

GEORGE HEADLEY

“The Black Bradman” had already made six centuries and a double century in Tests by the time he arrived at Haslingden in 1934.

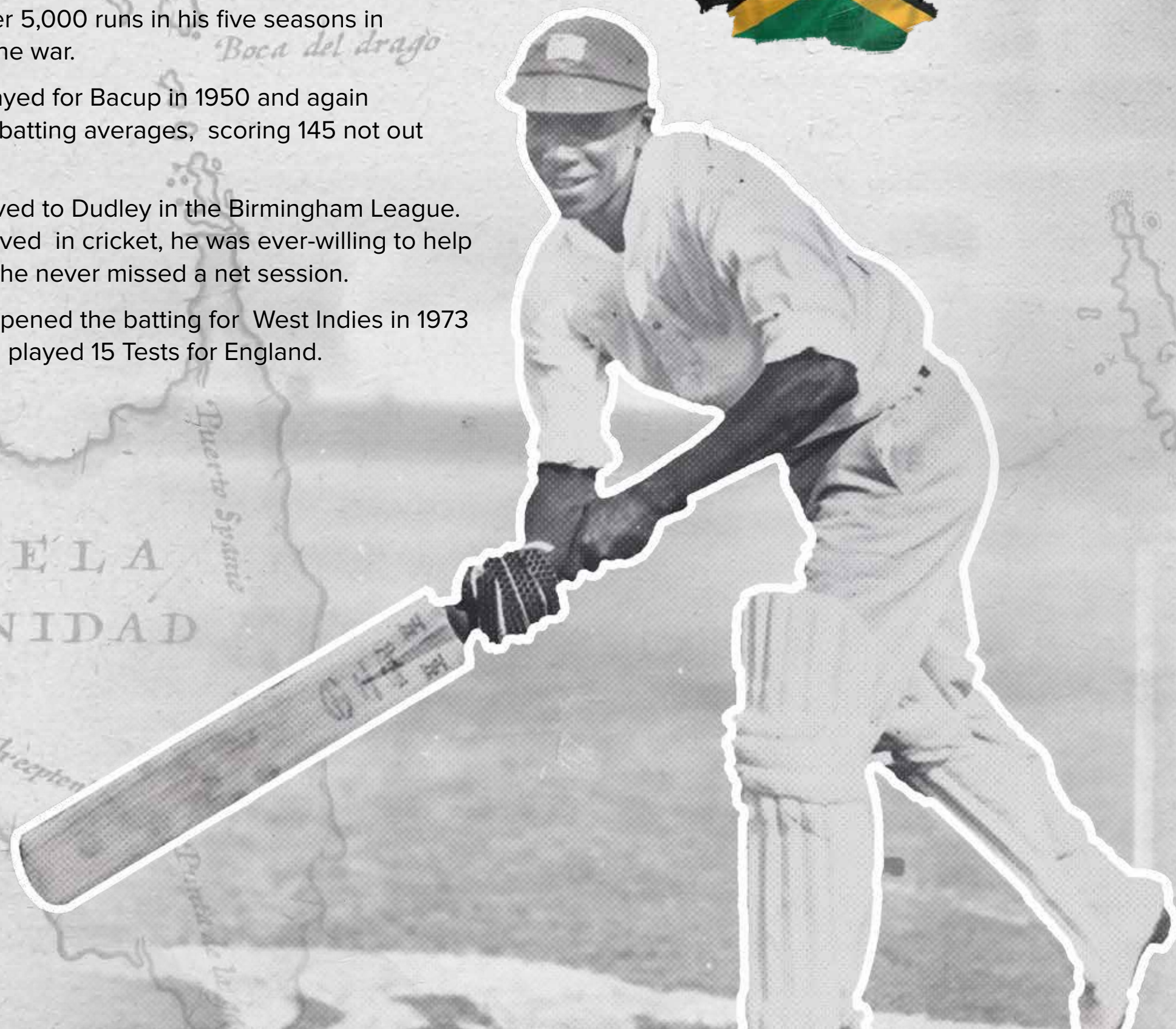
In his first match, Headley faced Constantine – and was run out for a duck! Yet he ended top of the batting averages, scoring nearly 300 runs more than anyone else. In his first Worsley Cup match, he hit 189, over half his team’s total.

Headley scored over 5,000 runs in his five seasons in Lancashire before the war.

After the war, he played for Bacup in 1950 and again headed the league batting averages, scoring 145 not out against Haslingden.

In 1951, George moved to Dudley in the Birmingham League. For all he had achieved in cricket, he was ever-willing to help young players and he never missed a net session.

