

# INSIDE EDGE

## *The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust A Message from the Chairman, Jo Rice*



### Inside this issue:

<i>A Moment in Time</i>	2
<i>Then and Now</i>	2
<i>Before the "Blue Books"</i>	3
<i>Golden Autographs</i>	3
<i>The Blythe Memorial</i>	4
<i>What your subscriptions have achieved</i>	4
<i>Sir Marcus Samuel and his architectural legacy</i>	5
<i>Stars of the Future Past</i>	7
<i>An appeal</i>	8

Sean Dickson's monumental innings at Beckenham recently serves as a perfect reminder of how much the present owes to the past. As he was working his way beyond 200 and on to his treble century, a host of names from the past were invoked - Woolley, Ashdown, Ames, not to mention Matt Walker, Aravinda da Silva and Graham Cowdrey - and many great feats of the past were put into the shade by Dickson's brilliant batting. Suddenly names that might have been forgotten by all but the more senior spectators at Beckenham were back in the spotlight. Who was this Bill Ashdown who scored not one but two triple centuries for Kent and yet never played for England? One very young spectator asked me if Graham Cowdrey was any relation to Fabian: I doubt if he had even heard of Colin or Chris.

The past is our heritage and our yardstick by which to judge the present. I hope that Sean Dickson goes on to score many more treble centuries for Kent, but his standing as a cricketer is only determined by how he compares with those who have gone before. This is what we at the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust are continuing to try to do, not merely to glorify the players of the past but also to help people understand those bygone achievements as the context for the achievements of today.



*Jonathan Rice*



*Canterbury Week 1901—Lord Harris and party*

## *A Moment in Time Monday August 5 1901*



The start of the 1901 Canterbury Week and J.R.Mason leads out the Kent team for the opening match against Essex, one of a number of pictures of that Week originally from Mason's private collection, recently to hand. The quality from all those years ago is not that pristine, but what does look clear is the pavilion behind, newly opened just the year before.

The picture below shows the pavilion even more clearly.



As to the match, it was Essex's first appearance at Canterbury and *Wisden* reports there was a Bank Holiday crowd of seven thousand. Essex scored 432 for nine wickets on the first day, Percy Perrin 104, putting a Kent victory out of the question, not helped by a deficit of 121 on first innings. Essex declared to give Kent a competitive challenge of 298 in three hours. Ted Dillon scored 103\* but Kent were well short when the game was given up as a draw.

## *Then and Now*



The left photograph of the Rainham ground was taken in 1993, and the right just before the opening of the new facility in May 2017.. Rainham now play in Division 4 of the Kent Cricket League.

**John Websper**



## Before there were "Blue Books" there were.....



It is fairly well known that the Kent County Cricket Annual has the longest run of any county yearbook. The present format dates from 1947, while before that the familiarly named "Blue Books" go back to the edition dated 1877-78. That for many years was that.

But back in 1985 a mysterious run of something akin to the "Blue Books" covering the years 1873-1877 appeared in the catalogue of the cricket bookseller J.W.McKenzie. An air of self-denial seemed to run across cricket book collectors as no one was aware of these publications existing. Even the *Bibliography of Cricket* whose thorough searches for cricket items had extended to the generally regarded definitive book collection at Lord's did not pick up on them until the McKenzie catalogue and only then in the second edition which had them as existing but not seen.

It appears they were sold for £100 as a set to the well known Kent collector H.W.Warner, who died some years ago, and now 32 years later they reappeared in an auction of Knight's the well-known cricket auctioneers and were acquired by the editor of this newsletter..

They are only four pages each, foolscap in size and contain much of the administrative information that appears in its successive publications, save for the county scores from the preceding season. The question remained as to whether the earliest years of the Club 1870-1872 were so covered and are they are out there somewhere?

Following this up and researching a query which the acquisition of these publications engendered led to the Kent Club's minute books and there hidden amongst the appropriate year's minutes, there they were - 1873-1877 and those dated 1871 and 1872. Lost from sight for clearly very many years. Now re-found and a mystery solved,

Howard Milton

## Golden Autographs



A small autograph book was loaned to me recently by a friend who played cricket for Cambridge University in the 1950s. In addition he was also a contemporary of Robin Marlar and Dennis Silk.

The small book, measuring 3 x 4 inches contains 59 signatures of the greats of "The Golden Age of Cricket" which is accepted as being from about 1895 to 1914. Included therein are 21 Kent signatures.

I suspect that the signatures were collected by an enthusiast at Kent home games. Most importantly you can read every signature clearly. Cricketers from this period took care when signing their names, which is not very true today.

The pictured page illustrates the coverage of great players and prominent among them is the great Colin Blythe.

The book was given to my friend when he was twelve years of age in the early 1940s. What a wonderful gift for a young boy.

