Clem Jones Oral History Project

Interviewee: Greg Chappell

Interviewer: Lindsay Marshall

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LM: This is an interview with Greg Chappell for the Clem Jones Oral History Project. The interviewer is myself Lindsay Marshall. It's being interviewed on Tuesday 7 February, 2023. I'm interviewing Greg from the Clinton Jones Office at East Brisbane and Greg is at his home in Adelaide, South Australia.

Greg thanks very much for doing this and being part of the Oral History Project.

GC: No that's fine Lindsay. I'm happy to be part of it.

LM: Now look your life's story is pretty well told in Australian sporting history and the public information that is out there about your life and your sporting career. But if we could just have a very brief discussion of your early life in Adelaide. What were the influences that led you and your brothers, Ian and Trevor into becoming professional cricketers? Was it a matter of family influence, family history with the game or was it something that was inculcated in you at school? What were the biggest factors?

GC: Oh my father was the biggest factor in the whole thing. He was a very keen cricketer. He played first-grade cricket Adelaide, he was a state baseballer for South Australia. So cricket and baseball were probably the two main sports that he encouraged us to play but also Australian Rules Football. I played some basketball but he just, he was very keen

on sport and he got us interested from an early age. I mean by the time I was born, Ian was well and truly down the path even as a five year old. He's five years older than me, so he was already going to cricket coaching apart from the coaching that our father gave him.

So I sort of just was born into a family where cricket was already well and truly established. Our mother had grown up in a sporting family. Her father, Vic Richardson, had represented and captained Australia at cricket. He'd captained South Australia at football and about five other sports he'd played for South Australia. So it was very much a sporting environment that I came into. I had a bat in my hand as early as I can remember, a mini bat. Certainly my earliest memories would be around two years of age, batting in the hallway at home. Dad or Ian throwing something to hit.

Usually, in the early days, I think it was a marble or a ping-pong ball and hitting them with this miniature bat. I mean we were catching from the time we were aware our father was throwing things to us. Only in hindsight I realised that he was a pretty good coach, he knew what he was doing. He taught me to catch by throwing the ball from behind me up against a wall because he found that if he threw it facing me I would look at him and wouldn't look at the ball. So he stood behind me so I couldn't see him and therefore I had to watch the ball hit the wall and came towards me.

Ian was my hero from an early age. He was doing all the things that I wanted to do, not least of all playing cricket. I followed him around like the playful puppy dog, but being five years older, he didn't really want a younger brother hanging around, he wanted to play with his mates. So he'd usually send me home, send me packing and until one day, I reckon I was nine years of age, he obviously ran out of mates and invited me to play in Test matches in the backyard. And the vital thing about our test matches in the backyard were that, in our mind, they were the real thing. So we were making decisions in real time.

So a lot of the things that I learnt in the backyard became very important later on. I didn't learn to win playing against Ian, because being five years older he could beat me convincingly.

LM: He'd always win.

GC: But I learnt to compete, I learnt to hang in there. And then when Ian left home, I was able to step up, because I'd played for England all those years because Ian was Australia being the older brother. So I played my first Test matches for England in the backyard. But when Ian left home I became Australian and I learnt to win. So I got the full gambit in the backyard.

But the important things our father insisted we play with a hard ball from an early age. Wanted us to get to know what the hard ball was like and I found out what the ball was like because my older brother hit me on occasions. But being the era that it was, it wasn't the done thing to cry, so you just had to suck it up and get on with it. So the backyard was a real hotbed for us and we went from there to school cricket, club cricket, state cricket. You know, Ian, I think I was 16 when Ian, no I was 13 when Ian got picked to play for South Australia. So that was a bit of a, you know, a point for me, because I thought, well if he can do it, maybe I can do it. And then I was 16 when he got picked to play for Australia. So they were pretty important milestones in my development.

LM: In terms of the support around young cricketers in those days, in terms of the opportunities for, not just coaching, apart from your, the tricks of the trade your father was obviously teaching you there, in clubs or schools, what was the training and coaching programs like in those days compared to today and the opportunities compared to today for young people?

GC: No, they were non-existent apart from the fact that games were organised by the primary school and we had a teacher who sort of supervised, but he wasn't a coach in any way. It was really just providing games and we played. There was very little representative cricket. I was lucky enough to be selected for a SAPSASA which is the South Australian Primary School Sports Association, Amateur Sports Association. *[Correction: South Australian Public Schools Amateur Sports Association]* So you had to be going to a state school to be selected. I was selected out of my primary school, St. Leonard's Primary School at North Glenelg. But by then I'd, by the time I was to play in the carnival which, interestingly enough was in Brisbane, I was already going into first year high school.

So I had to go to a state school. So I spent two years at a state high school so that I could play in the SAPSASA Carnival in 1961. I was 12 when I went to Brisbane. We played a national championship. I was one of the younger players in the South Australian team, so I only played in one game against New South Wales and I wasn't particularly successful, but that was out at [Queensland] University Oval. We had a visit to the Gabba. [Brisbane Cricket Ground at Woolloongabba] My very vivid memories of my first trip to the Gabba. It was a very exciting visit. Very different Gabba from the one that is there today. All the old pavilions were there.

I'm just trying to think of the curator who was still there. He'd been the curator at the Gabba for many years. He would have been a man in his, I reckon at least in his 70s when we went there and he had a horse-drawn roller. And the horse had padded feet, he'd made padded shoes for this horse so it didn't leave footprints in the, because the wicket would have been damp when he first started rolling it. So the horse had to be shod in padded shoes so that he didn't leave indentations in the wicket. And he did his final cuts of the pitch, the grass on the pitch with a scythe. So that was quite an historical visit.

LM: Wow, very old school isn't it?

GC: Yeah, it was very old school and as I say very memorable, those things. And, you know, a little bit later that year of course was the famous tied test at the Gabba with West Indies and Australia. So I have a, still get quite vivid memories of the trip. We went by train from Adelaide to Brisbane. So we went overnight to Melbourne, had a full day in Melbourne, overnight to Sydney, full day in Sydney and then overnight to Brisbane, so it was a three-day trip to get to Brisbane. We were billeted, I was billeted by a family *(unintelligible)*.

