

Recreation

Introduction:

A lot of the activities were seen as the exclusive domain of the ruling class. It is not until the 20th century that some of the barriers were removed.

The upper class engaged in:

- Grand balls
- Visiting theatrical groups
- Swimming (going to beach)
- Hunting and bird shooting
- Horse racing, betting and gambling (1906)
- Hotel entertainment- especially at New Year when they host balls.
- Reading
- Sports: golf (1930's) Lawn tennis, cricket and Yachting

The lower class engaged in

- Ring games
- Work games
- Tea leaf meeting
- Dances
- Cricket - they played amongst themselves with bats and balls that they made. This was usually done in an open space in the community commonly known as the 'ball ground'.

The Churches provided the following means of recreation:

- (i) Camps
- (ii) Retreats
- (iii) Outings
- (iv) Picnics
- (v) Concerts
- (vi) Sporting Competitions
- (vii) Clubs such as Girls Guide, Boys Brigade and Brownies

Cricket

- Cricket was very important at the primary/elementary level in **the schools** in the 1930's. In many schools throughout the West Indies the boys not girls, represented their schools at matches against other schools.
- West Indian colonies began playing cricket matches from as early as the **1890's**. You already know that at that early stage there was a **colour bar** on for the all of the exclusive cricket (sporting) clubs that were in operation at that time. By the 1920's things began to change.
- The **West Indies cricket Board (WICB) was granted test status in 1928**. The first test match was played at Lord's in England.
- Even though the whites dominated the side there a few blacks or coloureds on this team. **Learie Constantine** was one of them. The Trinidadian was among the first to break the colour barrier. He debuted in this historic test match of 1928.



Learie Constantine at the crease

He was soon joined in the 1930's by the Jamaican (Panamanian born) **George Headley**. **The West Indies won the series against England in 1934-1935**. He went on to become of the **first black man** to captain the West Indies team in **1947 - 1948**.

- By the 1940's there came the famous Barbadians- the **three W's (Clyde) Walcott, (Everton) Weekes and (Frank) Worrell**. **Weekes'** test record of five centuries in consecutive innings must have caused a few whites and blacks to jump together in true West Indies style. It helped to erase some of the prejudices that whites tended to have against non-whites.
- By the 1950's, a number of players of Indian descent joined the team. Among them were **Sonny Ramadhin and Rohan Kanhai**. The great **Garfield Sobers** also debuted at age 17 in 1954. The West Indies won the Test Match against England at Lord's in the 1950's.
- They played and won **Pakistan in JAMAICA in 1958**. **At this match**, Sobers made his historic 365 not out.
- The Calypsonians could not let the moment pass without ensuring that it entered the annals of our history. Men such as Lord Beginner and Lord Kitchener recorded songs such as cricket, lovely cricket. You know the power of music in uniting people everywhere.
- The colonial experience was meant to teach us that nothing good comes from the colonies. It comes from overseas. It wanted to teach us that we were inferior and the Mother Country superior. Some of us choose not to learn that lesson but rather to defy it. This is where our cricketers come in.

- The lower classes were not allowed membership in the exclusive cricket clubs. They played cricket among themselves with bats and balls that they made themselves. They would not have been able to afford the gears, bats and balls that the professionals and elites used.