For further information on this autograph book contact [cricketologist@btinternet.com](mailto:cricketologist@btinternet.com)

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—Main Committee Member

Tony Kilbee - Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Treasurer

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## 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

## The Blythe Memorial



There has been much interest in the restoration and reinstatement of the Blythe Memorial. The Memorial has been in storage since the commencement of redevelopment works at the ground and as those works near completion so we expect the memorial to return.

It is the Club's intention to return the memorial to the ground in time to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Colin Blythe's death on 8 November 2017 and work is underway to achieve that. On the day itself the memorial will be rededicated and a lunch will be held in the Pavilion to mark the occasion. It is also hoped that given the proximity to Armistice Day it will become the date on which the Club remember the fallen in years to come.

The Memorial will be placed near the Nackington Road entrance and will be a prominent feature on arrival at that side of the ground. It will be on a much better base and a stone mason is restoring much of the stone work to better condition.

In addition, there are a number of corrections required to the monument's inscriptions. Clearly over time more information has come to hand and this seems the right moment to make such changes. It should be noted that the Club also intends to return the Fuller Pilch Memorial to the ground at the same time.

Kent County Cricket Club suffered significant loss in the World Wars and the Club will do all that it can to honour the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

**Jamie Clifford**

## What your subscriptions have achieved

It is that time of year to chase up unpaid subscriptions to the KCHT. So please may we make a polite appeal if you have not yet paid, it would be very much appreciated if you could amend what we are sure is an oversight.. The address for payment is above and perhaps you would consider making a direct debit payment for future years. Again the contact is above.

If you are still unsure may we draw your attention to what you support has achieved. Look around the Spitfire Ground, St. Lawrence and you find new display cabinets for valuable Kent cricket memorabilia otherwise out of sight; new anti-glare glass for the portraits of Kent's county capped players in the Chiesman Pavilion; and most recently the signage identifying Kent legends who have given their names to the buildings around the ground. Various items of historic interest have been acquired from cricket auctions and finally, not forgetting this publication which to the eternal gratitude of the Trust, has been so well received.

If you have not already done so and have access to an e-mail address let the Trust know and you will get the extended electronic version of *Inside Edge* with longer feature articles. There is more we would like to do and not just in Canterbury.

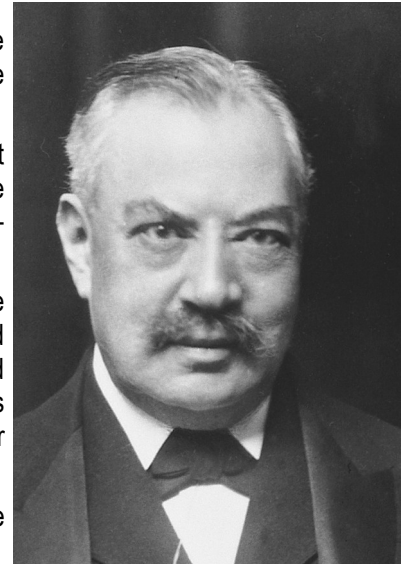
## *Sir Marcus Samuel and his famous architectural legacy to The Mote*

The Tabernacle at The Mote, Maidstone, regarded by many as the most iconic and unique building on any cricket ground in Kent, is now enjoying a new lease of life after a complete restoration. It has even been Listed by English Heritage.

Its history stretches back to around 1910 when Sir Marcus Samuel (later to become the 1st Lord Bearsted) was a generous benefactor to The Mote Cricket Club (formed in 1857). He chose Mote House and the adjoining park in 1895 as his family home largely because it included an attractive cricket ground. It was a sport he loved and played.

He built the current impressive pavilion for the The Mote CC and the unusual structure close by to meet his personal needs. It was a centre for some of his Maidstone entertaining and included a kitchen, fireplace, toilets, shower and a main room leading out to a balcony and steps down to the cricket ground. When Sir Marcus played only he would change in this building, pad up and use these personal steps to go out to bat or field. Then he returned for a shower and resumed his entertaining.

His remarkable story is now recorded with a large framed photograph in The Tabernacle. He was born in Whitechapel, London, in 1853 to a Baghdad Jewish family. His father ran a successful import-export business trading in the Far East and Marcus became deeply involved with his brother. One speciality was ornaments decorated with sea shells.



*Sir Marcus Samuel,  
1st Viscount Bearsted*



*Maidstone Cricket Week 1911—Sir Marcus Samuel and party in his private pavilion*

As he travelled Marcus recognised the growth of the international oil trade. After a trip to the Black Sea in 1890 he decided there could be money in oil transportation! He ordered construction of eight dedicated tankers – and these were the first oil ships to satisfy the Suez Canal Company on safety.

By 1897 he needed a name for his oil business and chose to mark family history by calling it SHELL. So the famous oil company, later to amalgamate to become Royal Dutch Shell, was born. Marcus became its first chairman.

