

# INSIDE EDGE

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



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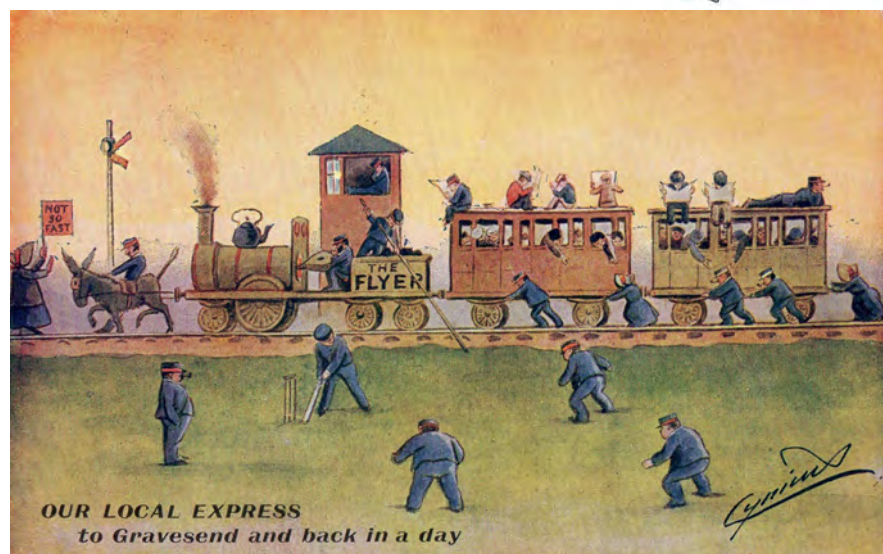
It's been a strange summer. The weather hasn't helped, with very few consecutive days of good weather, and Covid has certainly changed the way the county game has been played. It has not all been bad, though: the game against Sussex in July when we had to put together an entire eleven overnight, was not only full of exciting cricket, but also showed the determination of all at Canterbury not to let cricket take second place to anything.



The Hundred is now with us, and strictly speaking, because none of the teams have the word 'Kent' in their title, the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust has no interest in it. The problem with it, from a heritage point of view, is that it has no heritage, and indeed is trying desperately hard to break away from the long history and heritage of our great national game, which is clearly very silly (I am controlling my language here). The Hundred is a parasitic competition, taking the best players away from their clubs, while giving nothing apart from some cash, in return. It does nothing for the development of young cricketers, who represent the real future of the game. Cricket – indeed all sport – should be about more than money, and the Heritage Trust is determined to ensure that here in Kent at least, it always will be.

This strange summer will continue into October, weather permitting. Will it prove a watershed in the way cricket develops in this country, or will it just be a hiccup in a long historical journey? Time will tell.

*Jonathan Rice*



*A post card produced by the Scottish artist Cynicus  
(Martin Anderson) c 1908.*

## *A Moment in Time, Saturday 2 September 1950*

About a year ago Clive Dring, who was on the Kent staff in the early 1950s, wrote to the Editor:-

*"I've been going through some cricket items and things but don't seem to have a game I played in for Doug Wright's Benefit Match at Whitstable. I was 16 and Colin Cowdrey I think was over 17. We had a good partnership in scoring over 200.*

*I was wondering if you can come up with something on the match?"*

There was nothing on *Cricket Archive*, but I remembered I had a benefit programme for a Steve Marsh benefit game at Whitstable In 1995 and hoped by some chance it mentioned this match from 1950. Sure enough, in amongst the history of the Club, a team photo of the Kent side that played that appeared that day ( see below).



Clive identified the team as:-

Top left to right:- Jack Knell (Groundsman at Canterbury), Clive Dring, John Odey , John Aitchison, an amateur capped player name?, the next one?

Seated left to right:- Peter Hearn, Doug Wright, President of the Whitstable Club, Leslie Todd, Ray Dovey, Colin Cowdrey.

Seated on the ground , Scorer

Clive had every reason for remembering this match as the match report, on "Whitstable's greatest ever cricket-attraction" subsequently retrieved from the local public library confirmed:-

*"The leading members of the county side failed to produce big scores; a big partnership of 159 between 17 year old Tonbridge schoolboy, M C Cowdrey, 16 year old Clive Dring of the Kent Club and Ground staff, delighted the crowd. Cowdrey scored 127 (100 minutes, 17 fours and 3 sixes). Dring was 76 not out when Wright declared on 284 for eight declared."*

Whitstable were bowled out for 142 (Wright 3-14, Todd 3-11).

