

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

We've had our AGM, at which we welcomed two new committee members – Peter Francis and George Cocks – and said goodbye and many thanks to another – John Websper – who has decided to step down after four years on the committee. We now carry on with the work of cataloguing and preserving the collection.

We've begun on that task by working on several folders of old letters, invoices, contracts and certificates from the nineteenth century. We hardly knew we had such a wealth of material, some of it more relevant and valuable than others. But it all has to be catalogued and protected, so that it is readily available for research or display when required.

We have received several items of interest since the previous issue of Inside Edge, including a large portrait of George Marsham, our club president in 1886. It was found in a building about to be demolished, and was passed on to us because the plaque on it identified the sitter. It may prove to be too large to be hung at the club, but we will see.

We have also acquired a bat signed by the 1970 Championship winning side. The bat and signatures are in excellent condition, and this will certainly be displayed as soon as we can find the right context.

The collection grows, the work grows and, I am pleased to say, your Trust continues to prosper.



Jonathan Rice



French Gymnasts Band 1907. St. Lawrence Cricket Ground.

The entertainment for Canterbury Cricket Week 1907. The picture shows the old Telegraph Stand with the scoreboard atop. This was pulled down to make way for the now called Woolley Stand, which was opened in 1927.

Saunders Photos

A Moment in Time, Tuesday July 12 1932



An unusual picture from a Kent v Surrey match at Blackheath. It shows Jack Hobbs batting with a runner because, according to the description attached to the photograph, he was suffering from a severe headache.

This was the third day of the match which had begun on the Saturday. Surrey had won the toss and the day was dominated by the batting of Freddie Brown who struck his first hundred of the season in 95 minutes. He eventually scored 168 out of 206 in 130 minutes (21 fours, 4 sixes).. He put on 104 for the 10th wicket with J F Parker—still Surrey's best against Kent—Parker scoring just 12 of them. Surrey finally totalled 345 and by close of play Kent were 78 for 1 with Ash-down and Woolley at the wicket.

On the Monday, Woolley and Ames responded with a 3rd wicket partnership of 110— Woolley 76 and Ames scoring

his third consecutive hundred 120 (16 fours). He had just reached his hundred when at 3.00pm rain brought a premature end to play for the day. Kent were finally bowled out for 330 on the day in hand but the weather had effectively ended the momentum of what was an evenly competed for game Surrey batted a second time and, according to *The Times*, “pottered about” while Hobbs top scored with 42 in 185 for 8 declared. Set 200 to win in a token 80 minutes, a “tame ending” (*The Times*) came when Kent had batted for only 30 of them., scoring just 12 for the loss of Aidan Crawley.

Kent against Surrey at Blackheath was one of the great traditions of Kent cricket. 55 times they met at the Rectory Field between 1889 and 1970 with honours even—Kent and Surrey both winning 16 times. (Kent and Sussex at the Nevill Ground, Tunbridge Wells equalled this record 55 matches in 2017). Kent had a particularly productive run against the historically more dominant county between 1898 and 1922 when they went undefeated in 15 matches (10 won).

Blackheath last hosted a county match in 1972. The local cricket club still play there. But the ground is more famous for rugby union. Blackheath Football Club [sic] played here from 1883, as were a number of England internationals before Twickenham appeared in 1910. Rugby moved to Well Hall, Eltham after the 2015/16 season.

Then and Now



New Ifield: photographs taken in 1993 and 2018 A complete refurbishment was done in 2012.

The club fields teams in both the Kent Regional League (1B Central) & the Kent Village League (Division 4).

NB the Kent County Village League and the Kent Village league are separate organisations. The County Village League tends to operate more in the west and north of the county and has a membership of around 40 clubs, fielding more than 60 teams. The Village League has slightly more teams competing in six divisions .

John Websper

Preserving Kent's Cricket Heritage

The main objective of the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust is to promote the heritage of cricket at all levels in Kent with the maintenance and development of the County Club's collection of cricketing artefacts and memorabilia being its top priority.

When the Trust was established the collection was scattered around parts of the ground, some of it on display, but much still in store because of the then ongoing ground development.

A great part of the collection is made up of what can be loosely described as a "paper" collection. This, together with a variety of artefacts and pictures, has occupied our attention in recent months. For many years it had been stored in a haphazard way in a large area above the committee room at the top of the Woolley stand and in a secure room in the Club office.

In March 2016 we received an offer of advice in archive management from Caroline Ellis, a supporter and member of Kent since the 1960s and a museum and archives professional for more than 35 years. She now works freelance as a researcher and copy writer on museum and heritage projects, having previously been Head of Collections at the British Film Institute.



