



INSIDE EDGE

The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust

A Message from The President Chris Cowdrey



The heritage of Kent cricket is important to everyone who has a love for the County and I am delighted to see the Trust is getting off to such a good start. I truly hope as many people as possible will join the Trust to help us preserve and enlarge the collection. Of course it is exciting to watch the current Kent team play well, but our history is what makes our County so special. It would be good if we could encourage a few younger Members to get involved with the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust.

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KCHT Progress Report

From Jo Rice - KCHT Chairman



Since the Canterbury Week edition of "Inside Edge", the Trust has been forging links with other organisations, both inside and beyond the borders of Kent, that share our interest in the heritage of cricket.

In September I attended a seminar at the British Library, organised by the National Sports Museum Online. A very interesting day, the most important part of which was making new contacts in the sports heritage world, which we hope to build on in the future. We are also setting up links with other county heritage groups, and hope to be able to help establish an informal forum for all counties which will help us all learn from each other's successes and mistakes (if any!).

Within Kent, we have been establishing friendly relations with local museums, such as Belmont House, the home of Lord Harris, and have also begun to talk to the universities and local clubs within the county.

One of the main points of the Trust is to bring the heritage of cricket, at all levels within the county, to as large an audience as possible, so along with all the talking, we have placed orders for more display cabinets for the Spitfire St. Lawrence Ground, and are also planning our exhibitions for next year. With the Women's Ashes Test set for Canterbury in August, do not be surprised if one of the displays focuses on the history of women's cricket.

We need as many members and volunteers as possible: you don't have to give up your whole life to the Trust – unless you want to – but a few moments a month from lots of people will make a huge difference to our efforts.



New Display Cabinets for The Long Room

KCHT has taken the lead in replacing the display cabinets in the Chiesman Pavilion. David Robertson can now report that before the start of next season he hopes to have new display cabinets in place and that much more of the Club's collection will be on view. CEO Jamie Clifford and David met with a representative of suppliers in early November. Thanks to the generosity of the Supporters' Club and two individuals, we will be in a position to start planning our displays once the new cabinets are in place.

The Trust would welcome further offers of financial support to enable us to purchase more cabinets. Until such time as it is possible to establish a fixed site museum, it is intended to display archive items in cabinets located in the various buildings on the ground. These will then be incorporated into a dedicated Museum in due course. Members of the Trust, as well as Members and supporters of KCCC, are invited to sponsor a specific cabinet and have their generosity suitably recorded on it. Please contact David Robertson.



Cricket Club Histories The aims of the Heritage Trust include establishing closer links with local cricket clubs throughout the county. One thing we want to do is build up a library of local cricket club histories, many of which have been published over the years. The County Club currently has only a few such histories and larger collections are known to be held by a few Trust members.

Can you add to the collection? Have you produced or are you producing a commemorative publication which we can publicise in this newsletter? Please let us know and we will oblige.

DR/HM

Private Collections The Trust is still very keen to hear about collections of items of Kent cricket interest held by Members. While it would be splendid to have catalogues of such items, just an indication of the type and range of books and memorabilia would be nice to know. By so doing we can create a virtual library and museum. Such knowledge might be of use in answering any queries as well bringing together like minds in the furtherance of what we are trying to achieve as a Trust.

Wants Lists We are happy to publish in these pages any requests for items of Kent cricket interest wanted by collectors. By the same token, publicising any items available for disposal is also welcome. Please let us know.



Recent Acquisitions - Kent Membership Cards

In recent months the Club has received interesting archive items that various Members have accumulated over the years. These have included a large collection of membership cards dating back over fifty years. It is interesting to see the variation in appearance of these cards which were produced in small book format. In earlier years, they were even leather bound, giving a special significance to membership of the Club. It would be wonderful if we could build a complete collection of cards from the first issued in the late nineteenth century up to the present day. Any offers will be appreciated.

DR



Subscription Renewals for Non-Direct Debit Members

Subscriptions are due for renewal on 1st January 2015. The rate remains £10 and cheques should be made payable to "Kent Cricket Heritage Trust" and sent to the address c/o Kent County Cricket Club at the address at "Who's Who at KCHT". Please mark your envelope "Subscription Renewal".

