

# INSIDE EDGE

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## *The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust*

### *A Message from Jo Rice, Chairman of the Trust & President of the Kent County Cricket Club 2018*

It is wonderful to be able to report that the 2018 season has been so successful for the club that in future years we may well need to mount exhibitions featuring that Matt Henry catch or Joe Denly's hat-trick and century against Surrey in the Vitality Blast, or Zak Crawley's first (of many, I trust) first-class century. The point is that heritage is not just a thing of the past: every day we have the opportunity to add to it, to make it bigger and better.



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We have been very fortunate to receive recently on long term loan from the Cowdrey family a lovely portrait by Joan Lyons of Colin at the wicket at Canterbury, with many Kent faces in the background, ranging from Lord Harris and Stuart Chiesman to the young Cowdrey boys. We have also been loaned the silver salver given to Colin by his team-mates after the 1970 Champion

ship triumph. Let us hope that in future years the club will be loaned by the Billings family a trophy presented by his team on the occasion of our Championship triumph in 2019.

Well, I can dream, can't I?

*Jonathan Rice*



*Festive decorations—Canterbury Cricket Week 1907*

*A Moment in Time, Wednesday 19 June, 1907*



A timeless scene; cricket on Meopham Green. The post card identifies this as the local club playing Kensington, which one assumes is the club out of that part of London that played sides around the capital at that time.

They dated from 1848, but Meopham's history is about as long as recorded organised cricket in Kent. Meopham Fair and Market on the Green dates from 1456, and cricket merely became a part of the entertainment thereon from before 1750. The Club celebrated its bicentenary in 1986. A particular clue to longevity of Meopham cricket is that in 1735 the *Register of Licensed Victuallers* records The Eleven Cricketers Inn at Meopham, The assumption would seem to be is that cricket was played for some years before that, The Crick-

eters' Inn of today (the building on the right above) dates from 1794.

Meopham Green is five miles south of Gravesend on the busy A227 road to Tonbridge, a road which forms a far more hazardous edge of the ground than in 1794 or even 1907. For many years the Inn's sign depicted Les Ames keeping to Jack Hobbs on one side, and Herbert Strudwick to Frank Woolley on the other. Sadly in 2006, a change of ownership brought huge controversy when the new man renamed the Inn "The Long Hop" and down played the cricketing connection. Sense prevailed four years later when a new owner restored the original title.



*Les Ames unveils The Cricketers' Inn famous sign*



*A familiar view of The Cricketers' Inn showing the windmill that was in a state of disrepair, minus its sails, in the 1907 picture*

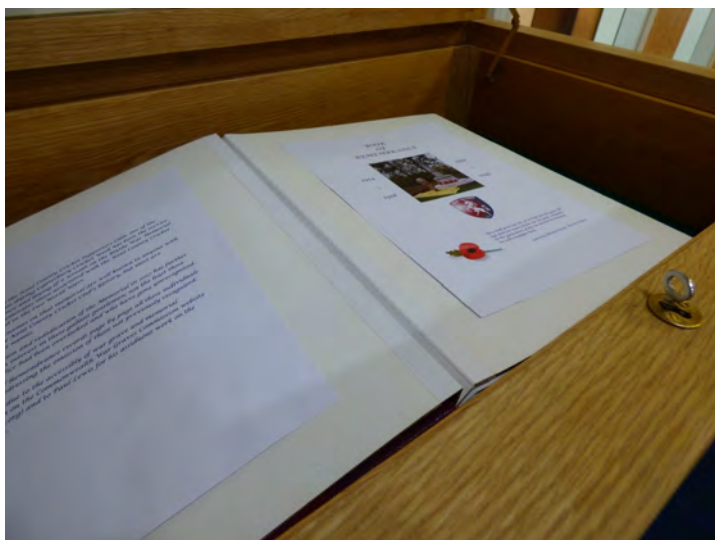
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## *Kent Cricket and the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Remember the Fallen*



On a sunny Autumn morning members of the Heritage Trust joined players, office staff, supporters and Army representatives to mark the Centenary of the Armistice and to remember especially those associated with the Club who sacrificed their lives in the service of their country.

This annual commemoration will be held each year on 8th November, the anniversary of Colin Blythe's death, at the Memorial that carries his name and those of a further 25 players who died in the two World Wars.

The Heritage Trust, mindful that there were other casualties from these two world conflicts, decided to undertake some

research with the aim of producing a Book of Remembrance that would record names of all Kent's cricket casualties.

