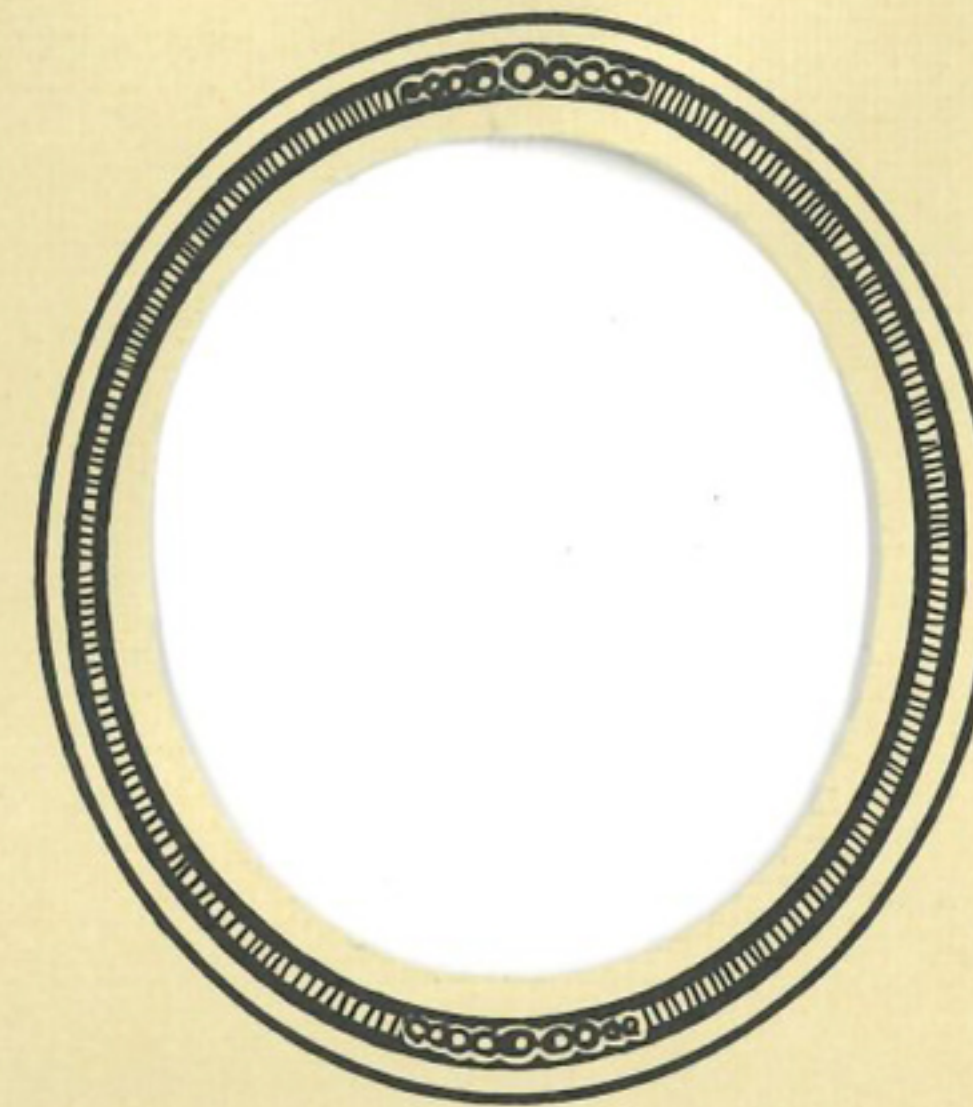


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The Story of Gunn & Moore

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William Gunn 1858-1921

William Gunn, who founded Gunn & Moore in 1885, was one of the finest cricketers of his own or any other age.

He scored 25,840 runs in his first class career, including 49 centuries. He played in nine Test Matches in England and two in Australia. He was the only Notts player in the England XI on the occasion of the first ever Test Match at Trent Bridge.

