upon-Trent: he top scored with 42, took 4 for 59, caught a fifth and as wicket-keeper stumped the other five.*

Mulvaney, D.J. 'Johnny Mullagh (1841–1891)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mullagh-johnny-4267>>

Out of the forty-seven matches they played in England, the Aboriginal team drew nineteen, won fourteen and lost fourteen. These statistics aren't mentioned in the book.

**Are they important? Is winning important – or is something deeper more important?**

[See also figures from the 'Graham Ledger' compiled by George W Graham, one of the team's investors, in the Appendices of Harcourt & Mulvaney, 2005) for other financial statistics and facts gleaned from match reports in newspapers whilst on tour.]

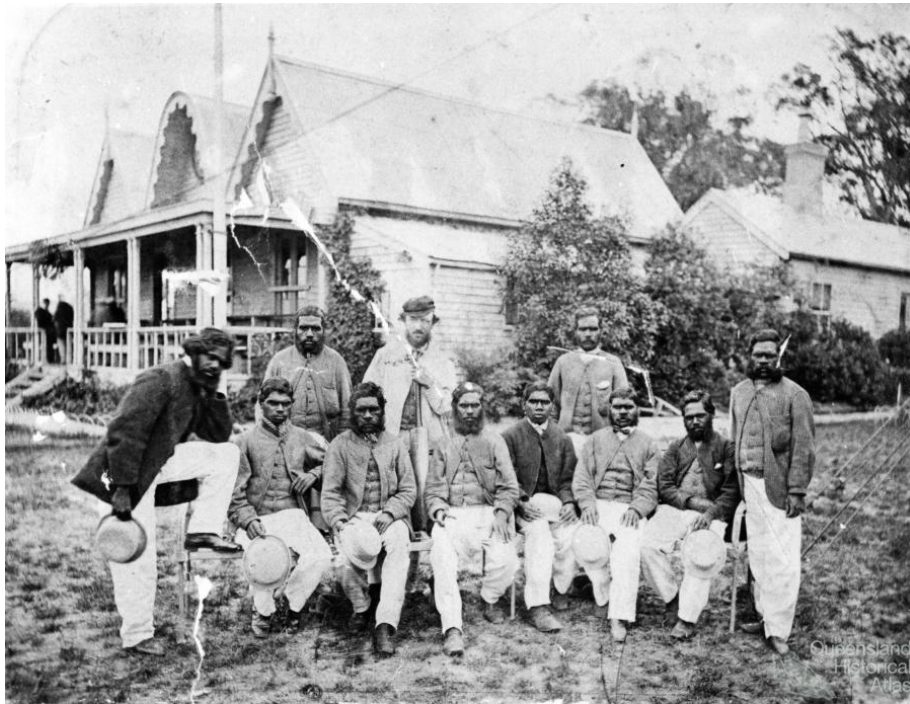


- The *Hamilton Spectator* described Johnny Mullagh in his obituary as “the [W.G.] Grace of Aboriginal cricketers”. The inscription on his tomb in Harrow reads: 'HERE LIES JOHNNY MULLAGH (ABORIGINAL) WORLD FAMED CRICKETER'. The memory of his prodigious sporting talent is a reminder of the importance of role models and the value of sport. Invite students to **write** a better epitaph.
- **Examine** these two photos of Johnny Mullagh and **describe** what they suggest to you about his character.



Photo (left): Wikipedia <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny\\_Mullagh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_Mullagh)>  
 Photo (right): Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre <[http://harrow.org.au/?page\\_id=270](http://harrow.org.au/?page_id=270)>

- The Aboriginal cricketers were the first sports team to represent Australia overseas. The text excerpt: *'There was no triumphant welcome after the long voyage home.'* is true today. Why have the real First Eleven never received the recognition they deserved and why are so many Australians unaware of their achievements when Australians generally hold sporting achievement (particularly on the world stage) in such high esteem? [See photo on following page, and invite students to **write a response** to it.]



