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Volume 2

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INSIDE EDGE

The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust

A Message from The President Chris Cowdrey



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The Chairman of the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust, Jo Rice, reminded me that he had asked me "in a weak moment" to be the President of the Trust. Actually the truth is that I was delighted to be asked and I am totally committed to it.

I love the title, I love the word "Heritage". It says it all. I suppose for me my heritage emanates from the St Lawrence Ground (or the Spitfire Ground!) and

as a result the club will always be dear to my heart. Watching my father as a young kid, plotting how to get past the steward at the entrance of the Chiesman Pavilion (yes, named after my Grandfather), playing for the club for 15 years or so, alongside brother Graham and having a son who has proudly adorned the Kent colours. That's "Heritage!"

I am pleased to report the Trust is doing well and with a reasonably healthy bank balance are spending much of it on preserving and archiving the collection. We must strive to continue this work and not let the great history of Kent cricket dissolve in to the dark ages. We are not opposed to T20 cricket, coloured clothing, reverse sweeps; indeed big crowds and new heroes are paramount to the club's future, but we must continue to strive to remember our heritage.

Exemplifying the work of the Trust we have recently purchased a poster at auction from Christie's, dated 1849, dealing with the meeting in Canterbury which formed the original county club. This is our heritage and long may it continue. I implore every lover of Kent County Cricket Club to support the Trust.

A Moment in Time, Saturday June 15 1912



Open to bids on eBay in recent months have been a number of postcards depicting the Gunpowder Works Cricket Club in Faversham. The two here come from the same match in June 1912.

According to the late Fred Poynter's splendid and detailed history of Faversham cricket, Davington Park was the club's home ground until 1923.

The club was originally formed in the 1880s and was reformed in 1906.

As Fred states "For a few years the Gunpowder Works dominated the sporting life of the town. Not only did they have a fine cricket eleven, but also ran a football side and a brass band".

The club survived the War, not the least the terrible explosion at the Works, and indeed flourished after 1923 when the club moved to the Mount, a ground where the county club had played a first-class match in 1876.

There is a history to be researched and written specifically on the Gunpowder Works Cricket Club and David Robertson, whose home town Faversham is, would welcome any information which might further this possibility.

Howard Milton



Another World

The British Film Institute has recently released on its website a number of cricket-related films. Some have Kent interest; not the least the one on Canterbury Week 1913.

It shows relatively little of the actual play, save for teams coming in and out of the pavilion. But as a rare glimpse of what the atmosphere of these Weeks in that golden age was like, it is remarkable. Scenes showing the large size of the crowd thronging the many tents give no better illustration of what a considerable social occasion this was. 1913 was of course the last great Week. Twelve months later war was declared on the second day. It is a sobering thought to wonder how many of these parading so joyfully returned when the Week resumed in 1919.

The link is:-

<http://player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-sussex-v-kent-county-cricket-1913/>

Other films of Kent interest which can be found via the BFI website are two matches in 1934—Australia (Canterbury) and Derbyshire (Dover); Herne Hill playing on grounds in Kent including Folkestone and Dover in 1932; and cricket at Canterbury in 1967.

Thank you to Martin Luff who drew this to the attention of the Kent County Cricket Supporters' Club, from whose excellent magazine this information was taken.

Recent Acquisitions

A recent Knight's auction included several important Kent items. The KCCC Committee agreed that we needed to bid for several items, and gave us authority to bid up to a certain amount to try to buy them. Committee member Derek Taylor bid on behalf of the club, and despite the huge sums bid for some lots, was successful in bringing two key items into the collection.

Lot 323 was a Kent Cap awarded to Colin Blythe (right). The estimate was £700 to £1,000, but bidding started at £1,900. This was a priority for us and eventually we won it at a hammer price of £2,400.

Lot 325 was a Kent Cap awarded to Frank Woolley, which also had an estimate of £700 to £1,000. Bidding started at a more reasonable £700 and we were successful at a hammer price of £1,500.