Naming the full team, the newspaper report identified two players missing from the ten (Kent did bat one short) in the photo. One is probably Frank Nutten, a Whitstable player brought in to make up the numbers, while the other does not look like Eddie Crush.

### *Three Kent cricketers with the same birth and death dates*

John Dicker was born in Cudham on 30 March 1815. He died in Westerham on 30 March 1895. Dicker was a right-hand batsman who played two games for Kent in 1840 scoring 4 runs in the two games in which he featured. Dicker was an early long stop and played most of his cricket in the West of Kent.

Charles Leslie Dinsdale Fawcus was born in Bromley on 8 December 1898 and died in West Chiltington West Sussex on 8 December 1967. Fawcus was educated at Bradfield College and Christ Church Oxford. He played for the university on several occasions but failed to get a Blue because he dropped Jack Hobbs. Fawcus was a left-handed bat and left-arm medium pace bowler. His one appearance for Kent was against Middlesex at Tonbridge in 1924, where he scored 5 runs. One critic said that "Fawcus lacked the temperament to succeed at the highest level". Many claim that he was the finest batsman seen at Bradfield College. He had a very successful career in teaching.

The third Kent cricketer on the list is James Watts who was born in Hythe on 15 December 1835 and died on 15 December 1919 in Bromley. He was a right-hand batsman and right-arm bowler. In the 1850s He played cricket for Folkestone and Hythe. His two appearances for Kent were in Canterbury Week 1859, doing nothing of note. Watts scored 19 runs in four innings. He was more successful with his bowling for Gentlemen of Kent .

**Derek Barnard.**



## *From the Kent County Cricket Club Collections*

Since the **Kent 150: Your 150** display opened in the new Oriole Lime Tree Café, the photo which has attracted the most attention has been that of Leslie Ames and West Indies captain Ralph Grant. The occasion is the LEG Ames XI against the West Indians at the Bat and Ball Ground, Gravesend on 3 May 1939, and it's a great picture.



*Ames and Grant toss up*

But what visitors have commented on is Ralph Grant himself, and his status as a white captain of the West Indians. The West Indies joined the Imperial Cricket Conference, then the game's ruling body, in 1926, but were not to have a black captain until Frank Worrell in 1960.

Ralph Grant himself came from a wealthy and influential Trinidadian family and took over the team's captaincy from his brother Jackie. He was a middle/late order bat and off-spin bowler, but was not a regular player until his elevation to the captaincy in preference to experienced players like Learie Constantine and George Headley.

The issue of the West Indies captaincy became increasingly contentious, with a campaigning CLR James saying

*'the whole point was to send whole populations of white people, black or brown men under a white captain.....they must always have a white man to lead them.'*

The game itself in Gravesend was a single innings one-dayer which ended in a draw. Ames' XI, packed with Kent favourites like Frank Woolley and Tich Freeman scored 278 for 6, Ames himself top-scoring with 116 in 85 minutes.

The West Indians replied with 225 for 3, but sadly the spectators were deprived of the opportunity to see Constantine, Headley — or indeed Ralph Grant — bat.

**Caroline Ellis**

*Editor's note:* In the 1930's three official touring teams played warm-up pre-tour matches at the Bat and Ball Ground in Gravesend. Leading players from the county side plus a number of local cricketers made up the opposition. Being the first sight in England of the tourists, they were well attended. The matches were played in pre-NHS days for local hospital charities. The tourists concerned were the West Indies sides of 1933 and 1939 and the Indian side of 1936.



*The crowd for the 1933 West Indians*

## *Lost Grounds in the Maidstone Area*

Following an article in the *Inside Edge* seeking help in identifying grounds throughout Kent where cricket is sadly no longer played, I embarked upon a journey of both discovery and nostalgia, having first experienced cricket in the Maidstone area in the 1950's.

I found that covering a period from before World War I to after World War II, a total of seventy-one (71) grounds were lost and these are shown numerically in areas on the attached street map. They can be divided into several separate categories, notably works facilities, council pitches and country estates.

The starting point was a combination of local knowledge and various AKCC Year Books- remember those? Further information was often required and involved a combination of various websites, parish councils, local history societies, local books, old newspapers and former players. Life would have been much easier if there were more references to the history of both existing and former clubs.