*The Aboriginal cricket team of 1866, which formed the nucleus of the team which toured England in 1868. (Tom Wills was then the captain, prior to Charles Lawrence's captaincy.)*

*Back row Left to right: Tarpot, T.W. Wills - Capt (standing), Johnny Mullagh (Unaarrimin) (standing). Front row Left to right: King Cole (Bripumyarrimin) (with leg on chair), Dick-a-Dick (Jumgumjenanuke), Jellico, Peter (Arrahmunyarrimin), Red Cap (Brimbunyah) Harry Rose, Bullocky (Bullchanach), Johnny Cuzens (Zellanach)(standing). Absent in photo are: Sundown (Ballrinjarrimin), Jim Crow (Lytejebillijun) Mosquito (Grongarrong), Tiger (Bonnibarngheet), Twopenny (Jarrawuk, or more commonly Murrumgunarrimin) and Charley Dumas (Pripumurraman). Tarpot, Wills and Harry Rose did not tour England. (Jellico died the year before.) Twopenny also left the team, but another man of the same name was appointed to join the tour.*

*(Harcourt & Mulvaney 2005, p.46).*

*Photo: National Library of Australia*

- The story of how the team got to England is a saga in itself. On 16 September 1867 they left Edenhope and journeyed by American covered wagon to Queenscliffe, playing matches along the way. In order to escape the restrictions on travel enforced by the Aboriginal Protection Board, they secretly boarded the *Rangarita* to Sydney from which, on 8 February 1868, they sailed for England on the *Parramatta*.  
**Read** about this journey further.
- Despite promises, the team members received 'not one halfpenny' (Mallett, 2002, p. 147) for their services in England.

*Nineteenth century Australia witnessed severe discrimination against indigenous peoples. Many of those chosen to tour England were left to obscure futures and early deaths once the venture had concluded. One Player, King Cole, died on the trip and of those who returned, seven spent time on a reserve, two vanished and the fate of two others is not clear from the surviving records.*

Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre <[http://harrow.org.au/?page\\_id=270](http://harrow.org.au/?page_id=270)>

Two players (Jim Crow and Sundown) became ill and returned home on the *Parramatta* in August 1868, before the tour finished. The rest of the team returned



to Sydney on the *Dunbar Castle* on 4 February 1869. Despite being lauded for his gentlemanly prowess, reports of Johnny's funeral in 1891 reveal underlying racial prejudice:

*Although the service was performed by an Anglican clergyman he could not be buried in a consecrated area of the cemetery. On his death certificate his name appears as 'John Mullah' and both his denomination and rank are recorded as 'Aboriginal'. This may explain why his grave was set fifty metres away from his contemporaries.*

(Whimpress, 1994: p.97)

Johnny Mullah, like his team members, was a figure caught between two worlds. All but one had passed away, when Tarpot died on 17 April 1900, the last survivor. **Research** the fate of each player. See Ashley Mallett's *The Black Lords of Summer* (UQP, 2002) for details.

- The following quote is included on the National Museum of Australia website:

*They are the first native Australians to have visited this country on such a novel expedition, but it must not be inferred that they are savages; on the contrary ... They are perfectly civilized, having been brought up in the bush to agricultural pursuits ... With respect to their prowess as cricketers – that will be conclusively determined by their first public match.*

The Sporting Life, London, 16 May 1868

<[http://www.nma.gov.au/online\\_features/defining\\_moments/featured/aboriginal\\_cricket\\_team](http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/aboriginal_cricket_team)>

### **What does it reveal about attitudes to Indigenous people in 1868?**

- The 1868 team wore outlandish garb'... 'decked in white flannel trousers, military red shirts with diagonal blue flannel sashes, blue elastic belts and neckties, white linen collars ... Coloured caps were chosen before the team left Edenhope' (Harcourt & Mulvaney 2005, p. 43) Each player's cap was a different colour. 'Each cap bore an emblem of a silver boomerang and a bat, and the players also wore a sash of their own colour to facilitate identification.' (Harcourt & Mulvaney 2005, p. 43) **Discuss** the symbolism evident in the caps worn by the team.



*Aboriginal Cricketers in England 1868 with C. Lawrence & W. Shepherd as Manager and Captain. [picture.]  
Photo: National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an13938309.*

- Although the 'baggy green' cap is a national icon, the First Eleven's cap has fallen from public attention – there appears to be not one of the original 1868 caps in any museum or collection. **Design** a new Boomerang and Bat logo for the caps.

