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# INSIDE EDGE

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



After a most unsatisfactory season on the field, for our men's team at least, the players will no doubt be spending much of the winter preparing for the 2025 season and hoping that there will be fewer injuries and more centuries and five-wicket hauls to dig us out of the depths of Division Two as quickly as possible.



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Some of us, who have long ago given up our unreasonable hopes of ever playing for the county, are working equally hard within the Heritage Trust over the winter to prepare for 2025 and the years beyond. Ian Phipps has done sterling work in cataloguing our collection, a task that is almost complete, but there is also the work of digitising as much as we can – scorecards, photographs, menu cards, autograph sheets and all sorts of other papers – and improving our storage and display facilities

I wish I could report some strong progress on the Heritage Hub project, but apart from securing the support of all those who may be involved in the many decisions to be made before the first spade can start digging, we have not been able to do a great deal. Until the ECB completes the sale of the franchises for the Hundred, and the club therefore knows how much money may be available for contributing to our project, we cannot draw up the detailed plans that will allow us to begin seeking funds to realise our ambitions. With any luck, the sales will be completed by the spring, so next year could well be a very busy one for us all.

In the meantime, of course, we are still having some very interesting items donated to us, the most recent being a collection of newspaper cuttings and other personal papers relating to the life of Godfrey Evans, given to us by the executors of the will of Godfrey's son Howard, who died earlier this year.

*Jonathan Rice*

## *A Moment in Time, Wednesday July 7 1909*



About the most unlikely record-making batting partnerships in Kent cricket history.

As Kent proceeded towards their second county championship, the cause looked a little shaky when Worcestershire compiled 360 all out on a benign pitch at the close of the first day.

Come the second day, Kent promptly lost two wickets but Humphreys and Hutchings took the score to over a hundred before a further wicket fell. At this point Woolley came in but having scored 19, a mistimed pull on a pitch enlivened by rain during the lunch break resulted in a badly split lip and he retired for repairs.

He returned a hour later by which time Kent had slipped to 191 for 6, Worcestershire now a good way off. Woolley resumed in full flow adding 84 with Troughton and 44 with Huish. The latter was bowled at 320, but Blythe was caught at slip the next ball leaving Kent with only one wicket to fall yet forty adrift.

The last man, Arthur Fielder, now joined Woolley and, having survived the hat-trick ball, between them gained complete mastery of the Worcestershire bowling such that in the last hour of the day they had put on 119 runs - 439 for 9 (Woolley 94\*, Fielder 67\*). Fielder's previous highest for Kent was 37— in all matches 50\* on the 1907/08 Ashes tour. So, he had barely even approached a hundred before.

The next morning continued the fray. In a hundred and twenty minutes they added another 116 runs. Fielder duly reached that unexpected hundred, scoring in all 14 fours. Woolley too went past his previous highest score being at the wicket for 285 minutes and hitting a six and 24 fours. And it was Woolley who was eventually out, cutting straight into the hands of H K Foster at point. Woolley ended on 185 and Fielder unbeaten on 112. A partnership of 235 for the last wicket and a very unexpected lead of 195.

Worcestershire on going in for their second innings never looked like saving the game. Blythe (7 for 44) and Fielder (3 for 67) bowled Kent to a very unlikely victory of an innings and 33 runs,

The Woolley-Fielder last wicket partnership set a new world record, breaking the previous record actually set against Kent by R W Nicholls and W Roche for Middlesex at Lord's in 1899 by just 5 runs. It remained the world record until Alan Kippax and Halford Hooker put on 307 for New South Wales v Victoria in 1928/29. The highest in England is now 249 by C S Nayudu and S N Banerjee for the Indian touring side v Surrey at the Oval in 1946. As far as county cricket is concerned the record still stands.

Not too surprisingly, Fielder's hundred remains the only hundred scored for Kent by a number 11 batsman and only Derek Underwood with 9.87 has a Kent career batting average lower than Fielder's 11.14 when a hundred has been scored.

Interviewed in the magazine *Cricket*, Kent captain Ted Dillon insisted Fielder's innings came as no surprise, adding "we all knew he could get runs if he really turned his attention to batting. But he is wanted for his bowling and has not been encouraged to make big scores."

## *The Canterbury Society Heritage Expo Event*

On Saturday 9 November 2024 the KCHT were among nearly 40 stallholders at the Canterbury Society Heritage Expo Event held in the Westgate Hall in Canterbury. The event enabled members of the public to appreciate and celebrate the importance of Canterbury's heritage. Ian Phipps, KCCC Heritage Officer, arranged items from the Trust's collection for the display and John and Rosemary Piddock manned the stall. The items included the 18th Century scoring stick which was of great interest together with the ball used by Tich Freeman when taking his world-record 300th wicket in 1928.



Frank Woolley's pre-World War I cap was a very special item to one visitor who was a descendant of Frank. Colin Cowdrey's bat, used when he made two centuries in the match Kent played against Australia in 1961, gave Rosemary the opportunity to reminisce with several older visitors about watching Colin play at Dover and Folkestone. The star item of the display, for both young and old visitors, was Daniel Bell-Drummond's bat used when he made 300 not out against Northants in 2023.



## *Inside Edge Distribution*

A sudden departure by a member of the small team who run KCHT has raised a few difficulties in the distribution of Inside Edge. This seems to have resulted in some recent members not getting the previous two issues.. With apologies if this applies to you. The missing issues can be found at [kcht.co.uk](http://kcht.co.uk) then click on KCHT Media, .or by contacting [howardmilton@btinternet.com](mailto:howardmilton@btinternet.com).