We played the carnival but I just remember South Brisbane Station we got off the train at South Brisbane and met the various families who were billeting us and I have a memory of Brisbane being very much a big country town in 1961.

LM: And in that era in the 1960s where you mentioned Ian starting to play for South Australia and then you played for South Australia as well later on, that was pre that professional era that we are so accustomed to

now. When you started to get into that higher level of cricket, how did you balance the demands of the sporting life and your own family life, your home life and also the need for paid work.

GC: Yes, well I was single when I first started playing, I was 18 when I got selected to play for South Australia. So I left school, I was working with the Shell Oil Company, so I had a job with the Shell Oil Company. I had to get leave of absence, unpaid leave to go and play Shield Cricket. Yeah, two of the four days were on the weekend so they were Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday games. So if it was a home game, you'd miss work on Friday and you'd miss work on Monday and get deducted from your wage. And we got about I think $20 a day or thereabouts which was pretty much just expenses for representing your state.

So it was very much a pastime. We worked for a living and played cricket as a pastime for many years. I started in '66 playing for South Australia. So it was '77 before World Series Cricket came along so basically it was a pastime. You had a job and you played cricket. So the cricket was incidental, although for me it wasn't incidental. I was hell bent on playing for Australia and representing Australia and playing Test cricket so I thought of very little else, other than how I could improve my cricket. I worked just under two years with Shell Oil Company and the opportunity came up to go and play county cricket in England which was fully professional.

So as a 19 and 20 year old I went and played county cricket for Somerset and was paid, all be it, I think it was about £1,500 for the first year and about £1,800 for the second year. Mind you it was plus-expenses, living expenses. So you really didn't eat into your fee. I was able to bring that money home. I could live off my expenses, meal allowances and travel allowances and so on because we were playing cricket pretty much every day. So there wasn't a hell of a lot to spend money on outside of food.

LM: Your employer Shell, these days big companies look forward to having a top sportsperson on their staff, it's a bit of a plus for them publicly, was that the situation in those days? Was Shell accommodating for the demands on your sporting career.

GC: They were up to a point. As I said, I had to take unpaid leave to go and play cricket so that sort of obviously became a problem because I did

meet with them to try and work out some way that I could earn more money rather than just be on set wage while I was there, whether there were jobs within the organisation. And really the only job within the organisation that was a, you sort of got paid over and above the daily allowance, you know, you could earn bonuses and things like that was driving one of the petrol trucks. And at 18 years of age I don't know that I really wanted to be driving a big petrol truck anyway. And I wasn't sure that that necessarily fitted ideally with what I wanted.

So when the opportunity came to go and play professional cricket I jumped at it. I could go and earn money playing cricket in the winter and then come back and still get a job but play cricket in the summer here. But interestingly enough being so excited to go and play fulltime professional cricket and be paid for it, I thought, "Wow, how good is this?" But midway through the second season I realised it wasn't all it was cracked up to be and playing cricket day in/day out dulls you a bit mentally. You sort of one game rolled into another and you got to a point during a season where you started praying for rain to get a few days off.

LM: Right. Right.

GC: And that felt like bad habits to me and I'd observed guys that I'd played with who had got into had habits and they played ourselves which, in Australia, we never played ourselves. We didn't get enough cricket. We'd play eight games a season or almost once a month you'd get a Shield game. And I mean they were cracking affairs because everyone was really keyed up for it and looking forward to it so you really had a full go at it. And it was as close to a Test match as you could get. But I found county cricket really a bit of a grind and I didn't want cricket to be a grind, I wanted cricket to be fun.

So I rang my father and said, "Look I'll be home in September, can you keep your eye out for a job? I'd like to work at something that I could earn a commission at so I'd work hard during the winter and then if I have to take time off without pay it's not such a big blow." I came home, our mother actually played tennis socially with other women and one of these women's husband was a sales manager at AMP [Australian Mutual Provident Society], so I went and did an interview. Found out that I had glandular fever and wondered why I was a bit tired by the end of the

cricket season. But I'd had it, I was sort of over it, but I took a week off before I started with the AMP. But at least I could go hard during the winter and earn enough in six months to last me 12 months basically.

LM: And that grind you mention there, when you are playing county cricket, is that still a factor in professional cricket life? Is that sort of mental imposition or the difficulty, mentally getting into a space to continue, to continually playing, is that still a factor today?

GC: I imagine it is but, you know, because that's what they grew up with, I don't think the players noticed it as much as I would having grown up in a different era. Look I would willingly swap pay packets with these guys but I wouldn't swap the era that we played in. It was a great era to play cricket. It was a different game and I remember having a conversation with Sir Donald Bradman a year or so before he died and I asked him why he, as chairman of the [Australian] Cricket Board, why he'd resisted the improvement in conditions for players and he made a comment that, he said, "Greg, sport loses something when it becomes a business."

And I understood what he meant and I think that what it loses is that spontaneity. I've no doubt the players loved what they are doing and as I say they've grown up knowing nothing else so it's not such a big deal. But having grown up when I did, I quite enjoyed the fact that we were playing it for fun almost so it changed the way we played the game. Or it meant that the game was a little bit more light hearted but never less competitive. I mean we couldn't have been trying harder if we'd been paid a lot more. But it was for pride. You know, you were playing for your own pride, for your teams' pride.

But yes, we realised after having played for very little for a number of years that if we would continue playing and we certainly needed better recompense. But we also needed some recognition that we had something to offer. We could put some, give them some feedback about tours and the fact that the tours to England weren't very well organised, we seemed to sort of crisscross and double back on ourselves a lot. There would have been a more efficient way to do it so that you didn't have to travel so much and bearing in mind in England you are travelling by coach mostly.