*Map of Maidstone showing locations  
of the 71 grounds*

However it was all worthwhile, with interesting facts

emerging such as Leslie Compton playing football for Arsenal and the following day cricket at East Peckham in aid of Tonbridge Cottage Hospital and the current Watlingbury side being the third team in around 170 years, each having a different ground. My thoughts turned to playing against Tovil at The Godlands, with over half their side from two families and later against Tovil & Bridge Mills, with Fred Ridgway, at the same venue. More details will be included in future editions.

I would be pleased to share any of my research and delighted to receive any information, particularly photographs, of "lost" teams and grounds from the Maidstone area. My e-mail is [lambertsonatour@gmail.com](mailto:lambertsonatour@gmail.com). If you have any influence in your area, please encourage the appropriate bodies to publicise the history of your local club, which is part of our Heritage and should not be forgotten.

Finally, if you would like to conduct a survey of "lost" grounds in your area or have details of individual grounds, Howard Milton would be pleased to hear from you.

**Ian Lambert**

## Come to Frittenden and pitch your Wicket

Perhaps no other county has such a wealth of beautiful cricket grounds as Kent, and village matches within the county and neighbouring Sussex were frequent in the early years of the eighteenth century. How long cricket has been played at Frittenden, in the Weald of Kent, is unknown, however, men from Frittenden are reported as playing from at least the first half of the eighteenth century.

An example from 1741 being:

*"On Mon, Aug 24, at New Romney, High Halden with one given man from Tenterden and another from Frittenden, v New Romney".*

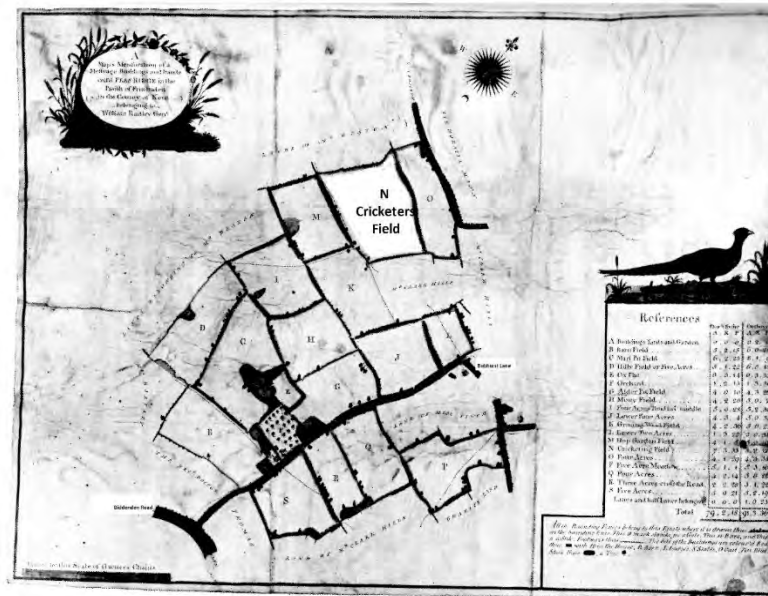
It is not certain when Frittenden gained its own ground. The first reports of Frittenden playing are all 'away' matches, so it is possible that Frittenden was a 'wandering' team at this time. In 1771 there was a report:-

*"On Thurs, Aug 8, at Smarden, Smarden v Frittenden, when William Daynes, fourth son of John Daynes senr of Frittenden, got by strokes 53 runs in the game, and ran in the whole 130 runs. The lad is not 13 years of age till Sept 29th next."*

Also, in 1772: *"Matches in Kent - Hollingbourne v Frittenden ..."*

And in 1800: *"Matches in Kent ... Chart Sutton with 4 given man v Frittenden..."*

However, a 1780 map in the Kent Archives, of Peasridge, Bubhurst Lane, Frittenden, shows a 'cricketing field', indicating that a permanent home had been established by this date.



21. Peasridge in Frittenden, 1780  
A map showing the fine craftsmanship of Benjamin Barham in both the drawing of the map and its decoration.

Cricket in Frittenden appears to have been well established by the 1840s as Charles Igglesden, editor of the Kentish Express, writing in 1923, records:-

*'an old doggerel that used to be sung by cricket enthusiasts some eighty years ago:-*

*If you want a game of cricket,*

*Come to Frittenden and pitch your wicket;*



*For Frittenden men are very bold,  
They play for silver or for gold  
When old Tanner Davis gets in,  
He knocks the ball right out the ring  
And old Bob Orpin, with his round shoulders,  
Knocks the ball over the bowlers,  
For Frittenden men are very bold,  
They play for silver or for gold.'*

In 1841 Robert Orpin was a 45-year-old farmer living at Mills House, later Mill farm, next to the windmill (now gone) at Sinkhurst Green. Orpin was a tenant of the Cornwallis Estate and the farm consisted of some 100 acres.

