

# Times past and classic cricket

**RALPH** Whitlock turns back the historical clock and invites us to look through the curtains of his birthplace, Pitton, near Salisbury, as it was in the Victorian era.

With the help of parish registers, newspapers and family records, Ralph describes a scene of hardship and violent socio-economic change.

For instance, in the 1870s, a villager, James Parsons, who was, though a humble farm labourer, a bit of a visionary, and conceived the idea of a British Empire peopled with good Anglo-Saxon stock.

With this idea in mind he and his wife emigrated to Canada and set up a small farm where Calgary airport now stands.

Once Parsons had the farm well established, he wrote to his colleagues in Pitton and its surrounds inviting them to come and join him — living with his family until they could find their own feet.

Over 80 villagers were persuaded to emigrate to Canada by Parsons.

A truly enjoyable look at rustic life in the raw and is rich in characters such as Donkey Bill, Chunky Garrett, Abraham Collins, Moses Welstead and Winterslow's 'witch' Lyddie Shears. **Dave Colville.**