Through the research work of Paul Lewis and Howard Milton, five further names were found. They have now joined the honoured group all of whose names, playing records, war service and date of death each occupy a page in the Book.

We thank Paul and Howard for their time and diligence in discovering these further names.

The Trust has donated the Book and a splendid hand-made cabinet in which it will rest. It will reside in the Club office and on the anniversary of each player's sacrifice will be opened to that page by a member of staff.

The Book of Remembrance was dedicated by the Rt. Rev Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Dover, during the Act of Remembrance.



**David Robertson**

## *Kent County Cricket Club 1870-2020*

Plans are now being considered for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Kent County Cricket Club, as at present constituted, which occurs in 2020. For the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust's part in this, it has been decided to produce a book celebrating the eighteen grounds the County Club has used for first team games in the county in that period. It will involve individual ground histories, including notable feats and personalities, and, it is to be hoped, numerous photographs/scorecards illustrating all this. Much information is to hand, notably from the Association of Cricket Statisticians *Cricket Grounds in Kent* published in 1992. But it needs updating and lacks those historic photographs. If you can be of help in furthering this project with information and photographs, please contact Howard Milton, by whatever means, at the addresses on page 4.

The grounds concerned are:- Foxgrove Road, Beckenham; Lloyds Bank/Kent County Ground, Beckenham; Midland Bank/HSBC Sports Ground, Beckenham; Blackheath; Private Banks Ground, Catford; Nore Command/Garrison 1 Ground, Chatham; Canterbury; Dartford; Dover; Mount Field, Faversham; Folkestone; Royal Engineers/Garrison 2 Ground, Gillingham; Gravesend; Maidstone; Angel Ground Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells Common Higher Ground and the Nevill Ground, Tunbridge Wells.

## Who's Who at KCHT

**President :** Hon. Christopher Cowdrey

**Trustees :**

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

**KCHT Committee**

Chairman - Jonathan Rice - [jnhrice@googlemail.com](mailto:jnhrice@googlemail.com)  
Ben Green - [Ben.Green.Kent@ecb.co.uk](mailto:Ben.Green.Kent@ecb.co.uk)  
David Robertson - [david.robertson81@btinternet.com](mailto:david.robertson81@btinternet.com)  
Howard Milton - [howardmilton@btinternet.com](mailto:howardmilton@btinternet.com)  
Tony Kilbee - [skilbee@gmail.com](mailto:skilbee@gmail.com)  
Derek Barnard - [cricketologist@btinternet.com](mailto:cricketologist@btinternet.com)  
Derek Miles - [derekwj miles@gmail.com](mailto:derekwj miles@gmail.com)  
Don Austen - [don.austen2769@gmail.com](mailto:don.austen2769@gmail.com)  
George Cocks - [mikegeorgecocks@aol.com](mailto:mikegeorgecocks@aol.com)  
Peter Francis - [p.mfrancis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:p.mfrancis@hotmail.co.uk)

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

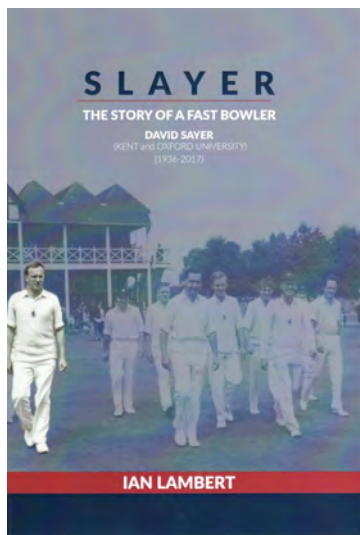
## Inside Edge Contact

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.

## Book Review: David Sayer remembered

**Slayer: the story of a fast bowler; by Ian Lambert.** Copies from the author [lambertsontour@gmail.com](mailto:lambertsontour@gmail.com). It is priced at £10 but postage and packing is a further £2.



I have to admit when I first knew that a biography of David Sayer was going to appear I recalled my schooldays. I was a Kent grammar schoolboy like David Sayer and in the early 1950s the word on the Kent grammar school network was that if you play Maidstone Grammar School at cricket you will probably be blown away by David Sayer as he was considered to be one of the fastest school-bowlers of all time.

Born in Essex the Sayer family moved to Kent and settled near Penenden Heath Maidstone. Sayer very quickly established himself as a very fast bowler at Maidstone Grammar School and made his debut for Kent in June 1955 whilst still a pupil at school. For the next two years he played no first-class cricket as he was carrying out his National Service in the RAF. From 1958 to 1960 most of his cricket was played for Oxford University with occasional games for Kent in the university holidays.