Minute books and scorebooks

Caroline spent a day with members of the Trust Committee and advised us on environmental monitoring equipment for light and humidity levels and appropriate storage for the preservation of the collection.



General view of picture storage racking

The first priority was to identify an area for the provision of shelving to house items that could be displayed from time to time, a large collection of pictures, and also for the storage of important documents many of which go back to the mid-nineteenth century.

The obvious place was the aforementioned area at the top of the Woolley stand and during the winter months Martin Gall, the Club's Ground Manager, supervised a re-wiring of the room and undertook the construction of tiered shelving for storage. Before that was possible a major operation was undertaken by members of the committee to clear the area of unwanted stuff that had accumulated over the years. The outcome saw a transformation that more than met our hopes and requirements.

The Trust purchased appropriate monitoring equipment and heaters together with storage boxes and acid free paper to protect those items vulnerable to light and dampness. Following a further visit from Caroline a few weeks ago during which she briefed committee members on the techniques for preservation and storage, work has now begun on this, and those many items that had been stored in other parts of the ground's buildings have now almost totally been moved to what we can now justifiably describe as the Archive Room.

It is gratifying that the Club now has a permanent home for its historic and valuable collection which we hope will be appreciated by generations to come.

David Robertson
Hon Curator

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

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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 Frank Woolley Portrait



A very notable omission from the numerous photographs and portraits that adorned the Spitfire Ground, St. Lawrence has been one of someone who, most would agree, was the county's greatest player, Frank Woolley.

It was something that concerned the county club's recent president, Lady Kingstown. Her lead launched an initiative to fill that gap.

As far as could be ascertained, there is no existing portrait of Frank Woolley. Moreover, no good colour photograph of him could be found trailing through numerous books that were likely to produce a result. There are a number of coloured portraits on cigarette cards which proved some guide, but not the full length image which, it was agreed, was required.

Following her very successful work on the new plaque which celebrates the 15 Kent County Championship grounds, unveiled recently, Suzanne Norfolk, a noted portrait painter, living in Bearsted, was commissioned to undertake the task.

So taking the best black-and-white picture that could be found along with colour clues from other printed sources, the final portrait (left) is the outcome.

It is now to be found in the Chiesman Pavilion on the wall on the left-hand side, just inside the entrance.

Lost County Cricket Grounds of Kent: The Angel Cricket Ground, Tonbridge (1869-1939)

Of the 15 grounds used by Kent in the County Championship and celebrated on the recent unveiled plaque on the ground at Canterbury, as we know, only three are still used. With exceptions of Maidstone and Folkestone who still hold ambitions of holding county cricket again, the rest are now lost to county cricket. Dover and Gillingham still exist but are not used for cricket, the others still support club cricket save just one which now does not even exist. This is the story of the sad demise of the Angel Ground in Tonbridge. In its time it seriously rivalled Canterbury as the centre of cricket in Kent. It was at the heart of Kent's golden period.

Its origins and its name lie with the Angel Inn/Hotel which stood at the corner of the High Street and Vale Road. This site in its history was close by the Priory of St. Mary Magdalene which clearly gave the nearby hostelry its ecclesiastical title. It existed before 1517 when it was known as Angelus. This subsequently became the Angel Inn. The building so closely associated with the ground was opened in 1828.

The earliest reference to the Angel Ground in Tonbridge comes possibly from 1844 when the game between the local Tonbridge Club (founded 1837) and Tunbridge Wells was played on the club field "near the Angel Inn".

The first definite reference is six years later in 1850 when the Tonbridge banker, Horatio Beeching bought what was referred to as the Angel Field. Club records were lost in the military occupation in World War I but it



The Angel Hotel in the early 20th century



The Angel Ground c 1907

appears that it was not until 1865 that the Tonbridge Cricket Club formally adopted the Angel as their regular cricket ground. In 1869 the Tonbridge Club sponsored the first county match there.. The old (1859) county club had just ended a three year period using Gravesend as their headquarters and were consequently looking for an alternative main venue. The Angel Ground was tested for its ability to support county cricket. The wicket was reported as "difficult" and it was not until 1872 that the county returned and only in 1884 did a regular series of matches begin. In that year the ground was described as "unquestionably one of the best grounds in the south of England".