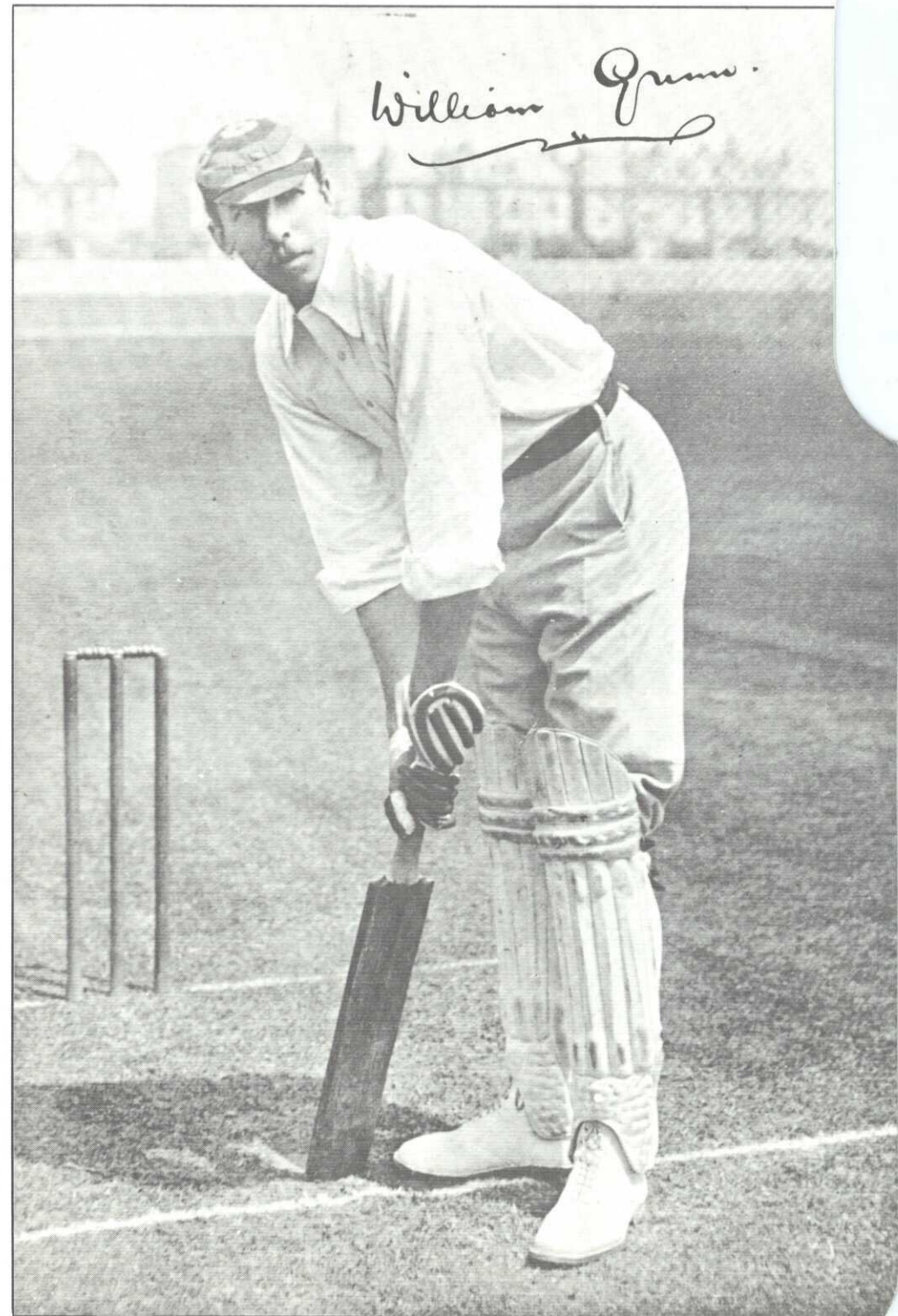
Born in Nottingham on December 4th 1858, early in his life he came under the influence of a Rev. Mr. Stonehouse who numbered among his hobbies cricket and football. At the age of fourteen he became clerk to Richard Daft who owned an athletic outfitters shop and cricketing warehouse in Nottingham.

He developed into a good all-round cricketer: a good bat, something of a medium pace bowler, excellent in the field, even wicket keeper at a pinch. This "promising young batsman" did not go unrecognised and in 1880 he played in all 12 of the Notts' fixtures — "he bats in capital style and with increased practice and experience should make a valuable man".

