

# The Little Wonder: The Remarkable History of Wisden

Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, fondly known as "Wisden," is a publication that has an illustrious history dating back to 1864. The almanac was founded by John Wisden, a renowned cricketer, and has become the holy grail of cricket enthusiasts ever since. Over the years, Wisden has evolved into much more than a mere compilation of statistics and scores; it has become a source of cherished moments, extraordinary stories, and invaluable insights into the game of cricket.

## The Birth of an Icon

When John Wisden unveiled the first edition of his almanac in 1864, little did he know that he was laying the foundation for an enduring cricketing legacy. The aim was simple – to provide cricketers with a comprehensive guide that encompassed every aspect of the game. Priced at one shilling, the initial edition of Wisden featured scores of all the important matches played in the preceding year, as well as articles written by leading cricketing figures.

With its distinctive yellow cover and compact size, Wisden quickly earned the nickname "The Little Wonder." It found an immediate fanbase among cricketers and enthusiasts alike, who recognized the vast potential of the almanac in preserving the rich history of the sport. This overwhelming response laid the foundation for a publication that would become a cricketing institution.

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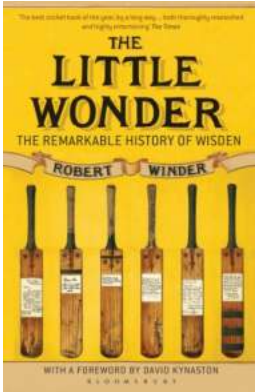
**Wisden** by Sarah Kuhn (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 908 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 64 pages
Lending	: Enabled



## Wisden Through the Ages

As the years went by, Wisden continued to evolve, adapting to the changing needs of the cricketing community. In the late 1800s, it began including obituaries of important cricketing personalities, paying tribute to their contributions to the sport. This tradition continues to this day, with each edition featuring an "Obituaries" section dedicated to honoring cricketing legends who have left an indelible mark on the game.

In the early 1900s, Wisden introduced its famous "Notes by the Editor" section. This segment, penned by the almanac's editor, became a platform for insightful commentary and analysis of the cricketing world. It provided readers with a unique perspective on the game, delving into controversies, discussing players' performances, and offering an in-depth analysis of cricketing techniques.

Another significant development in the history of Wisden was the inclusion of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year. Since 1889, the almanac has been bestowing this prestigious award upon players who have distinguished themselves in the preceding season. This accolade has become one of the most sought-after

recognitions in cricket, with players considering it a testament to their skill and dedication.

## **A Collector's Delight**

For cricket enthusiasts and bibliophiles, owning a complete set of Wisden editions is the ultimate dream. As the almanac gained popularity over the years, certain editions became rare and highly sought-after. The 1916 edition, for example, is particularly valuable because it contains a minimalistic grey cover due to printing restrictions during World War I. Similarly, the 1958 edition, known as the "Bradman Edition," dedicated its entire front cover to the legendary Australian cricketer.

These unique editions have fetched extraordinary prices at auctions, with collectors from around the world vying for the chance to own a piece of cricketing history. The allure of these rare editions lies not only in their scarcity but also in their ability to transport readers back to a specific era, reliving the triumphs and tribulations experienced by cricketers of that time.

## **Wisden in the Digital Age**

With the advent of the internet, Wisden has successfully embraced technology to reach a wider audience. Digitized editions of the almanac are now available, allowing cricket enthusiasts to access the wealth of cricketing knowledge with just a few clicks. The digital format has facilitated a more interactive experience, with hyperlinks directing readers to additional information and videos accompanying articles.