- One of the fascinating aspects of the 1868 tour was that the team members also performed tricks with boomerangs, shields, and stockwhips, in breaks between matches. They were proficient in using both the traditional Aboriginal hunting implement (e.g. boomerang) and the English sporting equipment (bat and ball). They played cricket but also performed traditional skills (such as throwing boomerangs, dancing, high-jumping) whilst on tour. Sampson (2000) says of Dick-a-Dick's performances that: 'His ball-dodging then, was neither accidental, nor was it a direct re-presentation of a traditional activity. Using warrior skills and an imaginative appreciation of opportunities arising from the English expectations of primitive aborigines, he artfully reshaped an Aboriginal practice into show business for white audiences.' (p. 361)

Whilst Sampson's research focuses on this 'performance of Aboriginality' in colonial society and discourse, others take a different view of this topic, saying that 'it is too easy to dismiss this tour as something akin to a circus. That cricket had always been associated with running and jumping and the long throw, years before the conception of the Aboriginal tour, gives the after-stumps sports much credence.' (Mallett, 2002, p.97)

**Research and debate** these two views.

- In 2004, an Australian auction item of Twopenny's boomerang was recorded. (Meacham 2004) But little tour memorabilia remained until many of the team's boomerangs and spears were recently uncovered in a museum in Exeter, UK. [See Gye, Hugo 'The Aboriginal cricket team who toured the UK long before the Ashes and impressed crowds with bat, ball and BOOMERANGS' *Daily Mail* 21 July, 2015 <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3169373/The-visiting-Aborigine-cricket-team-amazed-Victorian-crowds-bat-ball-boomerang.html>>]

**What does such an important discovery represent in terms of our history?**

- Johnny Mullagh did not put up with racism. Compare his reaction (in the book) to not being invited to afternoon tea at York, with the controversial stance against racism made by Sydney Swans AFL champion player Adam Goodes, Australian of the Year 2014, when he refused to play football.  
**Compare** the treatment of Johnny and his team-mates to the treatment of Goodes, who was not only booed for his acceptance speech, but also on the football ground.
- Why did Aboriginal people on stations like/start playing cricket in the first place? What drew them to the sport?
- Read the poem '*The Aboriginal Cricketer Mid-19th century*' by Les A. Murray <<http://www.lesmurray.org/fulldresscricket.htm>> which first appeared in *The Full Dress* (National Gallery of Australia, 2002).  
**Discuss** the poem and **compare** a batsman who faces a cricket ball metaphorically with how we should face our fears.  
**Examine** the portrait (which appears on Murray's website) and inspired the poem: '*Portrait of Nannultera, a young Poonindie cricketer*', 1854, by John Michael Crossland, c.1854. [Source: Rex Nan Kivell Collection National Library of Australia.]
- The trip by boat lasted three months, and the team was in England for five months.  
**Discuss** how this journey must have affected the players – being away from 'country' – and also how they were affected by the death of Bripumyarrimin (King Cole).

In the book, Johnny says: 'We're sick for our country'.

**What did he mean by this?**

- **Charles Lawrence (1828–1916)** took the men to England, and captained the team, but they had had another coach prior to that by the name of **Tom (Thomas Wentworth) Wills (1835–1880)** who was said to have not only revolutionised cricket, but also co-invented Australian Rules Football. In fact, there is some evidence

that his observation of Aboriginal games may have resulted in the invention of AFL. **Research** the role which both men played in this story, and in Australian sporting history generally. [Read Ashley Mallett's *The Black Lords of Summer* (UQP, 2002) for details.]

- One of the fascinating stories tangential to this one is the rescue of three children – Jane, Isaac and Frank Duff – who became lost after they had wandered from Spring Hill Station in Western Victoria, on 14 August 1864. Jane's stepfather, a shepherd named John Duff, sounded the alarm, but their rescue, nine days and eight nights later, was actually engineered not by the over thirty white men who scoured the bush, but by three Aboriginal trackers – Dick-a Dick, Red Cap, and another man – called in by an Alexander Wilson after the search had proved unsuccessful; the first two, of course, toured England with The First Eleven. Both Mallett (2002, pp.1–3) and Harcourt & Mulvaney (2005, pp.18–20) record the fact that their contribution has been overlooked. The incident was immortalised in an image and story which appeared in the Victorian School Reader Grade IV, and Jane Duff became a heroine for her self-sacrifice in protecting her siblings. Research this incident and the historical attitudes it reveals. [See also Webb (2014) and Torney (1999).]  
**View** the powerful film *One Night The Moon*, a musical with Paul Kelly, which tells a similar story. Dir. Rachel Perkins, 2001 [57 mins.]
- *The First Eleven*, a documentary produced by Christina Hindhaugh and James McCaughey, 2003, is available from the Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre, and students may find it a useful catalyst for discussion.