Gunn was the first professional to play for England against Australia at cricket and also against Scotland at Association football — one of the few sportsmen to have represented England at both games. However, although he was a magnificent forward, it is with bat in hand that he is remembered — a giant of the game by repute and physical stature. Few men of his size had such a bewitching variety of graceful and elegant strokes. Wisden said "for finish and grace of style his batting was equal to anything we have seen".

In Cricket of November 29th 1906 the Rev. Harold A. Kate wrote: "the place of William Gunn amongst the immortals of the game has been earned not only by his patient scientific batting but by his splendid fielding in the country where he covered such an extraordinary amount of ground. If an eleven of the best English players of all time could be collected, it is hard to see how Gunn, taking his skill and activity as a fieldsman with his reliability, consistency and hitting powers as a batsman into account, could be left out".

William Gunn died in January 1921, but his name lives on . . . in the annals of cricket and through the world-wide reputation of the firm he founded. In his will, having made provision for his widow and daughter, he left his successful business to the men who had worked with him and built up the concern.



Introduction...

Ever since Cricket became a public spectacle on the heroic scale, the bat has evoked a depth of sentiment inspired by no other implement of the game. The old cricketers cherished their favourite blades and hung them on the wall, long after their playing days were over, so that they became as symbolic as the ancestral swords of chivalrous memory".

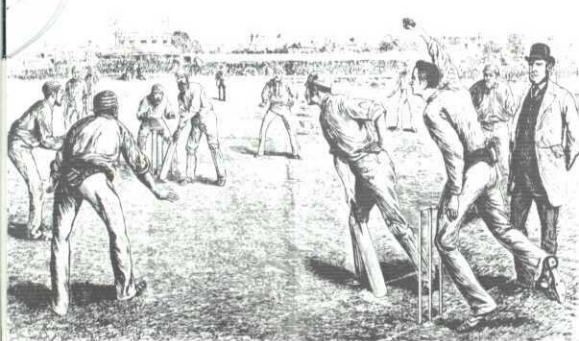
Indeed the history of cricket is linked very closely with the development of the cricket bat — the word "cricket" was possibly derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'cricce' which simply meant a shortened crooked stick. Originally the proportions of the bat were not specified, and it was left to the lads of the village to cut and fashion them as they fancied.

These early bats were curved rather like hockey sticks, and being broader and thicker at the bottom, they were obviously suited to the style of bowling used in those days, which was usually along the ground. Any thought of defensive play must certainly have been very difficult with bats of this size and shape. The style of bats continued to be influenced by the style of play until the eventual straightening of the bat came about with the introduction of overarm bowling. Round arm bowling meant that the

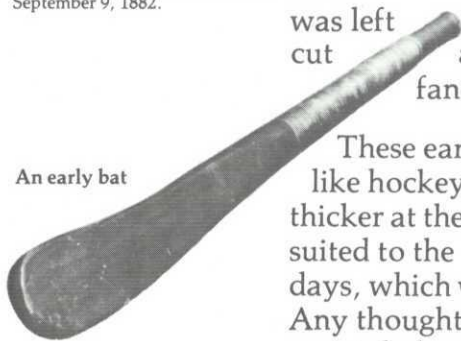
batsman needed a quicker back lift and stroke which necessitated making bats lighter. Although later changes such as the introduction of cane handles and the use of rubber springing have improved bats, the shape has changed very little.

Making cricket bats has always been a special skill and something which hasn't changed to this day is the craftsmanship which goes into the gradual process of creating quality cricket bats. This is a job for experts, like the craftsmen who have been employed at Gunn & Moore since 1885. It was in this year that T. J. Moore went into partnership with the legendary William Gunn, whose thorough training in both the business and the art of batsmanship enabled him to spot and bring into the business a craftsman of consummate skill, also named William, the son of the great Notts wicketkeeper, Mordecai Sherwin. It is through the skill of those unique men and the generations following that Gunn & Moore has built up its proud reputation.