So they were quite lengthy trips at times when you were going from the north of England down to the south of England, a seven or eight-hour

trip. It was a fair bit and bearing in mind that it was often done at the end of a test match, overnight or late into the night and you were starting up again the next day, which would never happen in these days.

LM: Now we're talking there about the 1960s when your sporting career was taking off, you were playing for South Australia and Australia and then in 1973 you moved to Brisbane to take up an offer to become the Queensland captain. Again because of the lack of the level of professionalism here as compared to England, what was the motivation there and I'm guessing it wasn't necessarily a financial one.

GC: No, I'd been approached, Queensland Cricket had approached me about moving to Queensland. I'd grown up in Adelaide, I'd expected to finish my career in South Australia. I'd recently married, Judy, my wife came from Sydney so it wasn't such a big wrench for her to leave Adelaide. She'd already left her family, so it wasn't such a big deal. But I'd played five seasons of first-class cricket with South Australia. Ian was captain of South Australia and captain of Australia by then and was likely to be captain of South Australia for as long as he was captain of Australia.

So I had ambitions to captain Australia at some point if the opportunity arose and I thought if it did arise, I would need some experience because I'd never had much captaincy experience, there were always older guys in any team that I'd played in. So there was no opportunities for much experience other than in the backyard. So when Queensland approached me, you know, my first reaction was little interest really and then John Maclean rang me. John I knew well, we played against each other and we toured New Zealand together with an Australia A Team and we were good mates.

And John rang me and said look if you are interested in coming to Queensland, I'm happy to step down as captain and let you be captain. And that really was the turning point for me because I wasn't going to get that opportunity in South Australia. So Judy and I decided we'd give it a go. Queensland offered me a contract, I declined the contract. In the first year I said, "Look, let's have a look at each other, see if we like each other." I thought I had no idea what Queensland would be like and whether I would enjoy it, whether it would actually be what I expected it to be.

So I thought well let's have a look at each other for 12 months and if we don't like it we can always return to where we were. And so there wasn't much to lose from that point of view. But we took to Brisbane pretty well. We met some lovely people, we made some great friends. And Queensland Cricket, whilst they hadn't been very successful, you could see there was talent there and the Queensland side at the time had some pretty good players, some emerging players. I thought that we could be a good team. I didn't want to come to Brisbane and have Queensland Cricket cellar dwellers for the rest of the time

So I thought that I could certainly make a difference and hopefully we could become a successful team. And the other thing from a couple of visits, subsequently playing for South Australia and playing at the Gabba and visiting Brisbane, you could sense that something exciting was about to happen or was happening. Brisbane was starting to emerge as a city, people, there was just a bubble in the air, people were starting to do deals. They wanted to do something and you know Adelaide was probably not much more than a big country town either. But with no real potential to grow much, whereas Brisbane was in the heart of the mining industry, the building industry was booming because Brisbane was starting to develop and not least of all Clem was a big part of that.

LM: And just very briefly, the focus in those days was on Sheffield Shield Cricket, you know, the state-by-state rivalries. Did you get any resistance here being a South Australian coming to the more or less, some people might have seen it as taking over the Queensland team. What was the reception like?

GC: The reception was very positive, certainly within the team and within the cricket community, there was a real buzz about me coming. So there was some excitement there which made it interesting as well. The opportunities that perhaps weren't available in South Australia or weren't presenting themselves in South Australia all of a sudden became available in Brisbane. So whilst I didn't get paid more for playing cricket there were ancillary benefits, you know, promotional opportunities, sponsorship opportunities, albeit very low scale compared to those of today. But in comparison to what else was around, the opportunities presented themselves and I was made, I made myself available to do it.

So it was an exciting time, business opportunities. I was offered a job, part of the deal to come to Brisbane was somewhere to live and a job and a club to play for. So I joined South Brisbane, John McKnoulty was the chairman of South Brisbane Cricket Club. John Maclean played at South Brisbane, but Brisbane had a bit of a history of producing Queensland and Australian players and it was a very well administered club. Some of the clubs I wasn't quite as convinced. I was approached by a number of clubs to join them. But John McKnoulty was a solicitor with McCullough Robertson, senior partner I think in McCullough Robertson.

So very smart man, very nice man and funnily enough the next door neighbour of the people with whom I was billeted in 1961. I didn't know it at the time but when we went to dinner at their place, very soon after arriving in Brisbane I said, "Well this is amazing because that house on the down side of the street there is where I was billeted when I came up here with the South Australian schoolboy team."

LM: Small world isn't it.

GC: Isn't it a small world. Yes, so South Brisbane was the chosen club. We finally found a place to live at Kenmore where we lived for many years and I joined Friends Provident which was an English life insurance company. So I'd been with the AMP, as I said, although I'd left the AMP before I left South Australia and joined Coca-Cola Bottlers on a management trainee program, which was a terrific program. I was only there for a couple of years but the benefits that I gained from that were immense. Coca-Cola Bottlers in Adelaide were a franchise in those days as was Coca-Cola Bottlers in Queensland. I was offered a job at Coca-Cola but I decided to get back into the insurance industry because I felt I could earn more money there.

So again, if I worked hard in the non-cricket months, I could, but I mean the beauty of the job with Friends Provident was that I was, I had, they guaranteed leave for cricket and it was paid leave, so again it was a slight improvement. Although Coca-Cola had also allowed me to play cricket and paid me while I did it. So I was in a reasonable condition with them when I left, but the overarching opportunity in Queensland was the captaincy.

LM: You mentioned just briefly earlier the promotional opportunities that you took up when you came to Brisbane. Now you mentioned Don Bradman before and his views on professionalising the sport but he'd done endorsements and commercials and that sort of thing when he was captain of Australia. And Barry Maranta whom you know has spoken to me about the, some of the paid advertising work he helped secure for you. How did you pick and choose what to do there with an eye on keeping your reputation and public image intact?