From then Marcus grew in stature and prominence. He was knighted in 1898 for assisting in the salvage of HMS Victorious after it grounded and was pulled to safety by one of his tankers.

The family business evolved into banking and Samuel & Co was transformed into a merchant bank. It merged in 1965 to create Hill Samuel and became part of Lloyds Bank.

Marcus was elected a London alderman in 1891, Sheriff of the City of London in 1894 and Lord Mayor in 1902/3. In recognition of

Shell's contribution to the British cause in World War One he was created 1st Baron Bearsted of Maidstone in the 1921 Birthday Honours. In 1925 he became 1st Viscount Bearsted. He died on January 17, 1927, aged 74, and his son Walter succeeded him to his titles and as chairman of Shell.

He is seen now as one of the most important people to have lived in Maidstone and he and his family are still honoured from time to time. After he bought the 180-hectare Mote Park as his family estate he built a new Mote House in a central position. Around that time the River Len was dammed to create the large Mote Lake.





*The Tabernacle is its familiar and much missed pose - 2002 awaiting the start of a Sunday match*

Building The Tabernacle could have been partly linked to Sir Marcus's election as President of the Kent County Cricket Club in 1910. It was the centre of many fashionable occasions, especially when Kent used the ground annually for county championship matches. In more recent times The Tabernacle, so named after his Lordship's death and to honour his Jewish religion, was used as Kent's match-day headquarters during county games.

Soon after Lord Bearsted's death the family decided to move from the Mote estate. Mote Park and the house were sold to Maidstone Corporation in 1929 for £50,000. But the cricket ground was gifted in trust to The Mote Cricket Club. The ground trustees hold considerable powers and Maidstone Council cannot make significant changes anywhere in Mote Park without their

agreement. A complex trust deed dictates the ground and buildings will automatically transfer from the trustees to The Mote CC 20 years after the death of our Queen.

Responsibility for The Tabernacle passed to the Band of Brothers who themselves ran a successful cricket team which played many matches a season. In more recent times upkeep of The Tabernacle became a major challenge for the Brothers and The Mote CC agreed to accept this responsibility.

This did not solve problems for long, however. The Mote CC hit hard times financially and deterioration of The Tabernacle was so serious that it started to collapse and was covered by a tarpaulin. It was a very sorry sight on such a majestic ground and demolition became a real possibility.

At the same time other facilities on the ground, including the main pavilion, faded and the main stand became unusable due to concrete cancer. In 2005 the Kent club withdrew county matches until the ground and facilities improved to meet the requirements of first-class cricket. The loss of Maidstone Cricket Festival was a big disappointment to the County Town and Maidstone Borough Council – as well as to many members of the county club who have been pushing for a return.



*The restored Tabernacle*

This has presented major challenges to The Mote CC. The one big success to date has been restoration of The Tabernacle. The Cobtree Charity Trust, Kent County Council and Sport England have all made donations/grants and with almost £60,000 The Tabernacle has been transformed while retaining all the old character. It is now used as The Mote Youth Sports Centre and is a regular and popular sport meetings place and a changing area for sport officials.

The club has spent many years trying to raise serious funds from residential development on part of its huge site. Maidstone Council aims to be co-operative but two or three schemes have collapsed for different reasons. A smaller land sale is now being negotiated and with help from a planned public appeal the club hopes to raise enough funds to achieve a meaningful improvement in facilities. Kent cricket could still return to Maidstone.....

**Dennis Fowle**

## Stars of the Future Past



Last year the Club was given a copy of the 1962 *Eagle Sports Annual*. Along with the *Eagle* comic and annual, this publication had a special appeal, mainly to boys, for whom it became a firm favourite between 1952 and 1963.

In the 1962 edition there appeared an article by the Editor, Kenneth Wheeler, who looked forward to 1970 with a feature headed "Cricket in 1970" which highlighted a group of promising young cricketers who had come under the care of Claude Lewis, the former Kent slow left-arm bowler. Following retirement, Lewis ran the Club's indoor and outdoor coaching schools in association with Leslie Ames, who after an outstanding playing career with Kent and England became Secretary-Manager of Kent and was the first professional cricketer to be appointed a Test selector.

The writer states that whether he is picking a ground-staff boy, a County or a Test match player, Leslie Ames' first consideration "is what results has he achieved?" He went on, "I'd expect a 14-year-old who wanted to join us to be getting his 40 or 50 runs, or his half a dozen wickets, regularly in school matches and it is by those results, which reach us through our scouts and schoolmasters, that we find boys suitable for trial".

The illustrated article identified twelve youngsters who, it claimed, could form the nucleus of a side that would bring honours to the County in the 1970s. Six of them did not play first-class cricket, but the other six included 19-year-old David Constant from Bromley who was captain of Kent Juniors. He played only seven games for Kent before moving to Leicestershire for four years in the mid-1960s. He became a distinguished first-class umpire at the age of 27.