Abell wrote that:-

*'With reference to Sunday cricket playing I have more than once heard of a Kentish village, I am not sure, but I think it was Frittenden or Benenden, where the custom always obtained that the Parson should open the Cricket Season on Easter Sunday by bowling the first ball on the village green directly after morning service. I have also heard that he performed the ceremony in his surplice!'*

While Frittenden does not have a 'village green' as such, the involvement of the clergy with the cricket team had a long history with successive Rectors, and their sons, as playing members, Presidents and Vice Presidents of the club.

By the 1860's Frittenden matches were regularly reported in the local press. The game in the parish would have been reinforced by the arrival at Frittenden House in the early 1870s of Sir Charles William Atholl Oakeley, 4th Bart. who had made two first class appearances. Between 1846 and 1857 he made several good scores in India, where he served in the Bengal Army, rising to the rank of captain in the Bengal Cavalry. He was elected President of the Kent County Cricket Club in 1876. His election followed that of the doyen of Kent C.C.C. Lord Harris in 1875. Oakeley served for many years on the Committee of Kent C.C.C.

Oakeley first appeared in the Cranbrook colours in 1866, and in 1867 scored 151 for Cranbrook v Tenterden. In the following two decades he played for many different teams including Cranbrook; Angley Park; Hawkhurst; Staplehurst and, on some 30 occasions from 1873 to 1878, Frittenden.

It was probably as a result of Oakeley's tenure of Frittenden House that the cricket ground was moved from Peasridge Farm, Bubhurst Lane, to the field adjacent to St Mary's church, between Parsonage Farm and Frittenden House. Once established there, Frittenden House used the ground for what came to be something of 'Country House' cricket, albeit in a minor way. This was exemplified by a match on 17 July 1914, the eve of WWI. Many of the players and spectators came from the elite of Cranbrook and surrounding areas, perhaps most notably, the writer, Siegfried Sassoon, F S W Cornwallis of Linton Park and Mr G B Winch, chairman of Styles and Winch, brewers, of Cranbrook.

Sir Charles established a 'House' cricket team, "Oakleaves". He played for the first time in the colours of 'Oakleaves' in 1870. This team played eight 'away' games until finally, in late 1873, they played at home in Frittenden, at the new ground established adjacent to Frittenden House. On two occasions, he fielded eleven under his own name, on both occasions at Staplehurst.

Sir Charles was not averse to more light hearted contests, such as Married v Single and Eleven v Twenty-Two, both matches staged at Frittenden. Sir Charles appeared for Oakleaves each year until 1878. Most years saw him appear on at least two occasions for the 'House'. However, in 1876 he played in some seventeen matches, of which five appear to be for the 'House', although only two of these appear to be at the home ground. His last recorded game, Frittenden v Smarden, was at the end of the 1878 season.

The fixture cards held by the Frittenden Archives demonstrate the continued involvement of the Oakeley family with the cricket club over 50 years. Sir Charles' son, Charles John Oakeley, JP, was captain in 1900 and was still serving as a Vice President until his death in 1938, and in turn his son, Charles Richard Andrew Oakeley, was also a Vice-President in the 1930s.

As with so many village cricket sides, the bulk of Frittenden's team comprised a mixture of farmers, farmers' sons, farm workers and their sons, together with butchers, grocers, inn keepers and the incumbent for the time being of St Mary's Church. For 'house' matches the locals would be supplemented by guests from the major houses in the surrounding area, such as the Hoare family of Staplehurst and the Knatchbulls of Brabourne.

Another feature of cricket in Frittenden was the emergence of a ladies' team. The national Women's Cricket Association was founded 1926. In August 1934, Frittenden Guides played the Cranbrook Guides, Frittenden scoring 59 against Cranbrook's 32. It is of note that the match was played *'on the village ground ...by permission of Mr Chantler'* (tenant farmer of Parsonage Farm where the ground was situated) One of the umpires that day was Nora Bearsby who was to be the driving force behind the Frittenden Ladies' Team. By 1937 the cricket club's fixture list included a match against Frittenden Ladies' C.C. although it may have been more of a social event than a true match. However, the emergence of a Ladies' team was not without some opposition. In May 1938

*'members of the ladies' team were in the midst of a practice game when someone, it is alleged, who bears a grievance against the club, walked on to the pitch and scattered the players. He pulled up the stumps and threw them in all directions.'*

As a result, permission was granted to the ladies to play at the football ground.