GC: Yeah, look there wasn't a lot to pick and choose between but I was lucky that Metropolitan Permanent Building Society was associated. Friends Provident did the life insurance, anyone who took out a loan from the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society had to insure that loan and they were directed to Friends Provident to do that. I mean it wasn't compulsory that they went to Friends Provident but most of them just took the introduction and came to Friends Provident so a lot of the work came to us. So, you know, I had an association through that with the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society.

So that was an introduction that bore fruit because I was somebody that they employed to promote their, because they were expanding quite rapidly at that time, Metropolitan Permanent Building Society. I remember going to a number of country towns to open new branches, be it functions for them, do some television advertising for them, so that was a high profile. And they were a reputable organisation. And the other one was Sharp, the electrical business, Japanese company. But obviously the Australian end of it knew who I was, so I did some national advertising for them, for basically their electrical goods particularly, television. So that was good.

There were a few other more low-profile, more local endorsements as well but it wasn't that hard to cull, because it wasn't like they were falling over each other to get to the door. But there were some good opportunities that came. And I leant on Barry's advice from when he was loosely my manager but he never took any fees for it. We were business partners and he acted on my behalf a lot of the times, just to, in initial discussions with these organisations. And I don't think we took them all but, you know, most of them were pretty reputable and we were quite happy to take it on board.

LM: Yes, it was a new sort of experience wasn't it for both of you. I think it is fair to say it was probably a learning experience for both you and Barry dealing with those sort of opportunities.

GC: Yes absolutely, I mean Barry had an education background and property development background, but he was an intelligent man and pretty well connected around Brisbane through his sporting exploits, not least of all in cricket with University [of Queensland Cricket Club] and so on, so he was a reasonably high profile individual around town, so opportunities did present themselves and he was very generous with his time and advice. And we finished up in business together on a number of fronts over the years. So it was a wonderful relationship and you know Barry and Lyn and the Maranta family were pretty much the default family for us in Brisbane.

Particularly for Judy, who had no family at all, so she had no family support. When we started having a family she was doing it on her own and I was away for a lot of the time and Lyn and Barry were very generous and very supportive. So they became a default family for us in Brisbane so it was a great relationship and exists to this day.

LM: You mentioned coming to Brisbane in 1973 to take up the Queensland captaincy, and you mentioned how Brisbane had a feeling about being sort of on the move and growing and you attributed a lot of that to Clem Jones who was then, been Lord Mayor since 1961. Did you know much about Clem before you turned up here?

GC: Not at that point. I knew of him obviously and the fact that he was chairman of the [Brisbane] Cricket Ground Trust, you know, and was on, had been on the Queensland, it wasn't a board in those days it was a, he was a committee member with Queensland. He'd been probably chairman, he'd been chairman of Queensland Cricket at times and he was a Queensland representative with Norm McMahon on the Australia Cricket Board as it was in those days. I think he'd spent about 20 years as one of the representatives of Queensland on the Australian Cricket Board, so I was well aware of him.

I met him fairly regularly in his role as Chairman of the Gabba Trust because we played at the Gabba be trained at the Gabba and there were a number of occasions that I had cause to call on Clem to get some

assistance to improve conditions for us. Because Queensland Cricket wasn't particularly flush with funds and it wasn't until after I'd retired and Clem had stood down from Queensland Cricket and the Australian Cricket Board. By that stage, Norm McMahon and Dr Battersby, Cam Battersby, were representatives on the board. And I had been approached by people within Australian Cricket to get involved with the board.

So I had to get a nomination from Queensland Cricket to stand and there was a bit of that, was the only, well with World Series Cricket, there was a bit of disruption around things. But it was when I tried to stand for the board that there was a little bit of resistance. But Cam Battersby decided that he would stand down and make a vacancy to allow me to stand for the Cricket Board, which I did, and became a board member for a couple of years. But it wasn't until my first meeting as a board member that I realised just why Queensland Cricket had been such a poor relation in things because of the way the board worked and the way the board finances worked.

As quickly as I can sum it up, basically, as a, the Queensland Cricket Association could apply to host a Test match and run that Test match, they had the right to run it. If they made a profit, the profit went into the coffers of the Cricket Board and at the end of the season each state would get a disbursement from the Cricket Board, commensurate with the number of board members they had. So Queensland had two board members, there were 14 board members, you know, two from Queensland and Western Australia, one I think from Tasmania and three each from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia were the founding members that's why they had the three members.

So they basically had control of the board. And so Queensland always made a profit on the Test match because Queensland Cricket did not have any members. The members at the Gabba were owned by the Gabba Trust. They were members of the Gabba Trust. So there was no financial benefit from that membership to Queensland Cricket. So they always made a profit because the bulk of the people that came to a Test match were paying customers. Therefore say you had 100,000 people over the five days that paid to go, the profit from that went into the

Cricket Board and then Queensland then got 2/14ths of that at the end of the year and that was it for Queensland Cricket.

What I found out much later when I came onto the board was that South Australia had a 100-year lease on the Adelaide Oval, so they owned the membership. So if they had 20,000 members, that 20,000 members went into the coffers of South Australian Cricket. And if they made a profit on the Test match that went into the Cricket Board coffers and then they got a suck of 3/14ths at the end of the year from that as well. But the real rort was going on in Western Australia because they owned the WACA [Western Australian Cricket Association]. They owned the membership.

So what was happening was that if someone rang up at the start of the season and said, "I want to buy a Test ticket", they would upsell, say, "Listen, if you become a member of the WACA, you not only get the Test match but you also get the Western Australia Football League matches that were played in the winter at the WACA [Ground] at the time."

So say a Test match ticket was going to cost $100, for $110 you can become a member. So the majority of people upgraded and said, "Oh yes, I'll be a member." The WACA had huge membership, so they got hundreds of thousands of dollars a year out of their membership and then lost money on the Test match because most of the people that came to the Test match were already members, so there weren't many paying customers for the Test match.