He had a very great deal of success for Oxford being a blue in all three years and taking 146 wickets in his three years of residence. David Sayer then played for Kent every season until his retirement at the end of 1969. However he did come out of retirement to play for Kent in 1976. After leaving county cricket he was engaged in insurance and played club cricket for The Mote and Bearsted.

Lambert's book is not really a biography. It does follow a chronological path through Sayer's life but is more a collection of stories from the different stages of Sayer's career. Ian Lambert was a life long friend of David Sayer and Sayer was best man at Lambert's wedding. It cannot have been easy for Lambert to produce this book but he had the assistance of Sayer's widow and the various family scrapbooks.

As with Lambert's first book on Kent cricket the quality of the photographs leave much to be desired. However it is well illustrated and the author is to be congratulated on bringing to our attention a thoroughly decent cricketer who took 613 first-class wickets at a very respectable average of 23.48 and one who had the distinction of taking a hat trick for Kent and against Kent.

**Derek Barnard**

## *Promise Unfulfilled: David William Jennings (1889-1918)*

Born in 1889 David William Jennings played for Kent in 35 first class matches between 1909 and 1914. He was a forceful right hand bat and an excellent out fielder. The batting strength of the pre-first world war side together with his own inconsistencies meant that he was unable to establish a regular first team position. He joined the Army at the outbreak of war in 1914 and until early 1918 was based in the UK. He was then posted to Belgium and in April to France where he suffered severe gas injuries and was evacuated back to the UK. In spite of hospitalisation and specialist treatment he died in August 1918.

Jennings came from a cricketing family, his brothers George and Thomas played for Warwickshire and Surrey after the Great War and his father played for Devon, umpired minor county matches, and from 1905 to 1938 was coach and groundsman at Marlborough school.

Jennings was born in North London, but later was based in Maidstone playing for The Mote. In 1908 he played two matches for the Kent second XI against Middlesex and Surrey with moderate success. His first team debut was in 1909 against Surrey and he played two further matches in the first team in 1910. In those three matches he scored just 22 runs. In second eleven matches he had greater success, scoring 98 against Essex in 1910. Jennings was also an off break bowler and in 1909 took 6 wickets in an innings against the Surrey second eleven.



In 1911 Jennings played three times for the first team. He scored a maiden 50 against Leicestershire at the end of June and with both Ken Hutchings and Wally Hardinge being injured, was retained in the team for the next match against Somerset. He scored 64 and 104\* adding 241 in a partnership with Frank Woolley. In spite of this success he was not chosen again for the first team that year. He did, however, receive his County cap. In 1912 he played in seven first team matches scoring a century against Hampshire in May. The following year he was in the first team for 11 matches and in his last season in 1914 he also played 11 times, scoring a century against Essex. His last match for the County was against Worcestershire in August 1914. He was not picked for the final two matches of the season.

In 44 innings Jennings scored three centuries and three other scores above 50. He was out for single figure scores on 20 occasions. He was more than unfortunate to have played in an era when the Kent batting line-up was very strong and when amateurs would be chosen when available over professionals. However other professionals such as Hardinge and James Seymour were able through their consistency to become regular first team players.

Jennings enlisted at the start of the War in the Kent Fortress Engineers alongside his brother Thomas, Colin Blythe, and Claude Woolley. He described his trade as a painter. He was posted to the Woodlands depot near Gillingham and within 6 months had been promoted to Second Corporal and was involved in coastal defence and railway repair duties. In 1916 he played a number of wartime matches for the East Anglian Royal Engineers and in 1917 played twice at Lords in inter service matches alongside Blythe and also Plum Warner and Patsy Hendren.

In early 1918 Jennings was posted to the Royal Engineers Base Depot in France and in February was attached to the 206th Field Company RE then in the Ypres (now Ieper) sector in Belgium working around the Yser canal. For six weeks the Company was engaged in repair and construction duties but on 23<sup>rd</sup> March an order was received saying that the Company was "to be prepared to move out at one moments notice". This was just two days after the Germans had launched their spring offensive over much of



the Western front. On 2nd April the 206th Field Company was moved to the front and was involved in the battle of Alette. On 9th April a further move was made to Bienvillers near Arras and on the following day Jennings was one of 19 soldiers severely wounded in a gas attack. The regimental diary simply states "19 O/R's ( other ranks ) wounded.....gas". Jennings was brought back to Blighty on 17th April and taken to the Western General Hospital in South Wales where it was found that his throat, eyes and chest were infected. He was discharged on 19th June but on 1st July he was admitted to St Marks VAD Hospital in Tunbridge Wells with symptoms of pleurisy. Various medicines were administered and Jennings's medical case sheet details a near daily status of his illnesses. On 3rd August it states that the "patient appeared to improve " but on the night of 5th August his temperature fell, his heart failed " and he died in the early hours of 6th August. The death certificate reads " gassed in France, double pleuropneumonia". Jennings was single and a telegram was sent to his father being the next of kin. His body was taken in a gun carriage to the station and thence to the family home town of Marlborough where he was buried in the Old Cemetery (grave right),