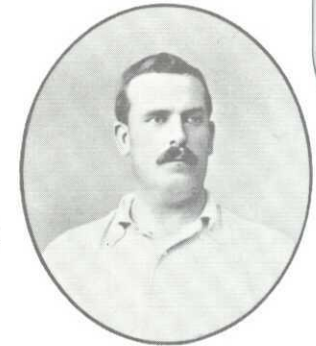
It is perhaps fitting that the mantle of William Gunn should now be taken over by Reg Simpson who is numbered among that select band which put the glory back into English postwar cricket. Reg reluctantly withdrew from test and first class cricket at the height of his powers to devote himself to his increasing responsibilities at Gunn & Moore on his appointment as Managing Director. His experience and understanding of every aspect of the game fit him uniquely for this position and indeed Gunn & Moore is the only cricket bat manufacturer to have a Test Player at its head.



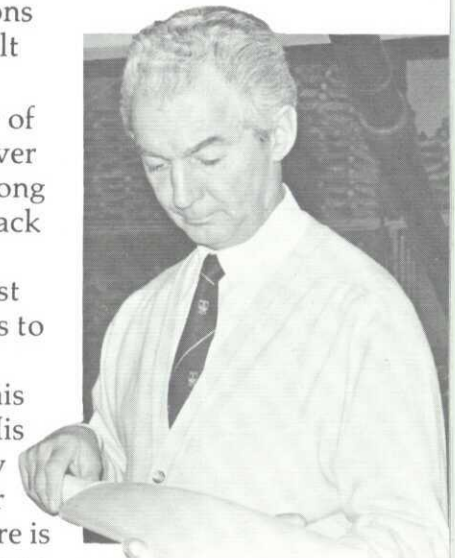
England v. Australia at Kennington Oval.
The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News
September 9, 1882.



An early bat



Mordecai Sherwin
Notts Wicket Keeper 1876-1893



R. T. Simpson (Notts and England)
First class career 1944-63
Runs 30,546 100's 64
Managing Director,
Gunn & Moore Ltd.

The Wood...

The manufacture of cricket bats is probably unique to this country, and a visit to the Gunn and Moore factory is a genuine relief from the monotony of automation and mass production. One's first impression is the sweet smell of maturing willow, and seeing the huge stacks of clefts, and the bundles of specially imported Sarawak cane, one realises that the story starts much further back.

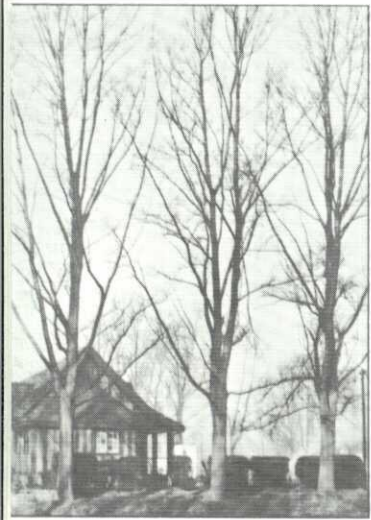
Of the 36 types of willow found in this country only one, *Salix Coerulea*, produces the lightweight straight grained willow, suitable for Gunn & Moore bats.

The wood arrives in rounds, approximately 28" in length which have to be split into the rough clefts in a process known as *riving*. This is done with an axe, wooden wedges and a long handled hammer, known as a '*beetle*'. The whole

process involves a strong arm *and* a steady hand; it's a skilled job getting the maximum number of clefts from each round.

The next process is barking, when the bark is removed with a 5 lb side axe. At this stage, the clefts weigh over 20 lbs, but half this weight is lost as the wood dries during the maturing process. The clefts are stacked so the air can circulate freely during this period which takes from 8 to 12 months. This process cannot be rushed and it's not before the wood is fully seasoned that the clefts are ready for the next stage, the shaping process.

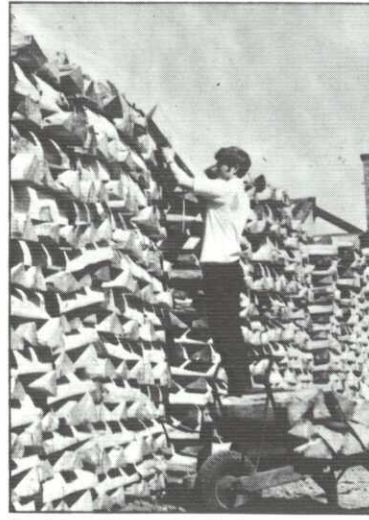
The first part of the shaping is carried out on the circular saw; a few swift passes, and the rough shape of the bat begins to emerge. Then, looking like crowded office blocks, the clefts are left for a further maturing period, during which the first stages of grading are carried out.