There were other lots we would have liked – a “Tich” Freeman Kent cap, which finally sold for £2,400; a rare book on our 1906 Championship win which went for £900, to a telephone bidder who was determined to have it, and one or two other items which went for well more than the auctioneer's estimates and our budget.

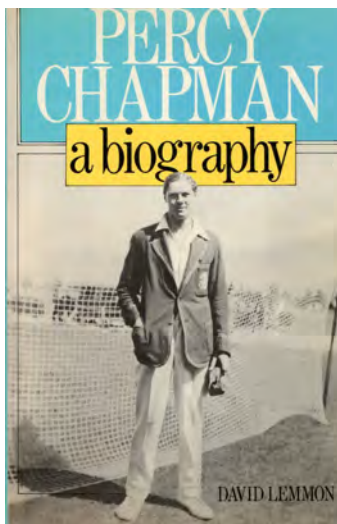
We will continue to look out for Kent memorabilia that comes up for auction, but our funds are limited and our priority at present is the preservation of what we already have. However, we will soon have the two county caps on display, to add to what is now a very fine collection.

Jo Rice



Ex Libris—A Favourite Kent Book Remembered

Percy Chapman: a biography by David Lemmon. 1985.



One of the Kent Legends, Alfred Percy Frank Chapman was a charismatic captain of Kent and England, captaining England before he captained his county side. He was not a disciplinarian but rather a persuasive charmer and his successes owed more to the vivacity of his personality than to his subtle study of his tactics.

Lemmon's biography written over thirty years ago brings out the full character of the man who may have been carefree on the surface but wanted results.

Selected by *Wisden* as a “Public School Cricketer of the Year” in 1919 for his exploits at Uppingham, he was a blue at Cambridge for three years (1920 -1922). He played cricket for his home county of Berkshire and was selected for England before he played county cricket for Kent. He captained England on 17 occasions out of his 26 Test Matches and only lost two Tests as captain. The pinnacle of his success was captaining his country to victory at The Oval in 1926 when England regained the Ashes for the first time since 1912. Appointed Kent captain in 1931 he was a steadying influence, but his increased drinking was at times an embarrassment and he was relieved of the captaincy in 1936. Lemmon does not go into as much detail as to Chapman's declining years probably because at the time his widow was still alive. Chapman died in 1961.

The man who was described by E.W.Swanton as a “handsome sunlit youth” was the epitome of the game in the twenties and thirties. Chapman deserves a more detailed biography but this book by Lemmon is still available at a very low price at Amazon or Abe books.

Derek Barnard

Who's Who at KCHT

President : Hon. Christopher Cowdrey

Trustees

Jamie Clifford - Kent Cricket CEO

David Robertson - Kent Cricket Honorary Curator

Howard Milton - Kent Cricket Honorary Statistician

Jonathan Rice - Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Chairman

Tony Kilbee - Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Treasurer

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Howard Milton - howardmilton@btinternet.com

Tony Kilbee - skilbee@gmail.com

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Derek Miles - miles@twisdon.fsnet.co.uk

Kent Cricket Heritage Trust
Registered Charity Number 1154556
The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence
Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent
CT1 3NZ

Inside Edge Contact

Feedback on this newsletter is always welcome as are suggestions for future contributions. The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust's committed interest is to all aspects of Kent cricket history, not just to the county club.

If you have something to say and/or contribute please contact Howard Milton at the e-mail address on this page or at 46 Elmfield Close, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LP

Recent Book

Beckenham Cricket Club 1866 – 2016



Foxgrove Road Beckenham Pavilion 1906
Beckenham Cricket Club, Foxgrove Road, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 5AS.

This 65 page booklet to celebrate 150 years of the club devotes 27 pages to cricket, still the main activity, whilst the remaining pages deal with all the other sports which are run under the guiding hand of the cricket club viz: tennis, hockey, squash, running, football and croquet. A solid history of the club is followed by portraits of the famous five who have played for Beckenham - Derek Underwood, Robert Key, Richard Ellison, Charles Rowe (Kent's President for 2017), and Nigel Felton (Somerset, Northamptonshire and Kent Second XI).