To consolidate its position on the county circuit, in 1886 £300 was spent on building a new pavilion complete with a press gallery and a scoreboard, the Kent Club donating £10. Further improvements in this building were planned in the winter of 1894/95, but the finance was not forthcoming. It is at this period that Tom Pawley, the Kent manager and a Tonbridge man comes to play a significant role in the ground's affairs. Tonbridge Week is first reported in 1890 when it consisted of a county match and local games. By 1892 two county games were allocated, a third in 1896. The influence of Tom Pawley was manifest in 1897 when Tonbridge was chosen for the county's nursery. It was not an obvious choice. Tonbridge was the smallest of the Kent towns then hosting county cricket while Canterbury, the more obvious choice, had just been bought by the county club. But support for the county game in the town had always been positive and with better transport connections to London and elsewhere plus Pawley no doubt in support, the Tonbridge Nursery was born. The rest is history. In Kent's golden period to 1914, the backbone of that famed team came from this productive source. Not the least Kent's greatest cricketer, Frank Woolley, born and brought up just across the way in the High Street. The exact location is marked today by a blue plaque on the Starbucks that now resides there.



Kent take the field c. 1913. Blythe at the rear

acre site on the racecourse. When the Tonbridge Club turned to Canterbury for support, Kent expressed the opinion that the sum paid was exorbitant.. They did however support a circular to members seeking subscriptions, but only on the condition the ground would be devoted to cricket “forever”. They subsequently gave £100 and following further appeals from Tonbridge another £25 in 1913. Also Kent contributed for funds for use on the stands etc., including in 1909 a practice shed and the following year the removal of an old scoreboard from Canterbury, re-erection on the ground. But continually they complained they were paying more towards the upkeep of the ground than they should .

Now growing concern arose over the ground’s condition. In 1913 it was referred to as “the back garden of the railway” and again a move elsewhere was being entertained. One problem was that the ground’s low lying site meant it was prone to flood in the winter from the nearby Medway, and in the dry weather it cracked. The result was that even on what looked like a perfect wicket a ball would mysteriously shoot, a “Tonbridge creeper”. Perhaps that was the case in that very same year when the deadly partnership of Woolley and Blythe (both taking 5 for 8) dismissed Warwickshire for just 16 in 45 minutes play; still the lowest total made against Kent (see the scoreboard above).



Problems were really exacerbated by the military occupation in World War I. Sheds were smashed, stores removed, the pavilion broken into, the papers littered about the floor, all records of the Tonbridge Club lost. In 1916 financial difficulties forced a temporary closure of the Nursery. As Tom Pawley bemoaned “Had the Germans occupied the ground, it could not have been treated worse”.



Despite growing financial problems in the 1920s, Tonbridge was second only to Canterbury as a social event with dances on the Castle lawns, fireworks and a Venetian fête on the river. But by 1926 the cricket element in the Week was losing money and in 1927 the Nursery moved to Canterbury with more members to take advantage of the practice facilities, owned of course by the county. Also the ground lost the occupancy of the Tonbridge YMCA Cricket Club, who played here since 1889. In 1923 following a disagreement over increased rent they left. These reverses did not deter improvements. A large scoreboard was erected in 1926 at the cost of £200, the money raised by donations, including £50 from Kent. In 1930 a new stand and seating was erected at the cost of £18,000, while in 1938 £1,500 was spent on renovating and enlarging the pavilion and enclosure. But 1939 was the final year. and the entertainments programme (left) produced that year was the last.

Cricket continued into the war. In August 1941 a Frank Woolley XI played an English Counties XI on the ground, but with increased military activity the ground was again requisitioned. The damage done by the occupation and just plain trespassing was grievous. Heavy lorries motored over the playing area, the pitches were a dumping ground stores. This was

particularly bad prior to D-Day, and weeds flourished everywhere. Even in 1939 the Tonbridge Club was heavily in debt and without the dependant income of the Week, well before the war was ended, the prospect of ever being able finance the restoration of the ground to make it fit for county cricket was remote, Unable even to repay the mortgage, the Club put the ground up for sale in 1944.