George’s son Ron opened the batting for West Indies in 1973 and grandson Dean played 15 Tests for England.



FRANK WORRELL

Frank Worrell impressed everyone who met him, played with or against him, or simply watched him bat. All grace, class and elegance, he seemed to caress the ball, sending it exactly where he wanted.

With Barbados he set world record fourth wicket partnerships, first with John Goddard and then Clyde Walcott. He was West Indies’ leading batsman in the momentous 1950 series win in England.

Worrell played seven seasons in league cricket in England, starting with Radcliffe and later at Norton in Staffordshire. He set a new league batting record in his first season at Radcliffe: two years later he broke it, scoring 1,694 runs (7 centuries, average 113).

In 1960, he was the West Indies first black captain in a full series. In the famous “Tied Test”, with Australia’s final pair needing just one run to win, Worrell said to Wes Hall: “Whatever you do, don’t bowl a no-ball. They won’t allow you back in West Indies.”

Worrell was knighted in 1964 for his services to cricket. In early 1967 he died from leukaemia and was the first-ever cricketer to be honoured with a memorial service at Westminster Abbey.



EVERTON WEEKES

Small but stockily built, Everton Weekes hit the ball incredibly hard but rarely in the air. Batting at number four in Tests, after Worrell and before Walcott, he attacked the bowling whenever possible and scored the most runs of the famous “three Ws”.

As well as his impact on the cricket fields of the world, Everton Weekes had a lasting impact on a small Lancashire town in the Pennine foothills. For seven seasons in total, starting in 1949, he was Bacup's professional.

He amassed over 9,000 runs for Bacup, with 25 centuries. In 1954 his batting average was 158.25. He helped the team to Cup success in 1956 and to the league championship in 1958, his final season in Lancashire.

In 1958 Weekes became only the second black captain of Barbados and proved an outstanding leader, helping to develop Conrad Hunte and Seymour Nurse into Test players.

He is remembered as “a great cricketer, a great man and a great ambassador for race relations.” After Weekes was knighted in 1995, Bacup's Chairman Neal Wilkinson said: “Sir Everton's name is very much etched not only into the history of Bacup Cricket Club but into the town itself.”