The booklet is well illustrated and includes a congratulatory letter from the President of Kent, Lady Kingsdown. Those who collect everything on Kent Cricket must obtain a copy. The good value cost is £10 and it is available from The Club Manager, Beckenham Cricket Club, Foxgrove Road, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 5AS.

Derek Barnard

A Festive Touch

The Medway bridge at Maidstone illuminated to celebrate the Cricket Week at the Mote in 1910.

For many years the playing conditions on the ground had been debatable for first-class cricket. But by 1910 the familiar terracing was now in place, the wicket had been turned round to counter the effects of the late afternoon sun, and the new, present pavilion constructed.

Rain played a part in both matches that year. A draw against Northamptonshire was followed by a win by 178 runs against Yorkshire. The latter were bowled out for just 78 thanks to the combined efforts of Woolley and Blythe.



Chauncy Hare Townshend (1798-1868): forgotten Victorian poet with a unique literary connection

The roll call of Kent county cricketers begins in 1806 and when exactly one hundred years later Frank Woolley made his debut, he most conveniently became the five hundredth. Scattered amongst that five hundred there are many players, particularly amateurs, who played just the odd match. Many have a tale to tell and this is one of them.

Chauncy Hare Townsend [sic] was born on 10 April 1798 in Busbridge Hall Godalming Surrey, the only son of Henry Hare Townsend. It was a very wealthy family with lands in Norfolk, Tottenham, Godalming, around Wisbech and Switzerland amongst others. These were inherited from Henry Hare, third Lord Coleraine whose only daughter married his grandfather James Townsend MP, Lord Mayor of London 1772-1773. As a family the Townsends were wealthy brewers and city merchants.



Educated at Eton College (1811-1815) and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, graduating with a BA in 1821 and a MA in 1824, Townsend was already making a mark as a poet winning the Chancellor's Gold Medal in 1817 for a poem on the subject of "Jerusalem". He published two volumes of poetry in 1820. After Cambridge he took Holy Orders but was soon disabled by illness (or some would say hypochondria), and never resumed the active duties of his profession.

Townsend's cricket career seems very brief. Just one match is credited to him in the records and that for Kent against Sussex on the Royal New Ground at Brighton beginning on 17 September 1827. Although the published scorecard shows he batted number three, it seems likely that he was a last minute replacement. Certainly there was no known Kent connection. According to *Scores & Biographies*, on the morning of the match William Ashby, George Mills and Herbert Jenner were "found absent" and "their places had to be filled by gentlemen who happened to be on the ground". There were already three "given men", William Caldecourt, James Saunders and William Searle. He hardly distinguished himself scoring nought and two and taking two catches.

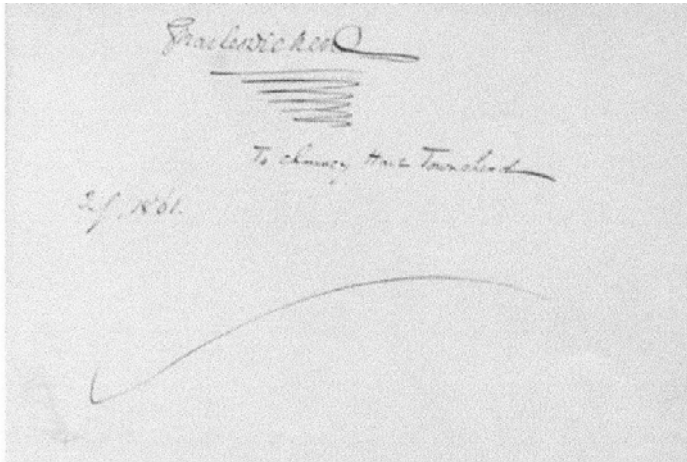
Also in 1827, his father died and although the dates vary, it seems likely that around then Townsend became Townshend. His ample inheritance enabled him to follow his own pursuits. As far back as 1815 Townshend had established a friendship with the sometime poet laureate Robert Southey and through him he met the Wordsworths and the Coleridges. Described as "dandified" and variously portrayed as "a dilettante and a hypochondriac", it was nevertheless thirty years before he produced another book of original poems - *Sermons in Sonnets with other Poems* (1851). Probably his best known work is *The Burning of the Amazon: a Ballad* (1852) but the Dictionary of National Biography judged his poetry as "too often commonplace".