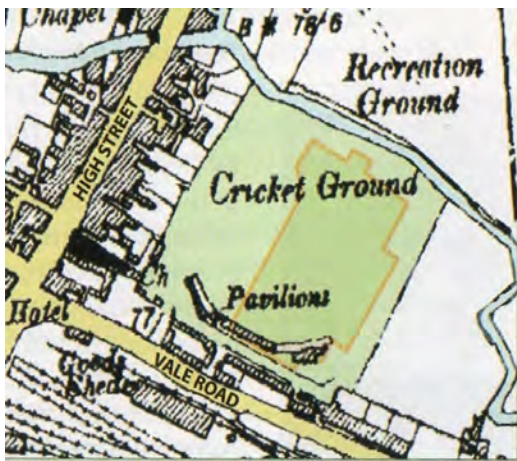
The first attempted venture in 1945 was to turn the Angel into a dog stadium, but the licence was refused by Tonbridge Urban District Council. There was also a proposal to build three hundred flats on the ground. In 1947 the council paid £8,500 and became owners of the Angel under the terms of the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937, a measure to enhance such activities. The following year the ground was leased to the Tonbridge Football Club for winter usage. There were continual arguments over the rent, originally fixed at £200, but rising to £600 a year. In 1950 the football club lost nearly £3,000 and in most years through the 1950s and 1960s four figures were recorded in the debit column. Without the money for improvements the ground continued to decline, already reduced in size by a about a third with the construction of Angel Lane. Finally in 1976 the Official Receiver was called in. Tonbridge and Malling Council refused a £5,000 loan and insisted on a lease they could call back at will. In the meantime in 1977 plans were drawn up in association with Sainsbury's and Bental's to build a large shopping complex on the ground, a prime town centre site. This sale for £1.5 million was accepted in 1979. Tonbridge Football Club played their last match on the ground in 1980. The Sainsbury's supermarket, Bental's department store and the Angel Sports Centre were opened in 1982.



Tonbridge FC 1974. Note the survival of the old cricket pavilion

In 2014 plans for complete redevelopment for the town centre which would have resulted in the demolition of the Angel Centre and new development in the Botany area of the town came to nothing when Sainsbury's withdrew for the plan.

Elsewhere, the Angel Hotel was so badly damaged in the floods of September 1968, which also damaged the stand in the Angel Ground, that it led directly to its demolition in 1972. First a Lipton's store and now a branch of Poundstretcher have occupied the site.



1909 OS map with the Angel Centre imposed thereon. Note the Angel Hotel.

Tonbridge Historical Society



The present day entrance to the Angel Centre

Howard Milton

A revised version of the entry in *Cricket Grounds of Kent*
(Association of Cricket Statisticians, 1992).

The tragic story of Musician John James Boys (1856-1883)



Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich

The history of Kent cricket is studded with soldier cricketers who played for the County while serving. Predictably, most were officers who played when on leave but there were distinguished cricketers among the lower ranks, notably William McCanlis, one of the architects of the pre-1914 Championship-winning teams, and Victor Barton who went on to play for England.

One talented cricketer who with a bit more luck might have risen to a higher level was Musician (later Bombardier) John James Boys. Born 17 August 1856 in Titchfield, Hampshire, he was one of eight children of William and Sarah Boys. (*née* Churcher). In 1872, aged 15, he left home and signed on for 12 years in the Royal Artillery band.

A right-handed batsman, right-arm quick bowler and occasional wicketkeeper, he almost certainly played cricket (even perhaps music) before enlisting. The Royal Artillery Cricket Club was for officers but talented "other ranks" were at times brought in to strengthen the team. Some scores are missing but Boys' first match seems to have been at Woolwich in 1874. Against very up-market opposition, I Zingari, he scored 11, opening the batting with another musician, Bombardier George McCanlis, younger brother of William. George McCanlis had played for Kent in the previous season.

In 1875 Boys scored 44 against MCC at Lord's and gained a place against Royal Engineers, the most important fixture in the Gunners' season, as well as hitting 189 for the Non-Commissioned Officers' team. Kent too had taken note and Boys played for 14 Colts of Kent against the County at Catford Bridge. Scores of 4* and 4 did not help but he was nevertheless selected for Kent v Hampshire at Catford. Bowled for eight, it would be six years before he took the field for Kent again, but in the intervening years he was several times approached. He was, according to *Scores & Biographies*, "unable to obtain leave of absence".

He continued to score runs for Royal Artillery. By 1876 he was playing regularly, normally batting in the top six ahead of assorted Captains, Majors and even on at least one occasion, a Colonel. In 1877 he scored 124 against the Rifle Brigade and 92 against the Royal Engineers at Woolwich and in 1878 did even better against the Sappers with 173 at Chatham and 110 at Woolwich. His last century was 145 v Cambridge Quidnuncs in 1882. Between 1877 and 1882 he also hit at least seven half centuries as well as several hundreds in minor cricket. He was a useful bowler and in 1876 took 5 for 45 v Household Brigade.

In June 1881 he made his second appearance for Kent, behind the stumps in the first game of the season, against MCC at Lord's. He failed in the first innings but when Kent were skittled for 53. In the second innings he was top scorer with 21, one of only two batsmen to reach double figures. In his final game, the last of the season at The Oval, he suffered a pair. Within two years he was dead, dying suddenly on 1 August 1883 from apoplexy on what should have been his wedding day. On the previous day he had been helping to lay out the tables for the wedding breakfast. He had one year left to serve.

