

Hair apparent

GRAHAM GOOCH, the former England cricket captain, has had a rug rethink. He was inspired during last winter's Ashes tour by the luxuriant new fur atop an Australian cricketer, Greg Matthews, who had previously been as bald as a billiard ball.

So unabashed is Gooch by his new-found hairstyle that he has embarked on a tour of Britain to

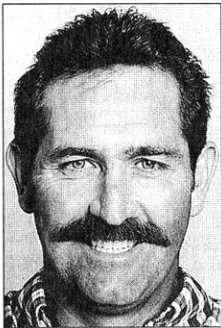
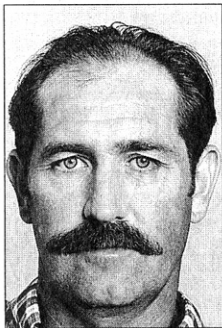
display it at salons in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. The Advanced Hair Studio, where his thatch was created, insists that Gooch is not being paid for the tour; instead he received a free "treatment" worth £3,000 in return for publicity.

The procedure involves no surgery; it is not a wig or hairpiece. "It involves a permanent process by

which hair is attached to an ultra-fine membrane that is integrated into his existing hair," says an advanced hair technician.

Henry Blofeld, the cricket commentator, has strong views. "Opening batsmen do tend to go for it — Geoffrey Boycott went for transplants, you see. It must be something to do with the bouncers that they face," he said. "Personally, I've been as bald as a coot from a young age and never seen any point in hiding it."

Gooch begs to differ. "Thinning affects guys in different ways and I decided to do something about it," says the Essex cricketer. "So here I am as I was ten years ago."



Before and after: Gooch and his new look

● *The boyish but balding Welsh Secretary William Hague will be forced to take a downturn today. After injuring his foot walking last weekend, Hague has abandoned plans to clamber to the 3,560 ft summit of Snowdon. An alternative programme has been organised as part of his Welsh tour. He will now go 450 ft below ground — into the Llechwedd slate caverns at Blaenau Ffestiniog.*

Not blighted

THE DROUGHT in Yorkshire has obliged Castle Howard to take emergency measures to avert a po-