In the 1830s Townshend, following an illness, became interested, indeed an authority, on mesmerism (or hypnotism) via which he met in 1840 and became a great friend of Charles Dickens, who shared the interest. He published two books and various articles on the subject.

In 1826 Townshend married Elisa Frances, daughter of Sir Amos Godshill Robert Norcott. There were no children, But in 1843 they legally separated due to "unhappy differences", Thereafter he spent much of his life either at his villa, Monloisir, Lausanne in Switzerland or travelling abroad pursuing his great passion, almost obsession, of collecting. It is for this he is largely remembered. His will of 1863 contains an inventory of his collections which lists 4464 books, 1411 paintings, engravings and prints (including works by Canaletto and Rubens), 687 fossils, 9 cases of stuffed birds and animals, a large collection of coins, 622 specimens of gems and minerals, 267 pieces of jewellery, 5 portfolios of autographs and a collection of books. He was also a keen painter and an accomplished musician.

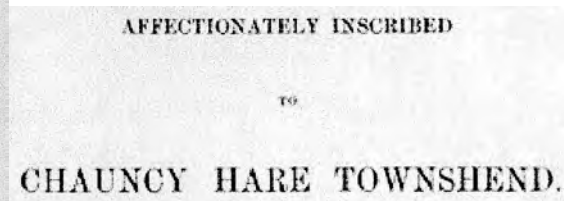
Townshend had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances from the artistic circle of the day. These included the novelist Wilkie Collins, the soprano Jenny Lind, briefly the composer Felix Mendelssohn, and even a young Arthur Sullivan who put some of his poems to music. But it was the Dickens friendship that he is most remembered for. Given the great author's proclivity to look to familiar faces and places for inspiration, Townshend may have been the genesis of Cousin Feenix with his "wilful legs" in *Dombey and Son* and the hinted hypochondria of Mr Twemlow in *Our Mutual Friend*; or more bizarrely the withered Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*.

In 1859 he published *The Three Gates* and dedicated it to his great friend Charles Dickens who repaid the compliment by dedicating his next novel to Townshend. This just happened to be one of the most famous books in English literature, *Great Expectations*, published in 1861. Dickens gave his friend the suitably bound original manuscript.



The original handwritten inscription

Wisbech and Fenland Museum



From an early edition of Great Expectations

Chauncy Hare Townshend died of peritonitis at his home in London 21, Norfolk Street, off Park Lane on 25 February 1868. He was 69. He bequeathed his paintings and his jewellery collection to the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). Most of the rest went to and is still held by the Wisbech and Fenland Museum. That includes the *Great Expectations* original manuscript.

Another great friend, and with Dickens a visitor to Monloisir in 1856, was Angela (Baroness) Burdett-Coutts and funds from the estate was given towards the creation of the Bourdett-Coutts and Townshend Foundation. A Church of England primary school maintained by the Foundation is still to be found in Rochester Street, Westminster.



Townshend was laid to rest in the New Cemetery in his birthplace, Godalming, Surrey. The grave (left) is marked simply with his initials.

Charles Dickens he made his literary executor on the understanding that "he publish without alteration as much of my notes and reflections as may make known my opinions on religious matters, they being such as I verily believe would be conducive to the happiness of mankind". They were hardly that and an ailing Dickens, already suffering from strains of constant touring, was landed with a task he was not expecting and did not enjoy. Nevertheless *Religious opinions by the late Reverend Chauncy Hare Townshend*, as com-

mitted, duly appeared in 1869. Dickens himself died the following year.