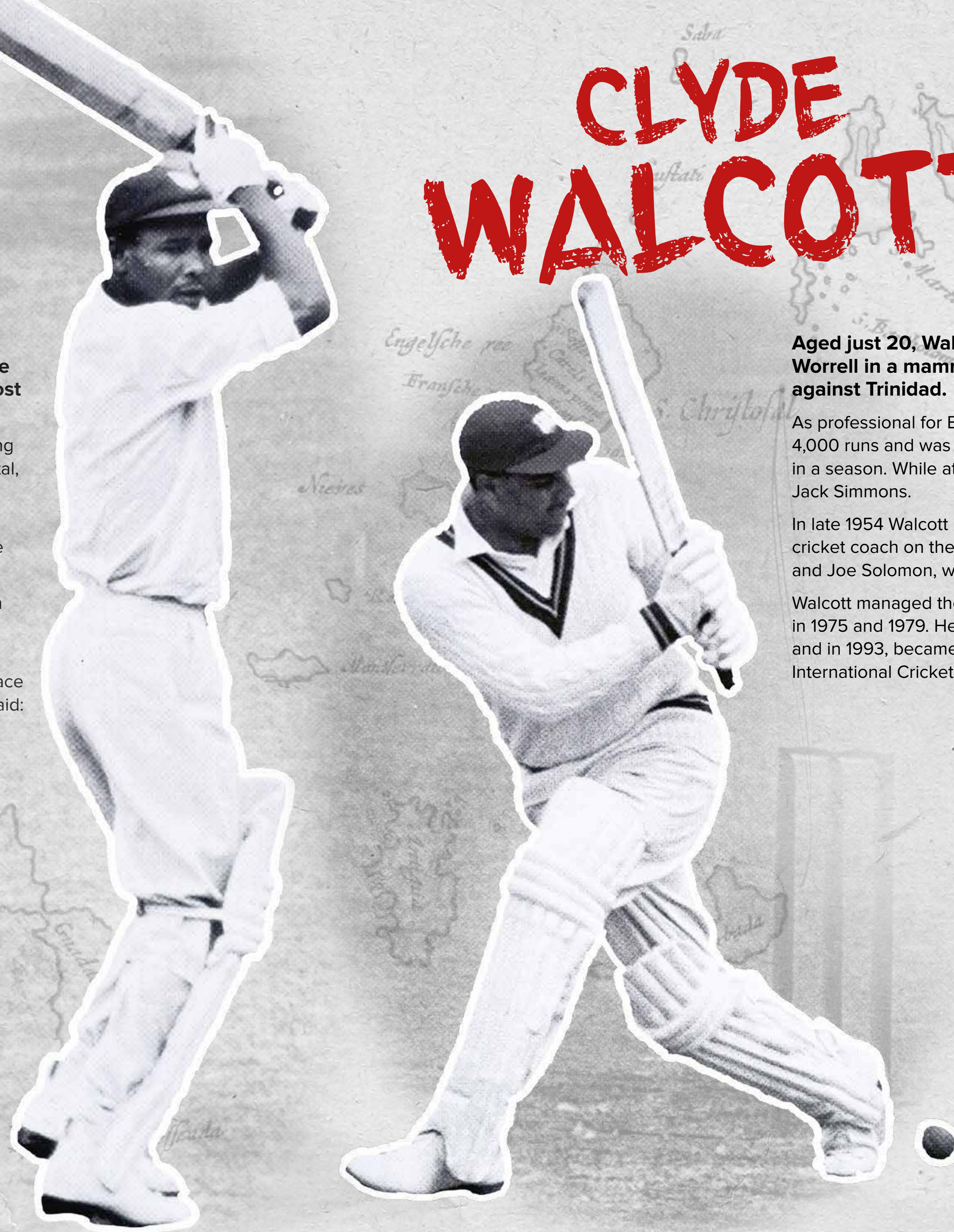
CLYDE WALCOTT

Aged just 20, Walcott scored 314 not out partnering Frank Worrell in a mammoth, unbroken stand of 574 for Barbados against Trinidad.

As professional for Enfield for four seasons from 1951, he scored nearly 4,000 runs and was the first Lancashire League player to average over 100 in a season. While at Enfield, he became a mentor to the young Jack Simmons.

In late 1954 Walcott moved to British Guiana (now Guyana), working as a cricket coach on the sugar estates. He helped Rohan Kanhai, Basil Butcher and Joe Solomon, who all went on to have fine Test careers.

Walcott managed the West Indies teams that won the Cricket World Cup in 1975 and 1979. He was later President of the West Indies Cricket Board and in 1993, became the first black man to be elected as Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).



GARRY SOBERS

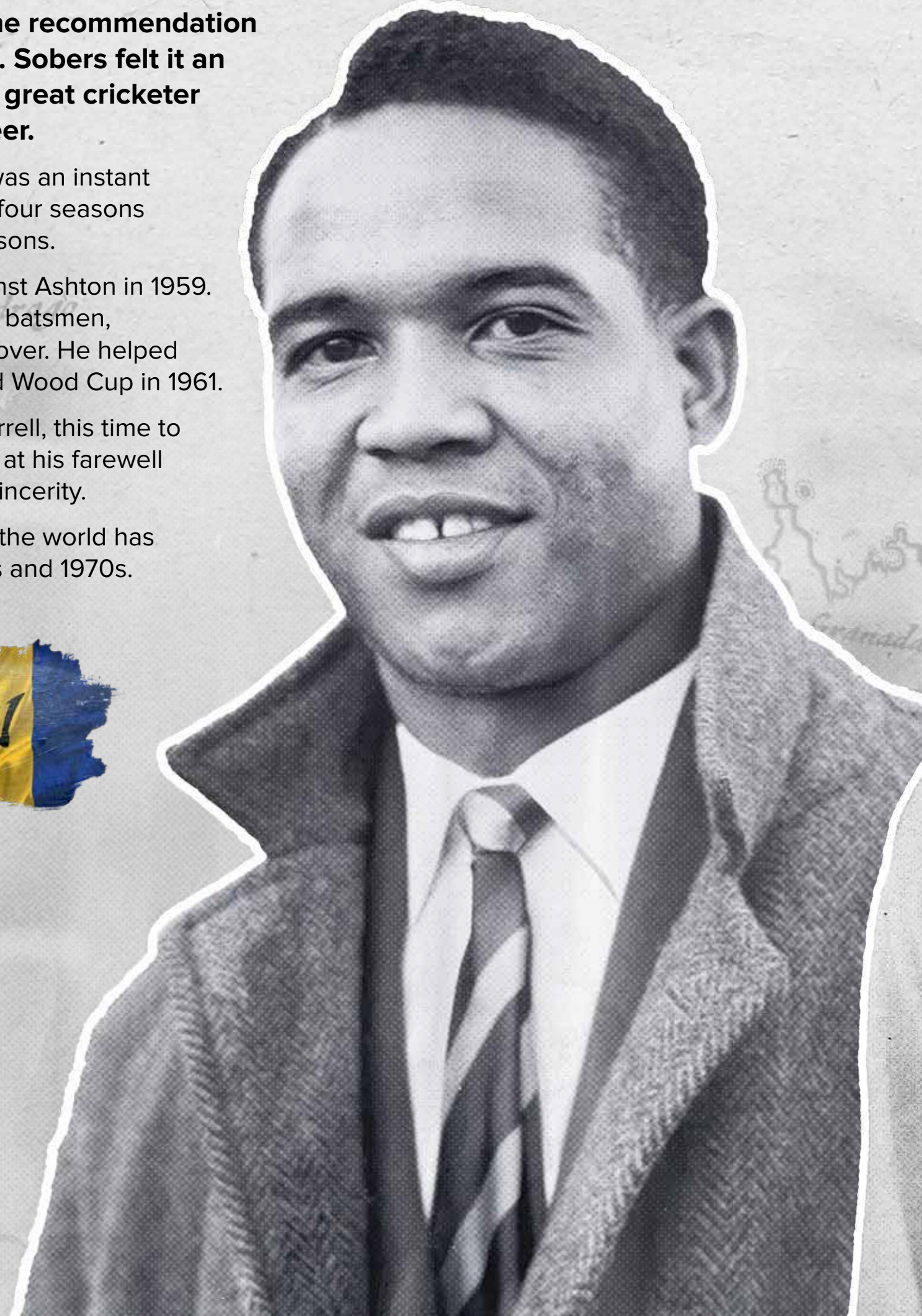
Garry Sobers joined Radcliffe in 1958 on the recommendation of Frank Worrell, who was leaving the club. Sobers felt it an honour to follow in the footsteps of such a great cricketer who had hugely influenced his cricket career.