And so Western Australia still got 2/14ths at the end of the year. So they had their huge membership plus their 2/14ths. And I think Queensland used to get about $30,000 or $40,000 a year, that was it, from the Cricket Board. And I was really filthy with Norm McMahon but in turn I was also filthy with Clem because he had been a board member for 20 years and he must have known what was going on. And he hadn't fought hard to get a better deal for Queensland Cricket. So Western Australia were ripping the system off.

And the other states were quite happy to sit there and do it because the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Sydney Cricket Ground, even though they had members, they also made a profit on the Test match because they had much bigger grounds to…

LM: To ticket, yeah.

GC: … attract people to come to the Test match. And they were, in those days, they were sharing alternate years, they were getting a second Test match. So they were doing fine. And they were quite happy to let Western Australia get away with it because they knew if they ever needed Western Australia's vote, all they had to say was, "Hang on a sec, you come with us or we'll take away your little financial gain." So I was a bit filthy with Norman and with Clem I must admit, you know, that we had been the poor cousins in the whole deal and Queensland Cricket always cried poor, which they were, but I'm sure if Clem wasn't as busy elsewhere he might have fought a bit harder to get more money for Queensland Cricket.

LM: Was that situation, how and when was that situation resolved? I mean it doesn't exist today obviously.

GC: No, no it doesn't exist today. It probably, I was on the board in the 1980s so it was around that time that they changed the whole financial structure of the board and I think the states basically became the agents of Cricket Australia and ran the Test match and got a fee for running the Test match rather than running the Test match, tipping in the profit or the loss and then taking out a little bit of the profit at the end of the year. So yes Queensland Cricket got a better deal out of it later on when we put a bit of pressure on to change it.

LM: Just going back to when you arrived in Brisbane in 1973, I've read some old news clippings from September of that year which mentioned a problem that was facing you in terms of playing in some of the earlier Sheffield Shield games in that first season here. And Clem was one of those that helped thought out a solution. Can you just briefly outline the circumstances of what happened and how it was resolved?

GC: I don't remember to be quite honest, but I'm sort of thinking back that there might have been some residential qualification that was required. And Clem I think probably stepped in with the Board and just said, "Hey, we'd better sort this out." Because I don't recall that happening now, but now that you mention it I sort of do have a faint memory of something like that being the case. But I hadn't been in Queensland or

somebody was suggesting I hadn't been in Queensland long enough, maybe under some old by-law that was still in force in those days that there was some suggestion that I mightn't be able to play for a few games. But obviously wiser heads prevailed and I was able to play.

LM: All that sort of machinations you mentioned among the states about the divvying up of Test receipts and that sort of stuff, that sort of illustrates the complexity of administrative politics in many sports, not just cricket. That sort of playing of politics and Clem was well know for his Labor Party views of course, having been elected so many times, did you think that there was, his party political experience helped him in terms of small-P politics within the administrative side of the game?

GC: I have no doubt. I mean Clem would have run circles around most people I would have thought when it came to politics. He would have known most of the tricks I would have thought. Anyone who can get through a party political system and get to the top of it you've obviously learnt some great skills along way. So I don't think there would have been many people. I mean Bradman was pretty good with the politics. But you're right. I mean sport was very political and the interstate rivalry was alive and well. Certainly up until the 1960s and possibly a little bit longer, but it was breaking down.

I think there was a realisation that Victoria and New South Wales couldn't dominate as they had done for many years and that financial structure was a good illustration of how they ran the sport. They did dole out favours and you had to repay those favours.

LM: And leaving aside the administrative politics of the game did you ever have any discussions with Clem about party political matters? The general Queensland or Australian political landscape?

GC: Not so much, I mean when we did have a few discussions loosely around it. I mean I was approached at some point by the Country Party to see if I had any ambitions in the political sphere and I didn't. Yes, I mean I sort of, I didn't have any strong affiliations or feelings around it. I mean the fact that Clem was from the Labor Party and at the time the ruling party at the state level was the Country/Liberal Party, didn't really bother me greatly. I mean I respected Clem's achievements and the difference from '61 to '73 was quite evident around Brisbane and the development

that was going on and the fact that Brisbane was being sewered and was being developed.

I mean Clem was a visionary in so many ways and the fact that Queensland, Brisbane was unique in that there was only one council. I'd grown up in Adelaide where we had a council in every suburb. So there wasn't much done because they were all bickering amongst themselves.

LM: Or they were too small financially.

GC: Yeah, well they just couldn't afford to do anything and they couldn't therefore achieve anything and all of a sudden to come to Brisbane and what, there is only one council, for the Greater Brisbane area? I mean that was a novelty. I mean Clem was probably dealing with a budget that was bigger than the South Australian budget. So it was a quite a different landscape and that was helpful because what I found in Queensland was that, I mean, South Australian Cricket wasn't that well developed in the sense of that, any success they had was despite itself. It wasn't any great administration that was making it happen and club pitches in Adelaide were pretty ordinary.

Again, because the council's ran them to ground and they probably didn't have the funds to upkeep the grounds. So the clubs were having to subsidise any work that the council groundsmen did on the cricket pitch. And when I got to Brisbane I found the club pitches weren't that much better in Brisbane, and that this was holding Queensland cricket back. The biggest difference, two things that I'd like to think that I influenced was selection policy and talking to Clem about, if you want Queensland cricket to improve and have a better record then you've got to do something about club pitches and club facilities generally.

And Clem, God bless him and his skills, I think Gough [Whitlam] was in power at that stage and they had something called the RED Scheme, Re-Development something or other. *[Correction: Regional Economic Development Scheme]* And I spoke to Clem and said, "Look, you know we have to do something about club pitches and practice pitches generally and particularly at the Gabba."

We used to train on the Gabba in those days, practice pitches were on the Gabba itself and they were awful. Jeff Thomson, for instance, when

he came to Queensland, Thommo couldn't bowl off the long run-up at training, because he would have killed someone, because practice wickets were just diabolical and practice wickets in many cases where non-existent.