Howard Milton

Acknowledgements:- Derek Carlaw, Philip Paine and Geoff Hill (Wisbech and Fenland Museum).

Reference:- Cave, Peter (editor) *The life and times of Chauncy Hare Townshend: a Victorian collector*. Wisbech and Fenland Museum, 1998.

Cricket Comicalities: a souvenir of England's tour to Australia 1928-29



Many years ago when my wife and I regularly participated in, and sometimes just visited, book fairs in the Midlands and north of England, our first port of call was almost always to dealers who specialised in cricket.

It was on one such occasion some thirty or so years ago that I fell upon a unique little item associated with A.P. "Tich" Freeman. It's a delightful little booklet with a personal association embossed on the front cover with the words *"With compliments from the Publishers to Mr. A.P. Freeman."* The title page announces it as *"Cricket Comicalities a Souvenir of the English Cricket-*

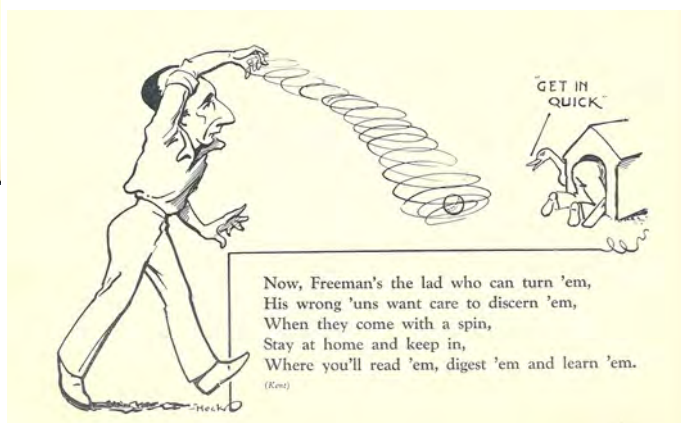
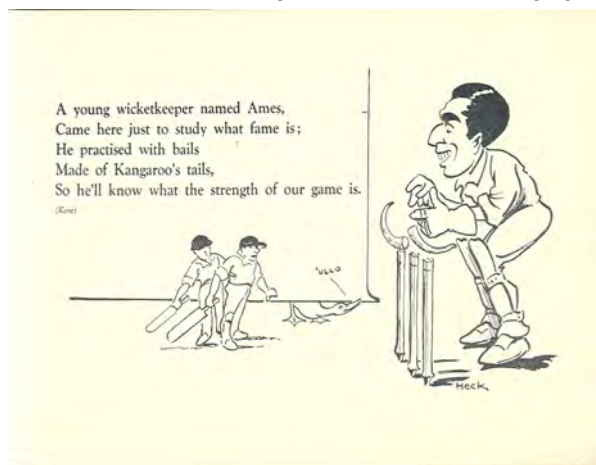
ers Australian Tour 1928-1929". The Publishers were The National Press, Melbourne.

Kent cricket enthusiasts will know that the captain of the tourists to Australia in 1928-29 was Kent's "Golden Boy", Percy Chapman. The tour party included "Tich" and Leslie Ames.

Its thirty pages include the tour fixtures but its real attraction is a collection of cartoons and verse with lyrics attributed to "Walnut" and drawings by "Heck". All three Kent players are featured. The verses are somewhat cringe-making but probably in tune with the times. You can see (and hopefully read) those attributed our past Kent heroes.

For those who are not aware, England, who had regained the Ashes at The Oval in 1926 under Chapman's captaincy, successfully defended them on tour with a decisive 4-1 victory. Neither Ames or Freeman appeared in any of the Tests but both performed well in the State games with Ames averaging 59.00 from eight innings and Freeman taking 35 wickets in his ten matches.