Appeal for Help

As the Chairman mentions in his report, we are always looking for active help in running and promoting the Trust, and no doubt on projects that may come up in the future. This could include helping with the administration and possibly joining the Committee. If you have not already done so, and if you can help, please let us know at the address at "Who's Who at KCHT"

A New Publication - Lord Harris

The Faversham Society has recently added to their prolific range of publications with an academic thesis by Ben Tosland entitled *The 4th Lord Harris, Bombay Cricket and the Civilising Mission 1890-1895: A Reassessment*.

As the title suggests, the publication examines the recent, negative, opinion of Lord Harris's five year governorship of Bombay. It draws on previously unpublished letters and the texts of a number of lectures, including those from many Indian sources. The 54 page A4 publication costs just £5 plus p & p and is available from The Faversham Society at The *Fleur de Lis* Heritage Centre, 10-13 Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NS. Tel : 01795 534542



Bonus Article

Recipients of the electronic version of this and future newsletters will receive an article of Kent cricket interest. Our first is Derek Carlaw's biography of Frederick Stanley Lowe, a promising bowler who played Kent Second XI in 1914, but who sadly had the distinction of being the county club's first casualty of the Great War. We are open to suggestions for future articles.



Gloucestershire Evening

The Heritage Trust held its first meeting at the Spitfire Ground during the last match of the season. The theme, appropriate to the occasion given the opponents in that match, was Kent and Gloucestershire. Matches involving WG Grace and Wally Hammond were recalled and Derek Carlaw's memories, as precise as ever, of seeing him in action, were fascinating.

Our special guest was John Shepherd who gave a very interesting perspective on a part of a career some of us have heard very little of – his years with Gloucestershire. The evening attracted about 22 supporters, including some guests from the West Country. Hopefully we can repeat this in the months to come.



The Lime Tree

Friday 9th January 2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the death of a St Lawrence ground legend. It was on that stormy night that the famous old lime tree fell. It was a fitting end to a long and distinguished life during which it played a significant part in the Club's history. Its successor is now looking in good condition, although batsmen's claims of having cleared the tree carry less weight than in years past!

DR



The exhibition to mark the Centenary of the start of World War I that was jointly mounted by the Club and the Trust during Canterbury Week

was well received by members and visitors alike, including family members of Colin Blythe and James Seymour. Several hundred people viewed the items on display which included Colin Blythe's wallets and a bat used by him for most of his first class career. There was also a Timeline showing the events of the 1914 season and a reproduction of some stern correspondence between Lord Harris and Major John Tufton, who objected to cricket being played after the outbreak of hostilities.

A Book of Remembrance was signed by past and current players, the coaching staff, Club officials and committee members, office staff and more than sixty members, supporters and visitors. The Book is available in the office for anyone who wishes to sign and will be open throughout the whole Centenary period, i.e. until November 1918.

DR

World War I Exhibition

Corporate & Club Membership

The Trust can now offer Corporate Membership to clubs and other groups with an interest in the heritage of Kent cricket. For an introductory rate of £15 for non-profit making organisations such as cricket clubs, historical societies and museums in Kent, who will receive copies of the electronic version of this newsletter, free admittance for their members to Trust members-only occasions, and in future, reduced rate or free copies of any publications the Trust may produce. If your club or organisation is interested, please contact us.



Frederick Stanley Lowe *Nearly a Kent Player ?*

Although never progressing beyond the Second Eleven, as the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1914-1918 War is commemorated, Frederick Stanley Lowe deserves remembrance as the first Kent cricketer killed in action, the only one in 1914 and probably the first professional cricketer to die in the conflict. A Reservist, born in Tyler Hill, he had served five years with the First Battalion the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment). On 18th October 1914 Lance Sergeant Lowe died, near Radinghem, northern France, leaving a wife and two sons, one a year old, the other four months.

Hailed in the local press as 'Kent's new fast bowler, discovered in Ireland' Lowe made his debut against Surrey Seconds at Canterbury on July 13, the first of four Second Eleven appearances which, together with two Club & Ground matches, was the extent of his cricket for Kent. Highlights of his brief career included 35 batting number nine against Staffordshire at Gravesend. Lowe was top scorer, one of only three batsmen to reach double figures when, facing Sydney Barnes, generally considered the world's finest bowler. Kent were dismissed for 113 (Barnes 6-41). For the Club & Ground, Lowe took 3-10 against Cyphers at Beckenham and had match figures of 9-66 against the Tonbridge Club.