So blokes were just having a hit wherever they could get a hit and turning up and playing club cricket on terrible pitches. So Clem got into the RED Scheme and I don't know how much money he got from it but he got enough to employ John Maley who was a groundsman who had come from Western Australian and he moved to Queensland and he was working with one of the club sides, I can't remember which at that stage, doing their club wickets and practice facilities. So Clem employed, well I don't know whether Clem employed him, but Queensland Cricket employed John Maley to do work on all the club grounds to install proper practices wickets and get decent wickets for club cricket.

And I can't overstate how important that was in putting Queensland on a track that led to the success that we've seen since the '90s really. It's allowed the young players that have played cricket subsequently to develop their game on better practice wickets, better club wickets and Clem was instrumental in getting the funds to make that happen. And we stopped picking the players who were making the most runs and taking the most wickets in club cricket because they had adapted to the terrible wickets at the club level and couldn't adjust to the different wickets at first-class level in Sheffield Shield Cricket.

So we started looking at the best young cricketers around the place who had a chance to play for Queensland and started picking them on promise rather than the guy that was succeeding in club cricket in those terrible conditions that weren't developing them to a stage, to a level where they might be successful from Queensland.

LM: You mentioned the state of wickets and playing fields, Clem, as you know, more or less assigned himself the job of curator at the Gabba for a certain time, do you recall that hands-on role that he adopted for himself there and what the reception was amongst players? How did you view that?

GC: I wasn't happy about it. We had a perfectly competent head groundsman at the Gabba at the time. I don't know quite why Clem had the need to be seen as the head groundsman at the Gabba as well. I

mean whether it was a political stunt from photographic opportunities, sitting on the roller at the Gabba and so on, I don't know where he was at in his political career at that stage and whether that was a necessity, but I mean we did have quite a heated argument about his role there. I disagreed totally with him being there and I remember quite a heated is probably, I mean it was hardly emotive, certainly from my side.

And I remember, like I said to Clem, "What are your qualifications?" And he said, "I built most of the roads in Western Queensland." And I said, "Well I hope the roads are better than your wickets", because his wickets were bloody awful. And Clem was the only bloke that couldn't grow grass in Queensland. The Gabba went from being a really good cricket wicket, one that offered something to both bowlers and batsmen to being just an absolute pile of poo. It was, you know, the only grass that he had on his pitches was grass that he reintroduced by hand from the grass clippings that he's spread on the pitches.

I mean it was an absolute disaster and there is no other way of couching it. We got Jeff Thomson to come to Brisbane, the fastest bowler that's ever played cricket and if we'd had the Gabba prior to Clem, and post-Clem, we'd have won the Sheffield Shield by Christmas in the first two years.

LM: Right.

GC: But there was no pace, there was no bounce and I mean Thommo was reduced to a nonentity almost at the Gabba because there was nothing to accentuate his great pace and bounce that were his great weapons. And my first Test match as captain for Australia was at the Gabba and I mean one of the great stories. And I've told this story many, many times, but I told it recently, within the last couple of years down at Sanctuary Cove Golf Club.

And I'll tell the story about the pitch first and then I'll tell the supplementary story of, because I'd… Nobody had really, I mean I didn't need anyone to tell me what had happened. But so anyway, my first Test match as captain, obviously I'm quite excited but quite nervous. I arrive at the Gabba on the first day and there is a classic bloody Clem Jones pitch, rolled mud with sprinkled grass clippings on it.

LM: This is the November 1975 West Indies, Australia/West Indies Test?

GC: Yes. Clive Lloyd was captain of West Indies, Clive had captained the West Indies probably three or four times prior to that. He was a fairly new captain. Anyway I won the toss and having played on Clem's wickets I knew that I couldn't offer the West Indies first chance to bowl on it but I didn't really want to bat on it last. So yes, it was a real conundrum. I won the toss and anyway I decided to send the West Indies in. We subsequently bowled them out for around about 200 which was a pretty good effort on both parts really. I mean we did well to bowl them out but they did well to get a reasonable score on that pitch.

Anyway so we were batting by the end of the first day because we bowled them out around, just after afternoon tea, and the wind had come up so all of Clem's grass had blown off the pitch. So what happened, because he had to roll, because he couldn't get any grass on it he had to wet them and really roll it, so he rolled mud. But because the grass is so important because the root structure is important in getting the moisture down into the depths of the wicket and to keep it there. So Clem's wickets dried out very fast. So what would happen, you'd get a very thin crust on top of the pitch and by the late afternoon that thin crust was breaking up and coming off.

So it looked like a jigsaw puzzle that had gone wrong. And I was batting by the end of the first day and therefore quite concerned about what would happen later in the game because once this crust had come off you'd then just be down into the dust. So I had a rather sleepless night that first night and I got to the Gabba the next day and there, just as a habit I walked out, but I think I could see from the outside that, gee that wicket doesn't look like the wicket I left here last night. So I walked out there and there was a brand-new pitch.

Now the laws of cricket are that you can roll the pitch between innings, you can mow the grass each morning, you can remark the lining, but you cannot remake the wicket once the game had started. So I'm thinking, this is going to be an international incident. So I didn't phone anyone, I walked off the ground and I knocked on the door of the West Indies dressing room, because Clive, I knew Clive would notice straightaway so I thought, I might as well get on the front foot. Knocked on the door,

asked for Clive. Clive came to the door, I said, “Mate have you had a look at the pitch?” He said, “No, should I?” And I said, “Yes, I think it’s worth a walk.”

And we walked out there and I stopped at the dressing room end and Clive walked up the other end and he walked back and I’m waiting for an explosion. I thought any minute now he’s just going to blow up because this cannot benefit West Indians. So he walked back and I said, “What do you think?” And he said, “Well it wouldn’t have been much of a game without it.” And he walked, just walked off. And I thought, well if he’s not going to complain about it I’m certainly not complaining about. Anyway subsequently the game, I mean the wicket still dried out again by the end of the second day, but he didn’t do it again.