### Indigenous Culture, Identity and History

- Aboriginal stockmen like Johnny and his team-mates were often employed on stations for low wages, and lost not only their names, but also their cultural traditions and kinship connections.  
**How did such treatment affect generations of Aboriginal people?**  
**How does it reflect on Australia as a nation?**  
**When did the law recognise Aboriginal people's rights to equal pay and recognition for their work?**  
**Research** Vincent Lingiari's organisation of a 'walk-off' by Aboriginal workers at Wave Hill Station in 1966, which contributed to changes such as the recognition of Aboriginal land rights or claim to their country. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent\\_Lingiari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_Lingiari)>
- Aboriginal stockmen's skills were legendary. **Read** stories about these skills in texts such as *Unbranded* by Herb Wharton (UQP, 2000) and sites such as: 'Aboriginal people and the Cattle Industry' *Aboriginal Art Online* <<http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/pastoral.php>>
- Johnny was a member of the Jarwadjali people. 'Jarwadjali' *Wikipedia* <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jarwadjali>> This article reveals the tragic history of massacres visited on these people during colonial invasion.  
**Research** this topic further.
- This book is dedicated 'In memory of Bripumyarrimin (King Cole)' who died during the 1868 tour. He was one of several Aboriginal people befriended by colonists in the nineteenth century, some of whom were taken to England (Bennelong) and others who were 'adopted' and then abandoned (Matthina), and who died in desperate circumstances. Revisionist historians are unearthing many stories of Aboriginal people whose lives were dramatically altered, and who were denied their rightful place in Australian history.  
**Choose** another figure such as Jandamarra, Yagan or Pemulwuy and **research** their life stories. See for example, 'Aboriginal Heroes: Episodes in the Colonial Landscape'

by Dale Kerwin <<http://www.qhatlas.com.au/content/aboriginal-heroes-episodes-colonial-landscape>>

- Stories are told in Aboriginal culture in order to explore cultural traditions and kinship structures. **Read** more about the topic and **discuss** in class. See for example: Aboriginal Kinship Systems <[http://austhrutime.com/kinship\\_systems.htm](http://austhrutime.com/kinship_systems.htm)>  
or: 'Australian Aboriginal Kinship' *Wikipedia*  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian\\_Aboriginal\\_kinship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aboriginal_kinship)>  
or: Central Lands Council *Kinship & Skin Names*  
<<http://www.clc.org.au/articles/info/aboriginal-kinship>>

### **National Heroes and Commemorative Celebrations of Australian Identity**

- Sampson (2000) has suggested that commemorations of the 1868 tour have tended to focus on the triumph of their cricket playing and underestimated the fact that: 'Commemorative representation has elided complexities of the tour by minimising its central element, racial exhibition, which alone made it a commercially attractive proposition.' (p.296) This implies that, like other such celebrations such as ANZAC Day and Australia Day, the commemoration is a complex elision of fact and fiction.  
**Discuss.**
- The Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre in Harrow was opened in 2004.  
**Is Johnny Mullagh a national hero, despite the fact that his history is not widely known? Should it be better celebrated?**  
Have your students research, discuss and then debate this topic.  
**What defines a 'national hero'?**
- In 1988, a re-enactment of the 1968 tour was captained by John Maguire and managed by Mark Ella, and toured many of the venues visited by the original team. (Mallett, 2002, p.vii)  
**Research** that commemorative tour.