Garry spent five happy seasons at Radcliffe and was an instant success. He scored 1,000 runs in each of his first four seasons and took 100 wickets in each of his last three seasons.

His highest score was a hurricane 186 made against Ashton in 1959. Against Middleton he clean bowled the first three batsmen, including Basil D'Oliveira, for no score in the first over. He helped Radcliffe win the double of the Championship and Wood Cup in 1961.

In 1962 he left Radcliffe, again to follow Frank Worrell, this time to Norton in Staffordshire. There was much sadness at his farewell and Garry was greatly moved by its warmth and sincerity.

Sobers is one of the greatest all-round cricketers the world has ever seen and captained West Indies in the 1960s and 1970s.



WES HALL

It must have been an extraordinary sight: the tall, powerfully built young man, crucifix swinging around his neck, coming off his 30-yard run in the confines of the Thorneyholme Road ground.

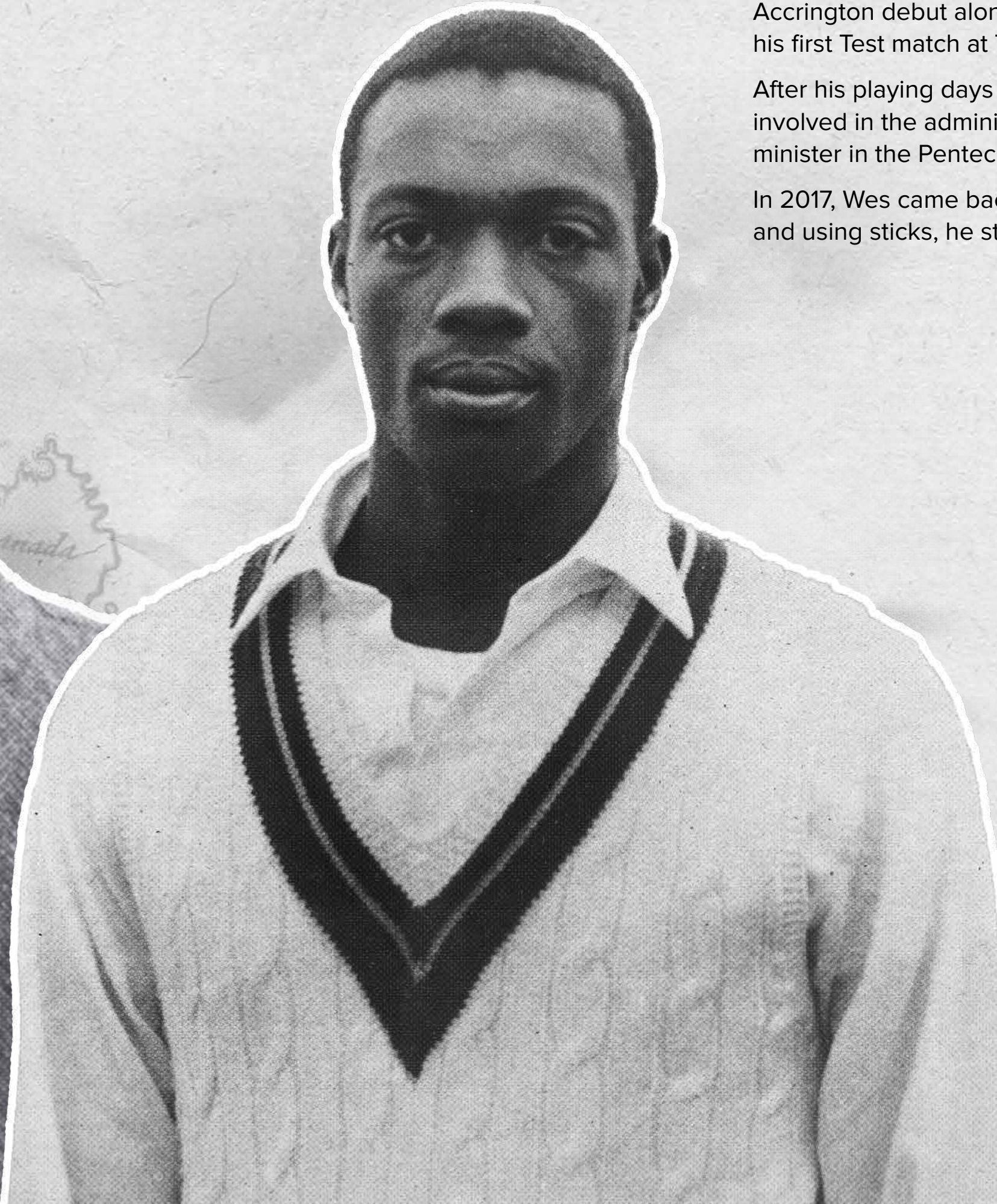
In three seasons at Accrington, Wes took 110, 106 and 123 wickets and helped them win the championship in 1961, the club's first title in 45 years.