Commentators have said that the 29 year old Jennings was the greatest loss to the County in the First World War . Ken Hutchings had left the game in 1912 and Colin Blythe advised Lord Harris in 1917 that he would not play after the War's end and was then appointed coach at Eton school shortly before his death. There are certainly two other contenders for this subjective accolade. The amateur Eric Hatfield also killed in the war had a playing record not dissimilar to Jennings and the injuries sustained by the mercurial Freddie Knott restricted his sporting activities after War's end. These two players might also have had lengthy careers in the side but for the war. However, if Jennings had remained unscathed then it would seem highly likely that this popular figure, "Davy" to his team-mates would have adorned the Kent cricket fields throughout the 1920's.

Peter Ruygrok

### *Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Blog*

A well-hidden secret of the Trust, which is not meant to be well-hidden, is that we have a blog, which features articles on any subject connected with the heritage of cricket in Kent. They are added to every two or three weeks (depending on how busy/keen I am at the time) and now represent a selection of subjects of interest, we hope, to Trust members. There are not only half a dozen articles covering the history of cricket in Kent, but also articles on players like Fred "Nutt" Martin and Charles "Father" Marriott, on Kent's first overseas player and on the work we are doing to protect and organise the archive, among many others.

Please visit the blog, which can be found at

[Kentcricketheritagetrust.wordpress.com](http://Kentcricketheritagetrust.wordpress.com), and if possible add your comments, likes, shares or anything else that seems appropriate.

We are always looking for new contributions to the blog, so if anybody has something they want to put up on the site, please send it to me at [jnhrice@googlemail.com](mailto:jnhrice@googlemail.com), and I will be happy to include it .

Jo Rice

*Oh, my Hammond and my Miller long ago.....!*

As one of the more ancient KCHT members, I have been asked by our editor to recount my memories of watching cricket before, during and immediately after the 1939-1945 War.

Before the war I saw first-class cricketers but until 1945 I had never seen a first-class match. We lived in Forest Hill where the sadly now defunct Forest Hill CC regularly played Sunday matches against county sides in aid of the beneficiary. My first was on August 1st 1937, Forest Hill XI v Mr G C Bonner's Notts XI. As well as the beneficiary Arthur Staples, the visitors included Willis Walker, who made his debut for Notts as long ago as 1913, Joe Hardstaff, who scored 53, and George Gunn junior together with the overnight not outs from their ongoing match at the Oval, Charlie Harris (29\*) and Joe Knowles (3\*). Harold Larwood was on the card but, if he played, he did not bat or bowl.

Forest Hill too fielded first-class cricketers. Stanley Rippon, one of the famously eccentric Rippon twins, scored 62. He also played before World War One. Arthur Jeacocke made 132 appearances for Surrey between 1924 and 1934 and incurred the wrath of Lord Harris for doing so while living on the Kentish side of Forest Hill Road. Jack Martin took a wicket. This was my first Kent cricketer, Martin making his county debut in 1939.

I made at least two more visits to the Forest Hill ground, Sussex, probably in 1938 but I have no scorecard, and Derbyshire (with seven past, current or future Test cricketers) in 1939. On the previous day Derbyshire had bowled Kent out for 162 at Gravesend, but would eventually lose by 171 runs.

It was not until 1943 that I again watched proper cricket. Played on the Private Banks Ground, Catford, a first-class venue for Kent until 1921, the match, the Mayor of Lewisham's XI v a Civil Defence XI, featured, among others, Arthur Fagg, 'Father' Marriott, Peter Sunnucks and Les Todd. Unfortunately, I can recall nothing of their cricket and have no scorecard but, if memory serves, all the big guns were overshadowed by the bowling of D K Mackintosh. A stalwart of the Catford Club who had played for Surrey Seconds and was twice capped by the Club Cricket Conference, he was, in the words of Arthur Langford in the 1965 *Cricketer*, 'quite one of the best leg-break bowlers in London club cricket'.