The 1920s and 1930s appear to have been the halcyon days for cricket in the parish. By then, the team was venturing over the border into Sussex. Furthermore, those decades saw Frittenden in a position to run a Second Eleven and the Frittenden School Team won the Woodchurch Schools Cup. The cricket club was a focus of social life with dances, whist drives etc, being regularly held. Of note is the club's purchase of a pavilion during the 1938 season. The cost, £12-10-0 (about £850 today) was more than 25% of the club's balance sheet!

Perhaps one of the more unusual cricket club events was a 1963 charity match between the Old Tymers Twenty and a Frittenden Cricket Club Eleven. The match, in aid of 'The British Empire Campaign for Cancer Research' and local charities, was the idea of residents Bob Coram (the cartoonist MAROC) and Ted Sessions, who captained the Old Tymers team, all dressed in 19th century costume. The 'Twenty's score of 79 was passed by the '11' for the loss of two wickets.

The 1970s saw a downturn in the fortunes of the club and it eventually folded. However, in 1996, a group of enthusiastic players created a new club at a new ground, at Sandhurst Bridge, which continues to thrive.

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**Phil Betts**

*Taken with permission from The Cranbrook Journal number 31 2020.*

## *Subscriptions*

A number of members have, as yet, not renewed their subscriptions for 2021. As we emerge from lockdown, the KCHT will be looking at priorities in forwarding our plans in promoting our great heritage. This cannot be done with finances uncertain. So, please, if you have yet to renew your commitment to this great cause, consider doing so. It is still a minimum £10 a year to The Kent Cricket Heritage Trust, Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence. Old Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3NZ.

## *Kent County Cricket Players: A Bibliography*

### *Part 3—Hearne to Richardson*

Books by and on Kent county first-team players. Books 'by' may include titles with little or no Kent cricket. Nineteenth century 'given' players and overseas players are included.

**A Hearne** (Kent 1884-1906)

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**Knott, Alan** – Alan Knott on wicket-keeping. Stanley Paul, 1977.

It's Knott cricket: the autobiography of Alan Knott. Macmillan, 1985.

Stumper's view. Stanley Paul, 1972.

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**Lubbock, Alfred** – Memories of Eton and Etonians: including my life at Eton 1854-1863 and some reminiscences of some subsequent cricket, 1864-1874. John Murray, 1899.

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**C S Marriott** (Kent 1924-1937)

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**S A Marsh** (Kent 1982-2000)

**Marsh, Steve** – The gloves are off. West Ridge, 2001.

**J R Mason** (Kent 1893-1914)

**Lazenby, John** — Test of time: travels in search of a cricketing legend. John Murray, 2005.

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**A Mynn** (Kent 1834-1859)

**Morrah, Patrick** – Alfred Mynn and the cricketers of his time. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963.

— reprint with new introduction. Constable, 1986.

**P A Nixon** (Kent 2000-2002)

**Nixon, Paul and Colman, Jon** — Keeping quiet: the autobiography. The History Press, 2012.

**C J Ottaway** (Kent 1869-1870)

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**G Parr** (Kent 1854-1858)

**Wynne-Thomas, Peter** – George Parr: his record innings by innings. (Famous cricketers series,) Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, 1995..

**H A Pawson** (Kent 1946-1953)

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**F Pilch** (Kent 1836-1854)

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**P E Richardson** (Kent 1960-1965)

**Richardson, Peter** — Tackle cricket this way. Stanley Paul, 1958.

## Who's Who at KCHT

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Caroline Ellis - Kent Cricket—Curator  
Howard Milton - Kent Cricket - Honorary Statistician  
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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.

Read the KCHT blog at –

[kentcricketheritagetrust.wordpress.com](http://kentcricketheritagetrust.wordpress.com)

## Chatham Crusaders Cricket Club

The Trust has received two team photographs of the Chatham Crusaders Cricket Club of 1910 and 1911. We know very little about the club or any of the players. Given the dates of the photos, we fear that several of the young men staring so confidently at the camera will have died in the First World War.

If anybody has any information about the club or the cricketers portrayed, please get in touch with the Hon. Curator, Caroline Ellis, at the email address given on this page. We are keen to learn much more.

Jo Rice