I mean it was a pretty low, slow thing, but at least it didn’t cause any damage. But it was totally against the laws of the game and there was a security guard that used to guard the oval at night time, because you could get into the Gabba in those days. So they had a security guard who patrolled the ground to make sure no one did any damage to anything, least of all the wicket. So I went to him at the end of the second day, and I said, “Mate, what happened here last night?”

“Hey, no, no I didn’t see anything.” He just put his hands up, he didn’t want to know. And then obviously be, anyway, a couple of years later, he was still there a few years later and I said, “Mate, come, what the hell happened that night?” And he said, “Well the Lord Mayor arrived around 11:30 p.m. at night he gave me a stubby of beers and he told me to go for a walk for an hour or two. So I went over to the East Brisbane State School where my car was parked and I sat in the car and I drank a few stubbies and the lights came on and the engines were revved up and there was quite a bit of activity.”

So I told this story at Sanctuary Cove a year or two ago and there was a fellow there who had worked with and had been a business partner with Kevin Norris. Kevin was a surveyor in town and Kevin was pretty close to Clem. And apparently this fellow who was at the lunch that I was speaking at he came to me afterwards, he said, do you want to know who was with Clem that night? And I said, “Yes, I’d love to.” And he said, “Me and a few of the boys in the office.” But apparently he got a phone call around 11:00 p.m. at night, apparently Kevin was away And

Clem had tried to ring Kevin Norris to get some help, but Kevin wasn't there.

So he rang his business partner and said, "I need you and a couple of your boys down at the Gabba as quick as you can get there." So they helped Clem remake the wicket. So the fact that that never became an incident, the media never commented on it, no one said a word and I can't believe that it just went through to the keeper.

LM: I was going to ask, did anyone comment on it at all? No one raised it?

GC: I'm not aware of any comment apart from, and I mean Clive never said anything in his press conferences or anything like that, so it was quite remarkable that it just, I think had Clive had more experience he might have probably arced up a bit more.

LM: How do you think that might have happened, how do you think it would have been handled today?

GC: Oh man, it would have been an absolute bun fight. I mean people would have called for Clem's head and he would have probably been, he certainly would have been forced to stand down from the Gabba and he probably would have been forced out of his role as the Lord Mayor.

LM: And you've sort of given us your views on Clem the curator there, did you ever see him play? He had a long association with, starting with the University of Queensland Cricket Club. He played for many decades. Did you ever get a chance to assess his playing style?

GC: Yes, I saw him play, I mean he wasn't a young man by that time, he was an enthusiast, he wasn't a great player.

LM: And we mentioned there how that incident might have been held today. I mean today sports of all types, not just cricket are totally changed from those days and despite what you mentioned about Sir Don Bradman's views, it has become a business and things like the NRL [National Rugby League] have changed shape and form, they are now built around big franchises, not suburban clubs. And a lot of that was driven by television markers but now we've go the overlay of the internet and the screen culture. Where do you see cricket going in terms of that environment?

GC: Oh look I think it will continue down that path. Twenty-over cricket will become more of a thing. I think everyone is trying to have their own Twenty 20 competition. So Test cricket is under threat like never before. I think what we'll finish up with is players will be owned by franchises and they'll be a little bit like soccer. They will be owned by their clubs and they will come back and play a few games for their country every so often and there will be World Cups in 50-over cricket and Twenty 20 cricket. I think India, Australia, and England will play Test cricket for the foreseeable future but for a lot of other countries I think Test cricket will slowly drift away.

LM: And that's a factor of like there is sort of, what I think of as the contraction of attention span in the internet age, that people want something very quick to happen.

GC: Yes, look I think that's pretty much it. It's the demand of the market and that's where it will take us.

LM: Another thing about sport that Clem used to say was its role in tackling antisocial behaviour and he had a saying, "Get young people into sport and you'll keep them out of court."

GC: Yes.

LM: And he especially encouraged young people to get into a sport but particularly team sports because they learn how to work and interact with other people and while also achieving their own personal goals and improvement. Do you share that approach and do you see the, is there an adequacy of opportunities and structure and support in cricket to do that these days?

GC: It's a challenge. I'm staggered at how many people are still coming to, you know, young kids who want to come and play cricket, play team sports generally, and obviously now with female sport with so much growth. I think there is still a lot of opportunities in that area and I agree with Clem that for young people it's just a wonderful addition to their education, the life lessons that come from sport. I know that, I've learnt most of my life lessons from cricket. You know, that I think it's really important. There is a huge growth obviously in e-sports and I think

that's going to continue for the foreseeable future and only increase in the foreseeable future.

So I think the challenge for the sort of live sports is there. There is a lot of competition for the live sports. So it's going to be interesting to see how it continues. I mean I'm sure there are life lessons that can be learnt from most things and e-sports no doubt, but team sports stand out to me as teaching those lessons to young people that they mightn't get elsewhere.

LM: Look before I let you go I just wanted to ask you about your philanthropic activities and you appear to share with Clem a willingness to help others and you are doing that in one way as co-founder of the Chappell Foundation, helping homeless youth. Can you just explain how and why that Foundation was created and what was your motivation to be involved?

GC: I've been involved in charitable work in one way or another for most of my adult life. I think we were encouraged by our parents to give back and our parents were great volunteers particularly around sporting clubs and so on. As kids mum and dad were heavily involved with the cricket club and the baseball club. And, you know, gave a lot of their time. So I think their encouragement was to give back. So from an early age, I've been involved in different ways, the Leukemia Foundation and others, back in the early or mid-70s, late '70s, I was involved with the Leukemia Foundation in Queensland. I was involved with the [Queensland] Children's Hospital finance committee, for want of a better word, I can't think what the committee was called.

But a few of us were invited, a few businessmen and myself to raise money to build a new children's hospital. I think the government put in dollar for dollar. So we raised quite a few million at a time when a million dollars was a lot of money and the government matched that and the Children's Hospital was rebuilt on the side. I mean you probably remember the old Children's Hospital from the 1970s, I mean it was still, they had to carry the kids from the ward, outdoors to the surgery, you know, facilities. I mean it was quite…

LM: Primitive.