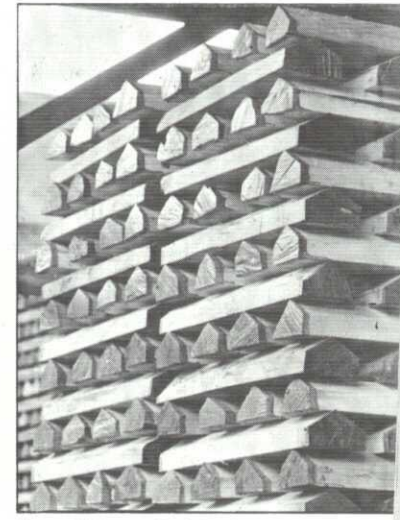
Salix Coerulea



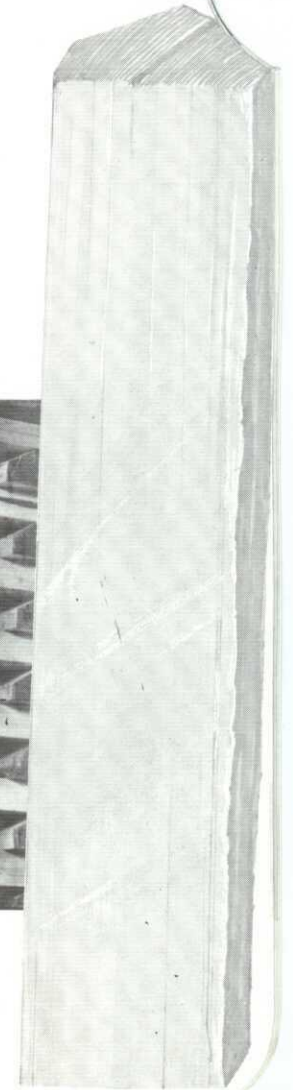
Splitting the rounds. This picture from the mid 50's records one of the largest trees ever to come into the Gunn & Moore yard.



Stacking the rough clefts for seasoning.



Sawn clefts stacked for further maturing.



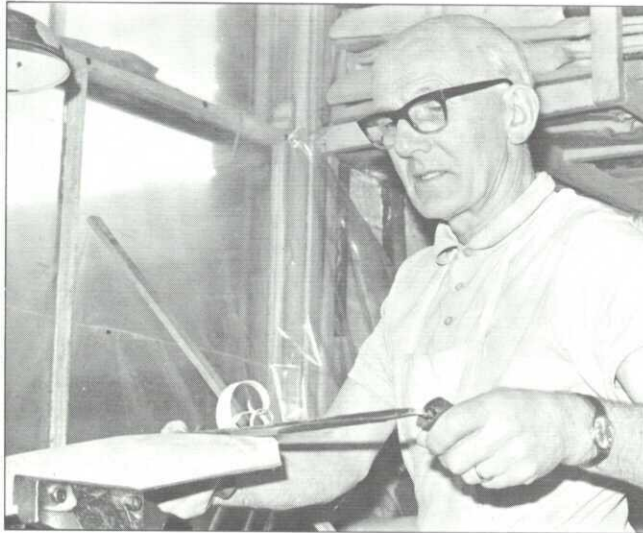
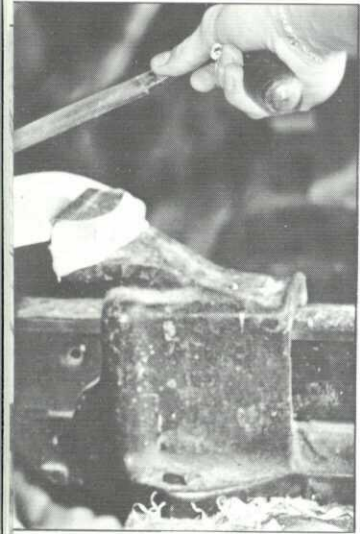
Shaping and pressing...