Kent needed a deputy for 'Pip' Fielder (born 1877) and Stanley Lowe had joined the staff in July 1914 with a reputation as an all-rounder in Army cricket and with the Woodbrook Club in Bray, Co. Wicklow, where he had averaged 28.53 with the bat and 11.50 with the ball. Woodbrook was no ordinary club. The personal fiefdom of Sir Stanley Cochrane, there was an imposing pavilion, indoor nets, a Test match standard wicket - even its own railway station - and regular matches with Australian and South African touring teams as well as with several counties. The team regularly fielded three or four first-class professionals. It was probably on Cochrane's recommendation that Lowe joined Kent.

On Tuesday 4th August 1914, as troops of *Generaloberst* von Kluck's First Army crossed the Belgian border, Kent were playing Sussex on the second day of Canterbury Week; Lowe was with the Second Eleven at Leyton. The ultimatum to Germany, due to expire at 11pm GMT, was not delivered until the evening but mobilisation telegrams had already gone out.

At Canterbury, the Old Stagers had cancelled their performances, spectators were fewer and the usual large Army presence was visibly dwindling - but at a Kent CCC Management Committee meeting, held at 11.30pm under the Chairmanship of Lord Harris, war-related matters were not allowed precedence. High on the list was 'the question of playing Freeman and Lowe in the Surrey match' (commencing August 10th). 'Tich' Freeman, already a first-class cricketer having played against Oxford University in May, was duly picked; Lowe would almost certainly have joined him had Kaiser Wilhelm listened to his fears over invading of Belgium. In the event, Lowe missed his chance to become a first-class cricketer. He had already received his mobilisation notice and, having taken two Essex second innings wickets for seven runs, had already left as the last pair played out time.

Born on 20th July 1887, Frederick Stanley Lowe was one of the ten children of Tucker and Clara Lowe who ran the Tyler Hill post office. For most of the time Clara (1850-1929) seems to have filled the role of post mistress, assisted by daughter Minnie, while her husband (1847-1923) carried on his former occupation of tile maker and later worked in the hop industry. As post mistress, Clara's responsibilities included sending out the mobilisation telegrams.

Stanley Lowe had already sampled Army life as a part-time soldier with the Buffs Volunteer Battalion while



The Tyler Hill Post Office Circa 1900



Frederick Stanley Lowe - Nearly a Kent Player ? (Continued)

employed as a gardener when, in April 1906, he enlisted in the 7th Dragoon Guards. Despite higher pay and a much better uniform, after little more than two months he had second thoughts and was bought out by his mother. It cost her ten pounds but by April 1907 he was back in the Army, this time with First Battalion of the Buffs and Clara got a refund.

For most of his Army career, Lowe served in Ireland where, with a full-scale Civil War looming, there was a large garrison. He met his wife Ellen in Ireland and in April 1912 they were married, in Dublin. Promoted Lance Corporal in 1908 and Corporal in 1910, he was classified a First Class Shot and his record shows only a few minor 'crimes' such as smoking on duty apart from in April 1912 when he was missing from barracks after 'lights out' for ten hours, 45 minutes. His CO, Major Hatton, delivered a severe reprimand and fined him a day's pay but the incident occurred only sixteen days after his wedding. Life might well have been difficult for Irish wives of English soldiers in the prevailing political climate and the Corporal did not lose his stripes.

Part of 16 Infantry Brigade, 6th Division, the Buffs were still in Ireland on mobilisation and did not arrive in the Divisional concentration area around Cambridge until August 19th. The Government, beset with irrational fears of invasion, insisted on keeping 6th Division in England until the Territorial forces could take over and, as a result, the Buffs did not leave England until 8th September by which time the main base of the British Expeditionary Force had been moved from the vulnerable Channel ports to St. Nazaire

6th Division, together with the somewhat battered 4th, was now part of III Corps commanded by Lt. Gen, Sir William Pulteney (memorably described by his Brigadier General Staff Charles Bonham Carter as 'the most completely ignorant general I served under during the war') and due to take its place on the Aisne where both sides were digging in. Delayed by chaos at the hastily established base, the Buffs relieved 3rd Division troops at Vailly-sur-Aisne on 21st September and that evening repulsed a strong German attack, losing two killed and seven wounded, among the latter Major Hatton DSO who, two years earlier, had taken a lenient view of Lowe's breaking out of barracks.