GC: …primitive at that stage. So to have had a part in that was a great thrill. Some of the most amazing things that I saw, the Leukemia Foundation we would have a Christmas party in the oncology ward every year and I got to meet these kids and their families in early December, knowing that most of them wouldn't make it to Christmas was quite humbling. There was an organisation, it was a Catholic organisation, I'm not a Catholic, but somehow I got invited to go to a sort of a party, I don't know whether it was a Christmas party, it might have been Christmas party. Now these kids, they were a Catholic group over in East Brisbane somewhere, over Coorparoo way somewhere and these kids were underprivileged and generally handicapped in some way and I used to go over there every year for their party and again a very humbling experience.

And I took our kids when they were younger just to let them know how lucky they were. Meet some of these kids with no arms, no legs and other deformities. One kid he just lived in his bed. He had a normal sized head but his body hadn't grown from 18 months of age. We used to play a cricket match against these kids and I mean the kids were coming in to bowl on skateboards because they had no legs, and oh man it was quite an experience. Anyway, so over the years I've been involved in a number of charities and I've been a patron of the LBW Trust which was "learning for a better world".

It was cricket-based trust out of Sydney and a friend of mine was Chairman of that trust for many years, for 10 years I think and I'd been a patron for about 10 years. Let alone the Primary Club and the Lord's Taverners and so on we'd done different things for and I'd been patron of a number of those things. So the LBW Trust I'd been involved with for 10 years and Darshak Mehta who had been Chairman of the LBW Trust stood down after 10 years because it was probably long enough. Plus his wife was unwell at the time, so he needed to sort of step back a bit.

Anyway thankfully she improved in her health and Darshak was ready to do something and he said, "Right now we need to do something in the Chappell name", and I said, "No we don't, I'm quite happy doing what we are doing." "No", he said, "You've got to do something in the Chappell name."

Darshak is not an easy fellow to say no to and he kept at me and I said, "Okay, well if we do something it's…." – because the LBW Trust raises money to support underprivileged people in cricket-playing countries around the world to get tertiary education. And I said, "If we do something it's got to be for young people and it's got to be in Australia."

We've got enough things here that need support without going overseas to support, kids, as good as it is. And I think I was living in Melbourne, we'd been living in Melbourne working with Cricket Australia for a few years, living in East Melbourne and I used to walk through the Fitzroy Gardens and do my exercise in Fitzroy Gardens and Darshak had suggested various camps or things, or other things, and I said, "No, no."

I'd seen enough homeless people in Fitzroy Gardens to realise that and did a bit of research and there was something like 110,000 homeless people in Australia and 40% of them slept rough and it was a growing demographic.

So that seemed to be a no-brainer for me. So we set up the Chappell Foundation about six years ago and we do different functions each year. We do a big dinner, we do a golf day, we do an art gallery and a sleepout at Sydney Cricket Ground and we've raised and donated about over $3 million in the six years and we've got seven charities that we support who do great work at the coalface with homeless people. And we've got one in Brisbane which is now called the Coffee Brigade, it used to be the Ecumenical Coffee Brigade. It was started by a nun about 40 years ago and I think there has only been about two nights in their history where they haven't delivered food for the homeless around Brisbane.

There is two or three spots in Brisbane where they've got vans so that volunteers make sandwiches and coffee and so on and deliver, you know, early morning sandwiches and coffee to the homeless around Brisbane and for many of them that's probably their only meal of the day. And we would be their major donor, keep them going. We've got one in northern New South Wales that works with homeless kids around Armidale and that's been expanded. The New South Wales Government have got them doing some stuff around other cities.

Bernie Shakeshaft who started the BackTrack [charity], he gets the kids off the street, provides them with accommodation, gives them a dog, they work with the dogs and the dogs, working with the dogs sort of

gives them a bit of reason for being and he educates them in welding and other things that can help them get a job in a rural area. And about 80% of the kids who get through the program get jobs. Two or three other charities in Sydney itself who offer halfway houses and other support for homeless kids, and one charity in Canberra.

So they all do wonderful work and I mean again it's quite humbling. You hear some of these kids, every year we have somebody stand up and tell their story of how they finished up on the streets and how one or other of the charities has helped them get back on their feet and get their life back together. When we started, I thought if we could put one life back together it would be all worthwhile, but we are luckily able to help hundreds of kids each year and it's just so pleasing to see the work that these charities do. I mean they're the ones that are the heroes, they're the ones that work with the kids. We just use the Chappell profile to get more awareness around the problem and raising some money which thankfully does such terrific things.

LM: Well it's an important issue isn't it because if you haven't got secure housing you are behind the eight ball in all aspects of life basically aren't you?

GC: Some of these kids, some of the stories are just, there is not a dry eye in the house, you know, of 400 people. This young lady got up and spoke last year how she was forced out on the streets as a six-year-old because of family violence and other things and she'd sort of been rescued a couple of times, but she didn't trust anyone and she didn't get the benefit of the support because she just couldn't open up. And finally one of these stepping stones, a halfway house in Sydney, one of the volunteers or the workers there finally got through to her as a teenager. And he got her trust and she got an education and she's now a qualified nurse and doing, studying to be a step above where she's at.

She's got her own home, she's got a car, well she didn't have a car, that was the problem and I was sitting next to John Singleton at the dinner and John's one of our patrons. John said, just get me an introduction to somebody that I can talk to there and so John provided a car for her and some other support. But not directly to her, through the charity so that there is some control over it, she can't just blow it. But this woman she's a really intelligent young kid but when you think that she started

her life as a six-year-old on the streets and where she's got to, it's all worthwhile.

LM: Yes, amazing story isn't it? Look, thanks very much for your time today Greg and thanks very much for being part of the oral history project.

GC: It's a pleasure Lindsay, and I hope it's helpful and good luck with your work because I'm sure it's going to be a wonderful resource for Queensland.

LM: Great, thanks very much.

GC: Thanks Lindsay.

[End recording]