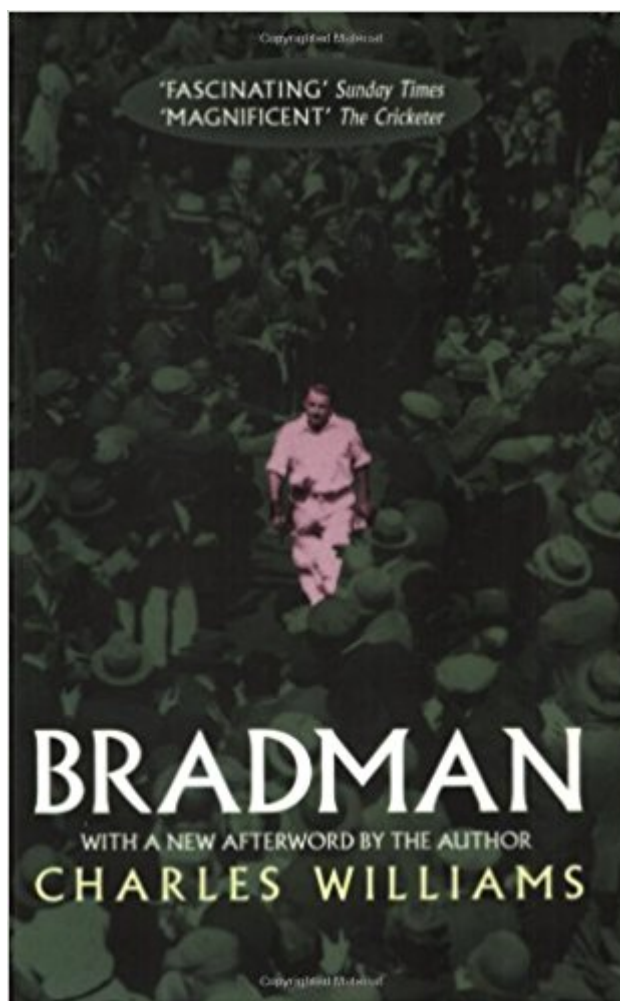


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# Bradman



## Synopsis

Bradman's is a masterly portrait of cricket's supreme batsman and Australia's greatest hero. Uniquely among biographers of Don Bradman, Charles Williams sets his subject's cricketing achievements within the context of a crucial period in the history of modern Australia, a time when, as the country felt her way towards something that the world would recognize as "nationhood," Bradman became a focus for national aspirations and a figure of unique status. Williams' story is as much about Australia as it is a great Australian.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fascinating SUNDAY TIMES Magnificent THE CRICKETER It would be stupid to say I enjoyed or agreed with every word, every sentence, and every nuance, but I honestly believe it is a splendid production SIR DONALD BRADMAN Sir Donald Bradman was not just the best cricketer ever, but the best sportsman the world has seen Simon Barnes, The TIMES

Charles Williams - Lord Williams of Elvel - was made a Labour Life Peer in 1985 and successively spoke in the House of Lords on Trade and Industry, Defence and Industry. He is the biographer of Charles de Gaulle (The Last Great Frenchman) and cricketer Donald Bradman.

a must for any cricket lover however perhaps more importantly it gives a insight into what life was like in Australia particularly during his playing days.

Charles Williams has produced a masterpiece in his biography of Sir Donald Bradman, the world's greatest cricketer. Don't be put off if you know nothing about the game of cricket, this requires no special insider understanding and it isn't all about cricket anyway. It is a beautifully written, well-paced and insightful account of an extraordinarily talented sportsman thrust into a demanding role as hero and national icon during a tumultuous time in Australian history and world affairs. It is a coming of age story not just of the shy, young "boy from Bowral", but also of an entire nation. The 1930s were difficult years and Bradman carried on his frail shoulders the hopes of a small, divided people living in a large, distant continent struggling to create an identity within a larger Empire itself riven by economic, class and political tensions. Williams captures it all with impeccable research and commendable objectivity for an Englishman given the intense rivalry of the contest between England and Australia for the most famous trophy in cricket (the Ashes) every other year. His account of the infamous Bodyline tour makes riveting reading as does his sympathetic treatment of Bradman's personal travails during this time, including serious and persistent health problems. Reading this book one is struck by how much has changed in 80 years - everything seems so rudimentary from transport and technology (radio was a novelty) to training and tactics in cricket. This makes Bradman's prodigious achievements all the more amazing. Few of his individual records still stand, but his test average of 99.94 put him and has kept him in a league of his own. There can be no other figure who is his equal in international sport. Truly he deserved the epithet given to Xenophon two and a half thousand years ago with which Williams ends this remarkable account of a remarkable life - "he achieved things that no mortal man had achieved before".

When Nelson Mandela commenced his long walk to freedom, just over a decade ago, he wanted to know whether Sir Donald Bradman, Australia's only cricketing knight, was still alive. A few days ago 'The Don' celebrated his 92nd birthday (born 27/8/08) and despite finishing his Test cricket career in 1948 is still regarded as the greatest Australian. Bradman's name is synonymous with fair play, modesty and excellence. His Test average of 99.94 per innings is double that of most other top-line batsmen (Graeme Pollock of South Africa is second, with an average of 60.97, and I deem myself as very fortunate in seeing his best score of 274 at Durban in 1970). British Labour peer, Lord Charles Williams, has written a superb book which places Bradman's outstanding feats in the context of Australia growing-up in the world. As Williams notes, the heroes of most other nations are symbolised by the warlike spirit of nationalism. However, Australia has never had a civil war or national revolution, nor has it ever been at war with near-neighbours. Thus, for Australians sport has become an integral part of politics and Aussie sporting champions achieved a status several

notches higher than elsewhere. Accordingly, Bradman's deeds against an English 'army' clad in white was not to be compared to Babe Ruth's baseball feats (and the pair did meet in 1932) but rather to George Washington's victories against the British redcoats! ( yes, I am exaggerating and The Don would have cringed at such suggestions but it simply helps to explain why opinion polls of today invariably rate him as the greatest Australian-not just the best cricketer or sportsman). Williams taps into the Australia psyche brilliantly and records just how important Don Bradman was to a fledgling Depression-era nation at the end of the world. Bradman and champion racehorse Phar Lap gave Australians something to cheer about as both proved themselves against the great nations of the world ( Phar Lap won brilliantly at his only start in the USA before dying in his paddock). For anyone remotely interested in Australia or cricket this book is required reading. UPDATE (27/8/01) Sir Donald Bradman would have been 93 today-but unfortunately he died on 25 February 2001, an event that almost brought the nation to a standstill, causing much introspection about the man, his deeds, and his influence on the nation.

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