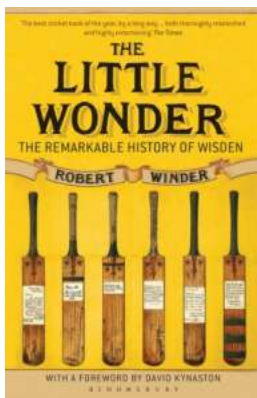
Wisden has also expanded its online presence by establishing a dedicated website and partnering with various cricketing platforms. This has enabled the publication to engage with a younger generation who primarily consume

information through digital mediums. The website features live match updates, insightful articles, and discussions, ensuring that Wisden remains an indispensable source of cricketing information in the modern age.

## The Enduring Legacy

Today, more than 150 years after its inception, Wisden Cricketers' Almanack continues to be celebrated as the "Bible of Cricket." Its ability to capture the spirit of the game, document its evolution, and provide unparalleled insights into cricket's past, present, and future is a testament to its enduring legacy.

Wisden stands as a remarkable testament to the passion and dedication of John Wisden and his vision of preserving the history of cricket. It has become a cherished companion for cricket lovers worldwide, offering a panoramic view of the sport and its finest moments. As long as cricket continues to enchant and inspire, the legend of Wisden will live on.



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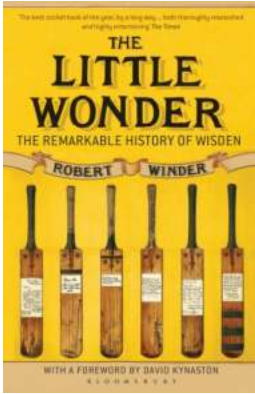
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John Wisden, at his peak known as 'The Little Wonder', was a key member of the England cricket team who in 1859 sailed across the Atlantic on the world's first overseas cricket tour. In 1864, after his retirement, Wisden published the first edition of the book that would make his name immortal. He printed 'full and accurate scores' along with indispensable facts about the Derby, the St Leger, the university rowing matches 'and other Interesting Information', including potted histories of the Wars of the Roses. The 1864 edition is now valued at anything up to £25,000, and Wisden Cricketers' Almanack has been published continuously ever since – not for nothing is it known as 'the cricketer's bible'.

The Almanack has, despite some close shaves, never missed a year. In 1937 it was just 48 hours from liquidation, and in the Second World War a German bomber set fire to the company's headquarters, destroying its records. And yet somehow, the yellow (since 1938) book has retained its antique, rugged character. It is a labour-of-love collection of records for cricket obsessives, but also a hearty eccentric. It loves to count the number of wides in a season, but also delights in relating tales from far-flung pavilions.

Through the telling of Wisden's story, we also glimpse the history of English, and world, cricket. The book is a window onto the game's most charismatic characters, its high points, lows and political storms. In *The Little Wonder* Robert Winder traces the central role the game has played in national life for so long. The book's 150th anniversary in 2013 is the ideal time to tell the extraordinary story of Wisden's – and cricket's – journey from Victorian times to the modern world. New every year, it feels as though it has been with us for ever.



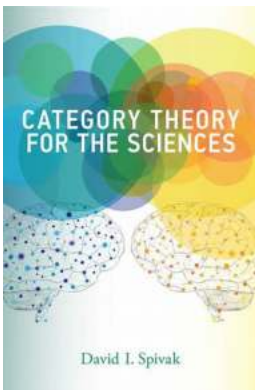
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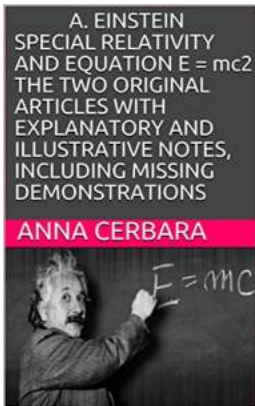
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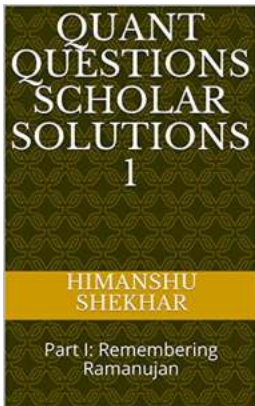
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