### **Sporting History**

- **Research** the history of cricket in Australia, and the part that the First Eleven played in that history. It is incredible to discover that as early as 1868 Aboriginal people had mastered this English sport and had been invited to participate.  
Did their playing influence the sport?
- **Research** the part played by other Aboriginal cricket players such as Eddie Gilbert, Jeff Cook or Jack Marsh, or other Aboriginal sportspeople, Cathy Freeman, Yvonne Goolagong Cawley, Lionel Rose, Tony Mundine, Mark Ella, and Adam Goodes.
- What role does cricket play in representing Australia's national identity?
- With the popularity of cricket as a national game, **why** are there no Indigenous cricketers in the Australian test team, and very few (if any) in state teams – particularly when we consider the amazing contribution Indigenous sportsmen make to AFL and Rugby. This also applies to the Australian Women's Cricket team.  
[See Ramsey, Andrew 'More Focus on Indigenous Talent' *Cricket.com.au* 20 December 2015 <<http://www.cricket.com.au/news/feature/indigenous-cricketers-targeted-by-cricket-australia-faith-thomas/2015-12-20>> and Cricket Australia's *National Indigenous Cricket Strategy for Game and Market Development 2014/15-2017/18* Available as a PDF on their website.]
- Harcourt & Mulvaney (2005) point out that changes in bowling and batting style in the nineteenth century were being made to the game in England, prior to the 1868 tour, so that 'during this critical decade of change, the Aborigines were at the forefront of

developments, regularly playing cricket for five months.' They thus arrived home with skills which Australian players were impressed by. Johnny Cuzens, for example, was able to combine under arm, round arm and over arm bowling in his 'windmill' delivery to great effect. The famous W.B. Grace was also revolutionising batting techniques. Research these aspects of cricket play.

## **SOSE (VALUES)**

According to: 'Teaching Values Education: An Intrinsic Case Study' Stephen Connolly & Sorrel Penn-Edwards *Griffith University, Centre for Applied Language, Literacy & Communication Studies*,<sup>1</sup> key values to be studied in the curriculum include:

1. Care and compassion: Care for self and others
2. Doing your best: Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
3. Fair go: Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
4. Freedom: Enjoy all the rights and privileges of Australian citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control, and stand up for the rights of others
5. Honesty and trustworthiness: Be honest, sincere and seek the truth
6. Integrity: Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
7. Respect: Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
8. Responsibility: Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
9. Understanding, tolerance and inclusion: Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

**How does *Boomerang and Bat* reveal any of these values?**

## **CONCLUSION**

This book tells a fascinating, uplifting, and yet tragic story about Indigenous people's achievements, and about the challenges they face to be recognised. Johnny Mullagh and his team-mates were heroes in our cricketering history, and deserve recognition. This book addresses that gap in our sporting history.

However, it also reveals the delicate balancing act which Indigenous achievers play in an essentially racist society. For the team were expected to play not just cricket but also to perform as Aboriginal warriors. They did not go on to fame and glory, nor reap riches from their success; but instead returned to their old lives and to relative anonymity.

This is an important piece of history because it reveals the complexity of white/Indigenous Australian relations, and the continuing difficulties we face in confronting the harsh realities of our Indigenous past, and continuing challenges in the present.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/2496/31028.pdf?sequence=1>



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## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mark Greenwood's** award winning books examining history, myths and legends have been published and honored internationally.

*Simpson and His Donkey* was a CBCA Honour Book and a USBBY Outstanding International Book. *Jandamarra*, illustrated by Terry Denton, was shortlisted for the CBCA Eve Pownall Award for 2014, the NSW Premier's Literary Awards Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature and the *West Australian* Young Readers' Book Awards.

Mark often teams with his wife, illustrator Frané Lessac, to produce books that promote an understanding of multicultural issues, such as *Drummer Boy of John John*, *Magic Boomerang*, *Outback Adventure*, and *Our Big Island*.

Their recent books include *The Mayflower* and *Midnight – the story of a light horse*.

Mark's new release in 2016 is *Boomerang and Bat*, illustrated by Terry Denton.