Wes reflected in his book *Pace Like Fire*: "Those Saturday afternoon battles turned out to be tougher than anything I was to encounter in Bombay, Brisbane, or The Oval."

He gave David Lloyd (then aged 13) his first bat: "It was broken at the bottom - but it didn't matter, it was my first bat." David made his Accrington debut alongside Wes who, with Roy Gilchrist, took him to his first Test match at Trent Bridge.

After his playing days Wes entered Barbadian politics and was involved in the administration of West Indies. He was later ordained a minister in the Pentecostal Church.

In 2017, Wes came back to Accrington for an evening. Eighty years old and using sticks, he still wanted to mark out his run-up.



CHARLIE GRIFFITH

In 1963 Charlie Griffith cut a swathe through the English batting. Ted Dexter publicly denounced him for throwing and he was no-balled four times by Arthur Fagg against Lancashire. Thus, his signing for Burnley in 1964 was highly controversial.

Griffith terrorised the amateur batsmen in the Lancashire League with the unpredictability of his 'suspect' yorker and bouncer. The yorker was close to unplayable, zooming towards the stumps like a heat-seeking missile.

Burnley won the championship and Griffith collected 144 wickets at the incredible average of 5.20. Only once was he tamed, taking 1-49 in the Worsley Cup Final against Rishton. Jack Chew played the innings of his life to score 52 not out. His body a mass of bruises, he was off work the next day.

Griffith returned to Burnley in 1967 but he was never as quick or as deadly again. A return of 57 wickets tells its own story.

His partnership for the West Indies with Wes Hall still goes down as one of the most feared bowling partnerships in Test cricket.



CLIVE LLOYD

In 1967 Wes Hall recommended Clive to Haslingden. Though shocked by the cold weather and persistent rain, he found the Haslingden people to be warm, friendly and hospitable.

"I think I never went anywhere other than Lancashire because I fitted so nicely in this county. But my decision to stay there for my whole career was also an act of loyalty to the people who made me feel so at home, I couldn't play for anyone else."

He recorded a century in his first game and topped the league averages, scoring 861 runs. He abandoned his looping leg-spin in favour of seam-up: "my fingers were too cold to get any purchase on the ball and I didn't get much turn in the damp."

In his second season he narrowly missed breaking George Headley's club record of 1360 runs, but still achieved the best average in the league (61.30), scoring 300 more runs than any other batsman.

Although other counties offered him better terms, Clive signed for Lancashire. He quickly became a county legend, playing exciting cricket and winning many trophies.

Clive moulded the West Indies into a highly successful team and became one of the great international captains. One of the world's best cricketers, he was knighted by the Queen in 2022.