Unfortunately, we do not know what instrument(s) he played. although his Army record shows a number of military crimes and misdemeanours for which he was confined to barracks or suffered loss of pay. Among them was "damaging his violin".

Derek Carlaw

The Kent County Cricket Supporters Club

Commemorative Plaque of Kent County Cricket Grounds 1890-2017



The Kent County Cricket Supporters Club recently received a bequest from a long standing member of the Supporters Club, Alan Wright. The generous bequest was to be used for the benefit of Supporters Club members, but the Committee felt that it should be recognised in some way. The debate on what would be a suitable memorial was long and varied. In earlier days a bench with the donor's name on it would have been appropriate, but that has now been somewhat devalued. Various suggestions from a statue of a cricketer (but who?) to a donation to charity (but which?) were rejected.

A chance visit to the green at Bearsted, next to the village sign with Alfred Mynn, 'the Lion of Kent' in full flow, revealed a plaque of the village, set on a brick plinth, which was erected for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. This seemed to be an ideal feature which could be used as a suitable memorial. Contact was made with the artist Suzanne Norfolk, who believe it or not lives at 'The Barn', which was once owned by Alfred Mynn and used by him for brewing his local ale.

After considerable discussion, the idea of a map of Kent showing all the grounds that they had used was formulated. How you actually show the grounds was a stumbling block, as was the number of grounds to be shown. After a detailed study of Howard Milton's excellent book *Cricket Grounds of Kent*, the criteria was narrowed down to the 15 grounds that Kent had used in the County Championship since its formal inception in 1890, and the pavilions on those grounds. It was felt that most of the pavilions would be recognised by members, particularly of a certain vintage, and also be of interest to members and visitors alike.

Suzanne Norfolk, the artist, following many discussions, (I could not call them sittings) was sure that she could complete the project. Photographs of all the grounds had to be sourced, showing the pavilions, and this proved difficult. Howard Milton however with access to a wide variety of postcards was able to complete the set. Subsequent review of the artwork concentrated decisions on what features to include i.e. rivers and towns etc. The North Downs proved to be very difficult to formulate in such a way that it

could be reproduced by the metalworkers. Indeed what could and could not be pressed by the metalworkers governed the final decision on what was included.

A firm decision was made however over the Essex coastline. It was originally included but subsequently removed with strong views that nothing of our arch rivals should appear on the final version.

Artwork completed, proof reading by Howard Milton was essential to make sure that everything was correct, as set in metal as it were, we could not afford any errors, as hopefully it will be a feature on the ground for many years to come.

Delivery of the plaque to my home proved an eventful day, not least because it was very large and extremely heavy and I had to clear my garage for a very big pallet to be fork-lifted into a very small space. The County Club subsequently took possession and the plaque safely stored whilst discussions were undertaken over its final resting place on Spitfire Ground St Lawrence at Canterbury. With the McCarthy and Stone retirement homes completed and the entrance to the ground smartened up, the final position for its installation was agreed.

The formal unveiling took place on the 11 May 2018, the first day of the game against Sussex, and John Shepherd the President of the Supporters Club did the honours with Suzanne Norfolk in attendance.

The Plaque has received a favourable reception, as an addition to the items of interest on the ground. The plaque shows all the grounds used by Kent in the County Championship from 1890 to 2017, as listed below:-

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Beckenham | Foxgrove Road | 1890 – 1905 |
| 2 | Beckenham | Kent County Ground, Worsley Bridge Road | 1954 – 2017 |
| 3 | Blackheath | The Rectory Field | 1892 – 1971 |
| 4 | Canterbury | The St. Lawrence Ground | 1890 – 2017 |
| 5 | Catford | Private Banks Sports Ground | 1892 – 1921 |
| 6 | Chatham | The Nore Command Ground | 1926 – 1927 |
| 7 | Dartford | Hesketh Park | 1956 – 1990 |
| 8 | Dover | The Crabble Athletic Ground | 1907 - 1976 |
| 9 | Folkestone | Cheriton Road Sports Ground | 1927 – 1991 |
| 10 | Gillingham | The Garrison Ground | 1937 – 1968 |
| 11 | Gravesend | The Bat and Ball Ground | 1890 – 1971 |
| 12 | Maidstone | The Mote Cricket Ground. | 1890 – 2005 |
| 13 | Tonbridge | The Angel Ground | 1890 – 1939 |
| 14 | Tunbridge Wells | The Nevill Ground | 1901 – 2017 |
| 15 | West Malling | The Old County Ground | 1890 |



*Suzanne Norfolk, John Shepherd
and the plaque at the unveiling*

Peter Francis