The late David Nicholls, from Gravesend, represented Kent Schools and South-east England. A popular wicket-keeper batsman, he was deputy to Alan Knott and was the second youngest first-class Kent debutant aged 16 years and 183 days when playing against Cambridge University in 1960. He was awarded his county cap in 1969. He retired in 1980 after playing 201 first-class games and 102 in the limited over competitions.

Edward "Ted" Fillary, who captained St Lawrence College, Ramsgate, is described by Claude Lewis as "a medium slow bowler of outstanding promise who specialises in leg-spin". He was with Kent for four seasons between 1963 to 1966 during which he played 13 first-class matches. He won Blues with Oxford University in 1963 to 1965 and his best bowling performance was in the 1963 Lord's Varsity Match when he took 6-77. His highest score for Kent (46) was against the 1964 Australians whilst his best bowling performance for the County was 5-52 against Middlesex at Lord's.

The author of the article has selected his XI from Kent's promising youngsters. He lists as twelfth man John Dye, Gillingham born and educated at Highfield Grammar School. A fast-medium left arm bowler, he played for Kent from 1962 to 1971 during which he took 371 first-class wickets at 25.11. Following his time with Kent he went on to play for Northamptonshire for six years.

Claude Lewis acknowledged the author's selection of the twelve as a group that individually and collectively could form a strong Kent side in the future. However, six of them did not reach the heights of the first class game. Those six were 16-year-old John Copus of Catford who captained Lewisham Schools and represented London, Kent and South-east England XIs; Donald Clayton who captained Maidstone Grammar School; Donald Fermor, a promising opening batsman from Oldborough Manor Grammar School near Maidstone, William Dover, another Maidstone Grammar School student described by Claude Lewis as a promising off-spin bowler who did not graduate to the first-class game but was heavily involved with Kent community cricket. For four years



Claude Lewis, County coach and a member of Kent staff for more than thirty years, supervises Kent coaching at the Eltham Indoor School.





*Clockwise from top left:- Derek Underwood, Simon Days, Alan Knott, David Nicholls & Michael Chambers*

between 1998-2002 he ran the Kent Cricket Board and was succeeded in that role by the Club's current Chief Executive Officer, Jamie Clifford.

Fifteen year-old Simon Days, "a very steady opening or middle-order batsman" from St. Lawrence College, Ramsgate, and fast bowler Michael Chambers from Cranbrook County Secondary School complete the twelve. Except for two.....

And those two were to make a significant contribution to Kent and International Cricket for two decades from the mid-1960s. Alan Knott (misspelt in the article as "Knotts") reigned supreme as the World No. 1 wicket-keeper throughout most of the period and formed a match-winning partnership with Derek Underwood that played a substantial part in the successes of Kent and England over the period. Alan Knott won 95 England Caps and Derek Underwood, 86. They both played major parts in Kent's great successes of the 1970s.

Today, Claude Lewis's assessment of these two star players is interesting. Of Alan Knott he said, "As you know, I don't like to praise youngsters too much, in case they should get the idea that success comes easily, but I am bound to say this about Alan: he is the best young prospect I have seen since Colin Cowdrey, and quite similar to our famous skipper in his batting style. Alan comes to the Eltham (coaching) School, has his knock, and then bowls off-spinners and leg-spinners. But he is also a brilliant wicket-keeper, and Mr. Ames and I agree that he could have a great future as a 'keeper-batsman". Of Derek Underwood he was much briefer and somewhat cautious, saying only, "Derek is tall for his age, and has a lovely rhythmic fast bowling action though I

don't think he uses his height enough. Good rhythm is of course, one of a fast bowler's main assets."

The prescience of the writer is an interesting aspect of this piece. In 1962, with the advice of Leslie Ames and Claude Lewis, he was identifying the 17-year-old David Nicholls, the 14-year-old Alan Knott and Derek Underwood (16) as youngsters who would form part of a team "fit to win the County Championship in a few years time."

But what of the six who did not achieve county recognition? Did they go on to play Minor Counties cricket, did they perform at Club level for one of the many who compete in the various leagues in Kent or elsewhere? Or did they adopt other sports in their youth and adult lives? Maybe there are readers of *Inside Edge* who can tell us?

**David Robertson**

## *An Appeal*

Copies of *Inside Edge* have been distributed to a number of cricket clubs in Kent. It is with the hope that they will be circulated therein in so that the message of the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust to promote our great cricket heritage across the county will be furthered.

Moreover, we are particularly anxious to read in these pages more about the history of Kent's many cricket clubs. If your Club has published a history recently or you would like its history to be produced in the limited pages of this newsletter. We would love to hear from you.

The contact addresses are on page 4.