*Private Banks Ground, Catford in 1910*

My father, an air raid warden since 1939, knew Macintosh, who was Chief Warden, and we watched from the pavilion where a somewhat over-awed thirteen year-old enjoyed a, by wartime standards, excellent tea. I was to see Mackintosh in action again in the following year when he took 8 for 89 for Catford v Walter Keeton's Notts XI, his haul including Reg Simpson and Keeton himself.

The war in Europe was over when, in June 1945, accompanied by my eldest brother in RAF uniform, I made my first visit to Lord's, for RAF v Royal Australian Air Force. We especially wanted to see Keith Miller who had just hit a much-praised century in the first Victory Test. My brother had a particular interest. He had flown with Miller at No 62 Operational Training Unit, Ouston, where they were training young navigators for night fighters. My brother held Miller in high regard both as a man and as a pilot. In impromptu cricket on the airfield, Miller batted and bowled left-handed.

Miller duly obliged with a beautifully struck 63, sharing a 106 run third-wicket partnership with another future Kent cricketer, Flying Officer J. Pettiford, who hit only two fours in his 57. Bob Cristofani, a leg-spinner all-rounder, took 4 for 35. Many thought him destined for great things but he opted for a career with the Australian Trade Department. Many years later I would

face his bowling at the Gover Cricket School. Not having played for years, he was to turn out for a Lord's Taverners' match and asked to join our net. A delightful man, in the bar afterwards I learned a great deal about leg spin bowling in general and Doug Wright in particular.

My next two visits to Lord's were not lacking in incident. In South of England v RAAF, Miller hit 78\* and Gubby Allen, of all people, was given out handled ball, which prompted some booing from an 11,000 crowd. In the second match, the RAAF dismissed an Army team containing Freddie Brown and Bill Bowes, recently returned POWs, and Captain W.H.V. Levett, for 70 (Cristofani 4 for 3) and won by 183 runs,

On July 14th I saw my first first-class match, England (with three 'schoolboys', John Dewes, Luke White and Donald Carr), v Australia, the third Victory Test match. I sat on the grass in front of the Grand Stand, entirely surrounded by the dark blue of the RAAF and was lucky enough to hear Antipodean barracking at its wittiest. Hutton contributed what seemed to me a technically perfect century and for the first time I saw my two boyhood heroes. Sadly, neither did much. Walter Hammond, crippled by lumbago, was stumped for 13 and took no further part in the match; Doug Wright scored five but did not bowl on the first day.

I saw all three days of the England v Dominions match commencing August 25th; it remains my all-time favourite. The Dominions won with eight minutes to spare, 1,241 runs were scored, there were sixteen sixes, sublime centuries from Martin Donnelly, Miller and two from Hammond plus half centuries from Sam Craig, Cec Pepper, Bill Edrich and 56 from Kent's Jack Davies. With some memorable off-driving, he was not outclassed, even in such exalted company. The only off-spinner among the eight spin bowlers on show, he also picked up three inexpensive wickets and fielded brilliantly in the covers.

At last I saw Doug Wright bowl and with 5 for 90 and 5 for 105. He was the pick of the five leg-spinners although Pepper, (4 for 57 and 3 for 67) ran him close. Eric Hollies, Cristofani and Pettiford were the others. I was intrigued by Wright's extraordinary hop, skip and jump action and tried my own version in the garden. My leg break became quicker and bounced more but, to my everlasting regret, I never had the guts to use it in public.

One highlight among dozens was a partnership of 117 in 45 minutes between Miller (185) and Learie Constantine (40). There were curiosities. Lindsay Hassett was taken ill and Constantine was elected captain shortly before start of play. As a result, a white South African, Desmond Fell, played at Lord's under the captaincy of a black West Indian. Hartley Samuel Craig scored 56 and 32 in his first and only first-class match and Colin Bremner, also making his debut in first-class cricket, stumped Hammond in both innings.



*Jack Pettiford*

To end the season I witnessed the penultimate match of the British Empire XI who did so much for cricket and charities throughout the war years. Played against Catford Wanderers at Southend Lane, the visitors were 31 in arrears with two wickets in hand when autumnal light ended play. I have no scorecard but the only Kentish involvement seems to be A W Penfold who scored 54 for the home side. He had a trial for Kent in 1923. For the Empire XI there was more high quality leg spin, this time from the West Indian Bertie Clarke (6 for 46) and off spin from Hampshire's Charles Knott (5 for 30). Top scorer for the visitors was another I would meet over a drink in later life, Bill Andrews (32).

**Derek Carlaw**