

# OZ BOWLING STAR'S TOUR VERDICT

**JOHN ETHERIDGE**  
REPORTS



**SHANE WARNE** reckons England have their best chance in 24 years of winning the Ashes Down Under this winter.

The legendary Aussie spin king has tossed aside his usual ritual of mocking the Poms.

England have been thrashed and embarrassed in all Ashes contests in Australia since Mike Gatting's team won there in 1986-87.

But Warne (*below*) reckons this winter could be different.

And he hails Graeme Swann as the world's most improved cricketer – insisting he will be key to England's attempt to retain the urn they won here last summer.

He said: "The last time England went to Australia, it was a 5-0 whitewash and embarrassing. They'll want to do something about that.

"They can challenge us for the first time since 1986-87. It will be a good series.

"Winning in Australia and India are the two toughest countries for any side.

"Australia has the best home record over the last 20 years. In my time, we lost one series against West Indies in 1992-93 and one run separated us.

"Our home record over the last few years hasn't been as

# Swann hell of a chance

HERO... Swann celebrates Ashes win last summer



## ENGLAND CAN WIN ASHES, SAYS WARNE

### OUR RECORD IN ASHES SINCE '87

- 86-87 (Aus) ..... England 2-1
- 89 (Eng) ..... Australia 4-0
- 90-91 (Aus) .... Australia 3-0
- 93 (Eng) ..... Australia 4-1
- 94-95 (Aus) .... Australia 3-1
- 97 (Eng) ..... Australia 3-2
- 98-99 (Aus) .... Australia 3-1
- 01 (Eng) ..... Australia 4-1
- 02-03 (Aus) .... Australia 4-1
- 05 (Eng) ..... England 2-1
- 06-07 (Aus) .... Australia 5-0
- 08 (Eng) ..... England 2-1

strong. They lost to South Africa and drew with India.

"But it's still a tough ask to win in Australia.

"Glenn McGrath will say 5-0 to Australia – but I think it'll be close.

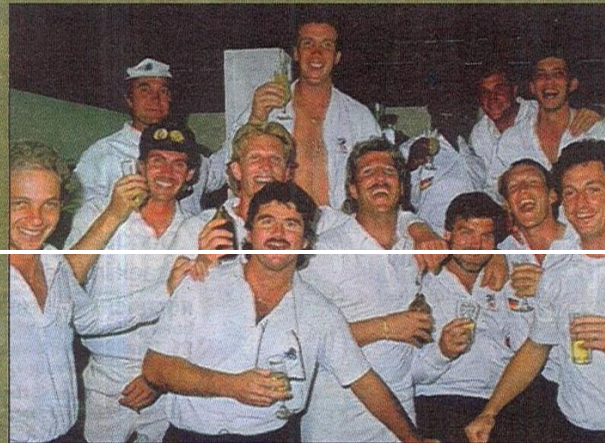
"If I had to put all my money on one team, I'd go for Australia because of their home record and England's experience last time.

"England played outstanding cricket in the recent one-day series. It has been a long time since they had the edge on us in all forms of the game.

"Their selectors and Andy Flower must take credit for not discarding players like they have in the past. They are starting to gel.

"And Swann is the most improved cricketer. He mixes his pace, he's not afraid to be hit, he's learning all the time in difficult conditions. As a spinner, he needs to know how to take wickets at the crucial times.

"There are times



WIZARDS OF OZ... England heroes celebrate 1986-87 Ashes triumph

to defend and attack. But, if in doubt, attack and that's what I like about Swann.

"His special ability is his quicker delivery – he spins it. That's rare for a spin bowler. Generally, the slower you bowl, the more you spin it.

"But Swann can turn it when he bowls faster. He is going to be a trump.

"Of the other England bowlers, I think Jimmy Anderson needs the ball to swing and Stuart Broad seems to be troubling the Aussies with his bounce."

Warne paid tribute to Sri Lanka ace

spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, the only man to overtake his tally of 708 Test wickets.

Murali, 38, has 792 victims and will retire from Test cricket after the opening game against India in Galle, starting July 18. But he is available for next year's 50-over World Cup.

Warne said: "Murali's been wonderful for cricket. Some will say Warne is better than Murali, some think McGrath was better than both of us.

"I may come out of retirement now just to get my record back!"

[j.etheridge@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:j.etheridge@the-sun.co.uk)  
● FOLLOW Shane Warne and the 888poker.com team at the World Series of Poker on twitter.com/warne888

### SunTRAVEL

## CRUISE THE 7 NIGHTS FULL BOARD FROM



Witness over 3000 years of ancient temples and monuments along Nile on board a seven-night cruise from only £699 full board including...  
Book a holiday departing from Manchester between July and August per person. To get the full Egypt experience you can extend your stay in Luxor from £99 or in the Red Sea resort of El Gouna from £199. £150. Flights from London Gatwick or Manchester.

Departures 2010	5* Viking Princess Full-board Prices from	Lu 2nd B Price
Jul 19	£699	£9
Aug 2, 9, 16	£799	£9
Aug 23, 30, Sep 6	£799	£1
Oct 4, 11, 18, 25	£899	£1
Nov 8, 15	£849	£1
Dec 13	£699	£2
Dec 20	£949	£3