The next stage of the process is most crucial. The shaping of the bats is critical, and calls for a high degree of skill, which takes years of training to perfect. Each blade has to be treated individually and have exactly the right amount of wood left to ensure perfect balance.

Something else which is important, especially to hard hitters of the ball, is strength. In order to ensure resilience and to provide a hardened surface, which will avoid scarring when the bat comes into contact with the hard ball, the blades are compressed in a special pressing machine. Besides hardening the blades, the load of up to 4 tons, will reveal any hidden flaws

or weaknesses. After pressing, the blades are given the familiar 'V' shaped slot in the neck, ready to take the handles which are skilfully being put together in another part of the factory.

Rolling and pressing provides a hardened resilient playing surface and finds any weak blades, which are ruthlessly rejected.



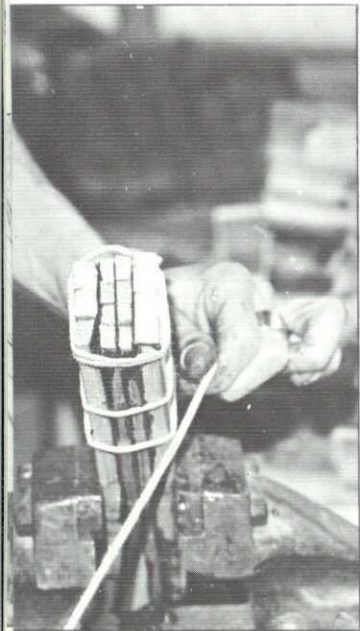
Individual attention by craftsmen ensure perfection.



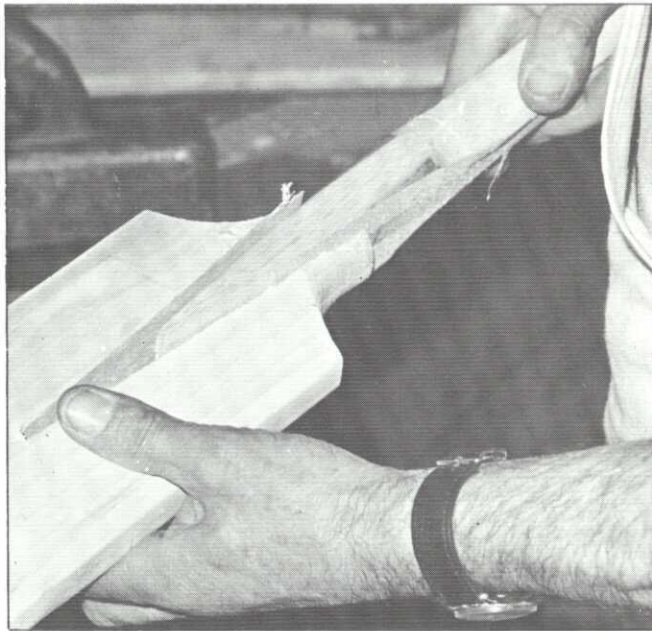
Getting to grips...

The cane, specially imported from the Far East, is first cut into bundles of the right length, and then fed into a splitting machine. The two different sized canes produced in this way are built into slabs, together with the special resilient rubber. Synthetic glues have been found unsuitable as they are not resilient enough, so animal glue is used to fix together the 14 canes which make up each handle. These are then bound together with cord and wedges used to keep the binding tight as the glue sets. A drying period of several days is allowed to let the glue set and ensure the slabs of cane are rigid enough to be turned.