Visit Mark's website for further information:

<<http://www.markgreenwood.com.au/>>

and his author page on Facebook:

<<https://www.facebook.com/Mark-Greenwood-494532914050136/?fref=ts>>

See also: 'Meet the Author & Illustrator Mark Greenwood & Frané Lessac' *Literacy, families and learning* <<http://trevorcairney.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/meet-author-illustrator-mark-greenwood.html>>

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Terry Denton** is one of Australia's busiest literary creative forces and his work as a writer and illustrator can be found in popular children's titles such as the *Gasp!* series (now an animated TV series), Terry Denton's *Bumper Book of Silly Stuff to Do* and the *Wombat and Fox* series. His work with writer Andy Griffiths on the *Just!* series, *The Bad Books*, *What Body Part is That?* and *The Cat on the Mat is Flat* is universally loved, as is the Denton/Griffiths epic *Treehouse* series. Terry is also a fine artist exhibiting around inner Melbourne.

Terry has illustrated more than 100 books, twenty of which he has also written. He won both the Multicultural Book of the Year and the Best Designed Picture Book in 1993. In 2003 and 2008 he was shortlisted for the Aurealis Award. His work has also won more than 50 children's choice awards throughout Australia. In 2008 *Just Shocking!* won all six children's choice awards in Australia. He has also been shortlisted by the CBCA many times. Visit his websites for further information: <[http://www.terrydenton.com/terrys\\_website/Welcome.html](http://www.terrydenton.com/terrys_website/Welcome.html)>

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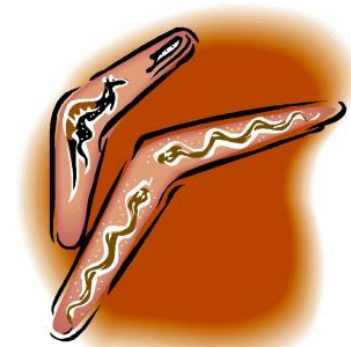
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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THESE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, has published widely on children's and YA literature, and in 2011 was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA (National) Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.

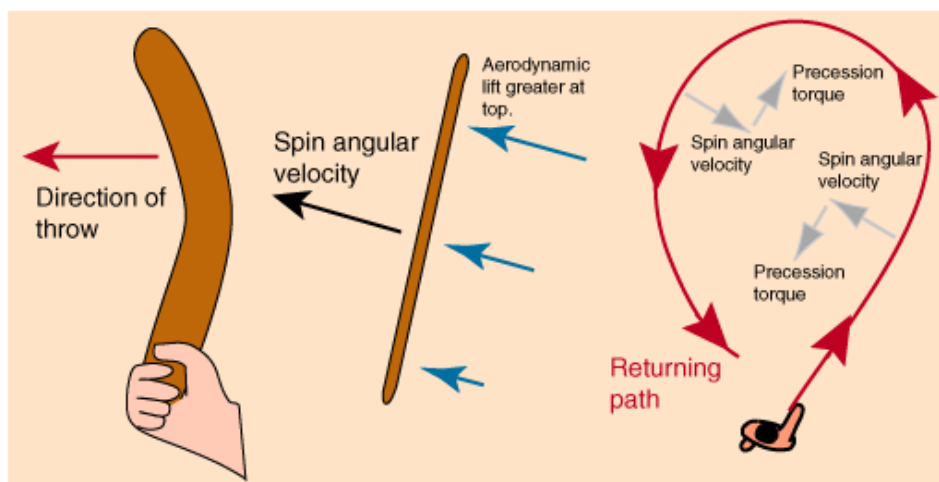


## COMPREHENSION QUIZ



### Questions:

1. What is Johnny Mullagh's Aboriginal name?
2. Where did Johnny and his friends go hunting?
3. Who encouraged and took the team to England?
4. What ship took them to England?
5. What famous cricket ground did they play at in England?
6. What is the traditional name of the team member who died in England?
7. Why was Johnny Mullagh offended in York?
8. How many matches did they play in England?
9. What happened to the men when they returned home?
10. Where did Johnny end his days?



**Answers:** 1. Unaarrimin. 2. Lake Wallace. 9. Charles Lawrence. 4. Parramatta. 5. Lords. 6. Bripumyarrimin (King Cole). 7. The team were denied service in the luncheon tent. 8. Forty-seven. 9. They went back to the stations where they worked. 10. In a rabbit's shack at the back of Pine Hills.

## **FIRST ELEVEN**

Enlarge to A3 this extraordinary painting of the team, and use it as the centrepiece in a collaged response to the ideas suggested in these notes.