As each side sought an open flank, the BEF began a systematic move north, III Corps concentrating around Hazebrouck. On 18th October, as the Corps advanced from Armentieres towards the ridge north of Lille, the Buffs were ordered to carry out a 'reconnaissance in force' towards the Hameau de Bas- La Vallee road. Their first objective, the village of Radinghem was taken with little loss but as the advance continued towards their second objective, the Chateau des Flandres, they came under heavy fire and it is probably here that Sergeant Lowe was hit.

There is no known grave but he is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial (Panel Two) and on a Roll of Honour on the wall of St Stephen's Church, Hackington. He is also commemorated in the churchyard on the gravestone of an



The Ploegsteert Memorial

elder brother Tucker (b.1882), a railway ticket collector who died in May 1914. Also remembered on the stone is another brother, Albert Edgar (b.1877) who was killed at Cambrai in 1918 while serving with the Canadian Infantry.

At the time living in Clonakilty, Co. Clare with her sons, from May 1915 the Army paid Ellen Lowe a widow's pension of nineteen shillings per week and she was still there in July 1919 when she received her husband's 1914 Star with clasps. By August 1921, when she signed for his War Medal and Victory Medal, she was Ellen McDonald, still an Army wife living in married quarters in Aldershot.

Derek Carlaw



Who's Who at KCHT

President : Hon. Christopher Cowdrey

Trustees : Jamie Clifford - Kent County Cricket Club CEO

David Robertson - Kent County Cricket Club Honorary Curator

Howard Milton - Kent County Cricket Club Honorary Statistician

Jonathan Rice - Kent County Cricket Club Main Committee Member

Tony Kilbee - Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Treasurer

KCHT Committee

Chairman - Jonathan Rice - jnhrice@googlemail.com

Jamie Clifford - jamie.clifford.kent@ecb.co.uk

David Robertson - david.robertson81@btinternet.com

Howard Milton - howard.milton@tiscali.co.uk

Tony Kilbee - skilbee@gmail.com

Martin Moseling - acricketsortofchap@gmail.com

Derek Barnard - cricketologist@btinternet.com

Please feel free to contact, as appropriate, any of the officers and committee of the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust. Their e-mail addresses are to be found opposite. Please address your query, by post to the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust, c/o Kent County Cricket Club, The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Old Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3NZ.

In particular, we would welcome for inclusion in this newsletter any items of interest to the Kent cricket heritage community, however small. These may be directed to Howard Milton, the editor, at the e-mail address as noted or to 46 Elmfield Close, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LP.

Publications & Membership

One of the objectives of the KCHT is to initiate a programme of publications of relevant interest. But to achieve this we still need the funding and the interest an increased membership will bring. One project that is high on the list of priorities is to produce a *Bibliography of Kent Cricket* which will include details from the many Kent cricket club histories that have been published. So if you have not joined us yet, please do, or if you know of others who would be interested, please tell them. HM

A Grave Mystery

Alexander Pitcairn - Kent Cricketer?

The discovery of the coffin of Alexander Pitcairn beneath St Martin's Church in Eynsford during extensive restoration works aroused much interest in September. Pitcairn, whose brother Robert gave his name to the South Sea island where the Bounty mutineers lived following the infamous mutiny, has a traceable cricket history. Much was made of his being a "Kent cricketer", playing in a match for the Gentlemen of Kent against the MCC at the original Lord's ground in 1791. But looking at what *Scores and Biographies* called the Kent team a very weak side, they lost by an innings and 113 runs, gives rise to the suspicion he was making up the numbers. Not the least because most of his ten recorded games were at Lord's for the MCC. No other games of a Kent interest were recorded.



Nor is there any other evidence of a Kent residence save that his permanent repose was to be entombed, unmarked, beneath the flag stones of Eynsford Church. A lawyer, Pitcairn's cricket career as recorded, seems to be confined to 1791 and 1792. He died in November 1814 aged 64. HM