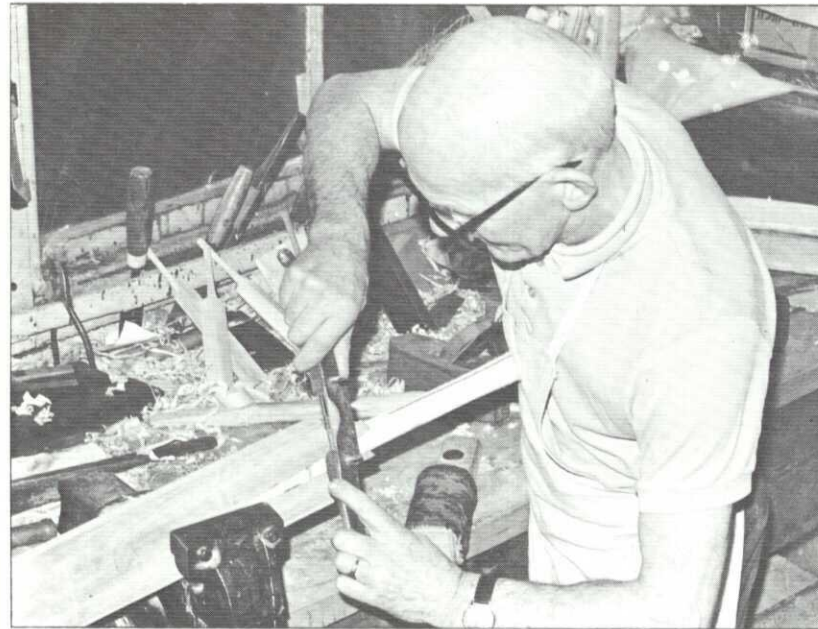
During the turning process the handles at last begin to take on their more familiar shape and after being given the finishing touches, with the keen edged draw-knife, they are ready for fitting to the bat. This is done with such expert precision that the need to glue the handles in position hardly seems necessary. There is actually a case on record of a bat being sent out, by accident, unglued. Its proud possessor played with it for the best part of a season before he even suspected the omission!



Cane and rubber bonded together — the basis of a perfect handle.



Fitting the handle to the blade.



Shaping the shoulders.



Final stages...

So now we have a completed bat ready for the final stages; and it's here that the master craftsman comes into his own. A few deft strokes and he adds the finishing touches with unerring accuracy, giving the bat its characteristic shape and finely balanced proportions. Sanding and polishing finishes the blade and it then only remains for the handle to be bound with twine and fitted with the rubber grip. This operation is carried out on a lathe which accounts for the hole in the bottom of the bat, which is *not* used for oiling the bat as some people think!

Finally the bats are checked and graded before being given the Gunn & Moore stamp of approval, a stamp of quality.

As one leaves the factory, the sight of those maturing clefts, the bundles of cane,

and the batches of bats at various stages of completion leaves one with the thought that cricket is far from declining in popularity. The demand for top quality bats is ever increasing and technical innovations, such as the use of carbon fibres, are helping to improve bats even more. There will never be a substitute, however, for using the best quality materials and the skill of craftsmen whose lives are dedicated to creating perfect bats.

Gunn and Moore products have been world famous since 1885 and players throughout the world, be they Test players or schoolboy aspirants, can be certain that the same high quality of materials, the same high standards of workmanship go to the making of every bat bearing the name Gunn and Moore.



Checking and grading.



The seal of approval.



Fitting the rubber grip.



Which bat?

In selecting a cricket bat the prime objective should be a light pick-up facilitating smooth and easy-flowing strokes. This should not be confused with a lightweight bat since it is the weight/balance ratio which is the all important factor. As this is peculiar to each individual player, choice of bat should essentially be by 'feel' and not scale weight alone.

This means looking for as much wood as possible around the drive area — approximately 7" from the toe in a full-size bat — while at the same time ensuring the balance is such as to allow for a good back-lift and stroke with minimum effort.

It is to be noted that the number of grains on the face of a blade has no material influence on the performance of a properly treated bat.

Close attention should also be given the bat handle which should fit comfortably in the hands and not be too thick as this will restrict wrist movement.

How to look after your cricket bat.

OILING Oiling is essential to preserve your bat. However, be careful not to over-oil it — there is a much greater danger if you over-oil rather than under-oil.

A new bat or blade should have one coat of oil applied to the face, edges, toe and back. Use a soft rag or, if you prefer, the palm of your hand. Take care to see that as little oil as possible touches the cane splice of the handle.

No further oil should be applied to the back, but at intervals of two or three weeks throughout the season give the face, edges and toe another light coat of oil.

Only *raw* linseed oil should be used.

Dampness is dangerous for bats . . .

Take care, so far as possible, not to get the bottom of the bat damp. It causes the pressing to lift with possible splitting along the bat base.

During the winter months . . .

Store your bat where it will not be exposed either to dampness or excessive heat. If the bat is stored in this way there will be no need to oil it during the out-of-season period.