David Robertson



Cricket in Crisis

What crisis you may ask, Test matches in England are well supported, T20 is thriving. At the recreational level however it is a different story. The Kent League handbook for 2016 contains pen pictures from 67 clubs almost a third of whom report either serious problems or an issue with the availability of players. Bear in mind that each club in this league fields a minimum of two teams every Saturday and the numbers begin to stack up. The problem is replicated in the Kent Regional Leagues and the two major Village Leagues.



Brenzett

For fifty years before the introduction of County Boards by the ECB (Kent Cricket Board) recreational cricket in Kent was organised by the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs (AKCC) which had twelve autonomous districts around the county. The Central committee ran age group competitions including the prestigious Under19 Oxford Festival. Many of the districts ran K.O. Cups and single Wicket competitions and were responsible for running local coaching programmes. To take one year at random the AKCC yearbook for 1986 shows that the Metropolitan District had a membership of 107 clubs, Maidstone and Tonbridge both in excess of fifty. Of the other nine Districts only Dover (24) and Folkestone (21), both with much smaller catchment areas, had significantly fewer members. The overall total for that year was 538 clubs plus 41 schools.

My own district, Thanet, had historically few clubs with their own facilities. Broadstairs, Sandwich, Birchington and Westgate-on-Sea being the exceptions. What it did have however was many thriving clubs who played on local authority pitches. At its height in the late 1970's & early 1980's there were at least eleven such pitches located at six venues. In addition to a full programme of weekend matches, an evening league which began in 1968 with thirteen members and was a forerunner of T20. grew to accommodate in excess of thirty sides spread through four divisions. The AKCC district ran a knock-out cup on similar lines, twenty overs per side.

It is no exaggeration to state that cricket was played and could be watched on every day of the week with the exception of a Friday when local authority ground staff were preparing wickets for the weekend. Then in 1976 Indoor cricket was introduced. Starting with 18 members it quickly caught on and within a few years more than 40 sides were competing.

Without a comprehensive survey it is difficult to assess the current situation in the county but in 2014 the KCB, now renamed Kent Community Cricket (KCC), had a membership of 277 clubs. This represents a 51% decrease in 26 years from the AKCC figures of 1986. In Thanet the Works League had just 4 members in 2016 and the former AKCC knock-out cup had six entrants from four clubs and local authority pitches have been reduced from eleven to just three.

Credit must be given to Kent Community Cricket for their diverse efforts to attract young people into the game but the problem is retention. How many of the hundreds introduced to the game through Kwik Cricket or attending coaching courses go on to become regular club cricketers ?

The reasons for this decline are not clear cut. Young people have far more sporting opportunities from which to choose. There is a decline of cricket and indeed sport in general in state schools; a lack of coverage on terrestrial television and minimal reporting in both local and national newspapers. All combine to make the game a minority interest sport. Small wonder that a recent survey among young people showed that cricket is not in the top ten sports that they would choose to play.



Chisle

John Websper



Kent Cricket Heritage Trust

Registered Charity Number 1154556

Please reply to

The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, Canterbury CT1 3NZ

December 2016

Dear Trust Member,

The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust is now in its fourth year of operation, and has made a strong start in its ambitions to manage and display Kent cricket memorabilia, as well as to provide an archive for research into cricket in the county. We have put on several displays and purchased six new display cabinets, which show off the Kent collection to excellent effect. Our newsletter, which you will now be reading, has already covered some fascinating issues on the heritage of cricket in Kent.

To continue to grow and thrive, the Trust needs members. We already have over 100 people who have pledged a minimum donation of just £10 a year to the Trust, and we would very much like that number to grow significantly.

I am taking the liberty of attaching a membership application form, which I hope you will pass on and send back to us. Without the support of Kent cricket fans like you, the Trust will not be able to do all the exciting things we are planning for the future, so we very much hope you will decide to join us in this. Indeed become an active member. We are always looking for specialist skills to further our cause. Website creation and management is a current concern.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Jonathan Rice
Chairman

Kent Cricket Heritage Trust

Registered Charity Number 1154556

St Lawrence Cricket Ground, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3NZ

Tel : 01227 456886

Annual Donation £

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