*The First Australian Cricket Team to Tour England 1868, image by Dave Thomas, 2001.*

## STORY STARTER

**Write a short story using these images as inspiration.**

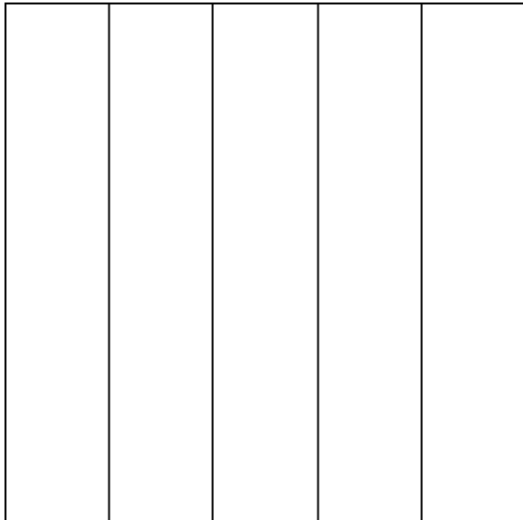


### **2. Story starter featuring Johnny Mullagh:**

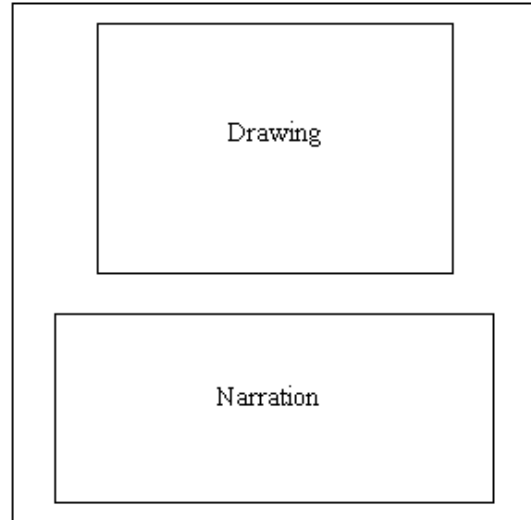
The field is set. The bowler turns. Johnny looks his way. Runs were there for the taking...

## MAKE YOUR OWN COMIC

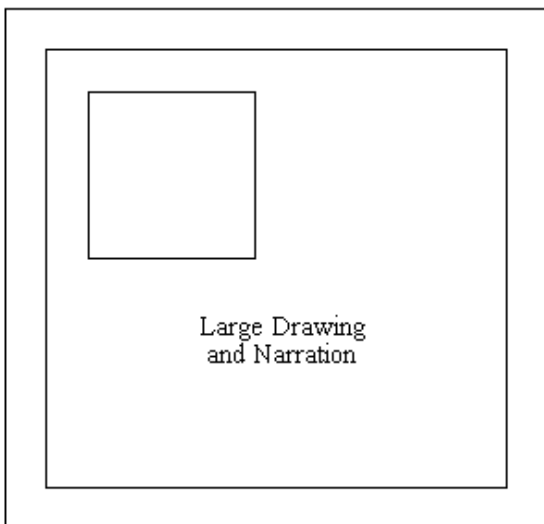
Design a comic strip based on an incident in this book.



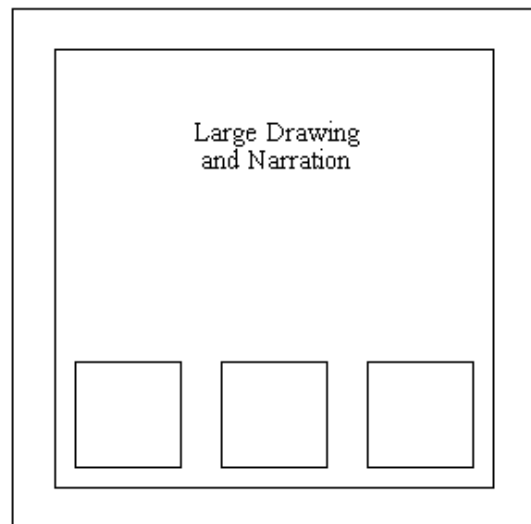
Contiguous Panel



Text-heavy Panel



Insert Panel



Meta-Panel