## *KCHT Membership*

Any new readers of this publication would be very welcome to come and join the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust. (KCHT). We are here to promote Kent Cricket's remarkable heritage to the world. Indeed in the world of cricket, that heritage has arguably no superior. The membership fee is a minimum £10 (but more is very appreciated).. With such money, KCHT can support and build on its archive, not the least in what is a very competitive market when it comes to acquiring items of relevance. If you are interested please contact John Piddock at [john.piddock@btinternet.com](mailto:john.piddock@btinternet.com) or by post John Piddock, Secretary of KCHT, c/o the address of Kent CCC on page 10,

## *Derek Underwood*

### *The Writing of an Autobiography*



As someone fortunate enough to have watched the great Kent side of the 1970s, there were few more compelling sights than Derek Underwood gliding in from the Pavilion End at Canterbury and bowling with that classical action. His death earlier this year unleashed a host of poignant memories as the cricket world came together to pay tribute to a truly great bowler and upstanding individual.

Having had the privilege of meeting Derek on several occasions and leaning on his expertise when writing my biography of Colin Cowdrey, I was delighted to be given the opportunity of writing his biography.

Having researched his career in some detail from a plethora of books and newspapers, I made it my business to talk to as many of Derek's acquaintances as possible. Former opponents such as Dennis Amiss, Keith Fletcher and Clive Radley described in telling detail the challenge of scoring off him on a good wicket and surviving against him on a damp one. While there was no obvious way out of the maze the consensus seemed to be that playing him off the back foot was the best option.

Amid a number of telephone calls, the highlight of my endeavours was my two trips to Kent to meet Mrs Dawn Underwood, Derek's ex-wife, Carl Openshaw, Kent's former chairman, and other close friends such as John Shepherd, Alan Ealham and Alan Brown. Although Alan Brown is now 89, he, along with Bob Wilson, aged 95, and Alan Dixon, 90, were razor-sharp in their observations about Derek.

Cricketers in the main are renowned for their geniality and the Kent sides of Derek's vintage were no exception, fully vindicating Norman Graham's comment that, talent aside, their success stemmed from their excellent team spirit.

Norman lives in a beautiful remote spot in Northumberland, his home adorned by memorabilia and photos from his playing days and having spent a delightful morning in his company, I drove across the moors to Castle Barnard to meet Stephen Brenkley, the *Kent Messenger's* cricket correspondent in the late 1970s. Aside from recalling Derek's harmonious relationship with the media he contrasted his self-effacing modesty off the field with his intense competitiveness on it, a point reiterated by everyone I spoke to.

Having a loathing to leaking runs, Derek could be unsettled by a sustained onslaught from a batsman, at which point wicketkeeper Alan Knott would step in with a quiet word of reassurance.

Given Derek's sensitive personality who shunned controversy whenever possible, the most traumatic episode of his career concerned his enlistment in Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket, an episode which forms the crux of my book. Drawing on Derek's own notes, local newspapers and minutes of the Kent Committee (my thanks here to the efforts of Ian Phipps, Kent's Heritage Officer), I explain why he joined WSC, the deep-seated divisions wrought by Packer and how the charge of deserting Kent and England greatly excised him. It said much for Alan Ealham's leadership that he helped persuade the Kent Committee to think again about releasing the county's Packer players and they in turn were rewarded with another decade of loyal service from Derek.

Talking to Derek's younger team-mates such as Christopher Cowdrey, Richard Ellison and Neil Taylor, the unassuming modesty which defined him in his younger days never deserted him and how, as senior professional, he set standards for them to follow.



Living in Edinburgh I spend a lot of time on the road interviewing people for books, so it was a real pleasure to meet Graham Johnson when he came to my home *en route* to St Andrews to play golf. Looking exceptionally fit for his age, Graham recalled his time at Beckenham and Penge Grammar School with Derek as well as bowling in tandem with him. He also reckoned that Derek missed the regimented life of first-class cricket and how nothing in retirement quite compensated for the sheer thrill of playing for Kent.

As regards retirement, I had several long conversations with Derek's nephew Kevin who worked alongside him at Turf Cricket Ltd, supplying artificial cricket pitches to clubs and schools, a role at which Derek excelled. In charge of the firm was Derek's brother Keith (Kevin's father) with whom he was very close, and Kevin, and Keith's widow Anne, gave me valuable insights about the prominent role Keith played in Derek's career, not least his advice on business matters.

Kevin was also a leading authority on Derek's final years when he was struck down with Lewy Body Dementia, the most serious form of dementia, a tragic end to a life well lived. You would have to go a long way to find a cricketer more liked and respected as Derek Underwood and it was Kent's great fortune that he served the club with such distinction for 25 years.

**Mark Peel**

***[Editor's note : Mark's book – "Deadly: The Life of English International Cricketer Derek Underwood" will be published by Pitch on 3rd March, 2025]***

## *The First Seventy-five Years of Sibton Park Cricket Club With a Very Sticky Wicket*

Nestled in the Elham Valley on the outskirts of Lyminge is Sibton Park Cricket Club (Figure1). Cricket has been played in the grounds of Sibton Park since the 19th Century, and today the club plays in a dedicated ground to the left of the house on Longage Hill.

An early match, reported in *The Folkestone Express and Hythe and Sandgate Advertiser*, published on 21 August 1895, was a game played at Sibton Park against Sandling. Sandling won the match with their bowler, JS Fuller, taking nine wickets for 23 runs.



*Figure 1 - Sibton Park Cricket Ground today*

In 1897, John Howard MP, purchased Sibton Park house and estate. He became a great patron for the future of cricket at Sibton Park. *The Folkestone Herald* published on 5 August 1899, reported on a Lyminge 2nd XI Team playing Harvey Institute Club at Sibton Park. Harvey won having made 77 runs. That was too good for Lyminge who only managed 49. On 21 March 1903 the *Folkestone Herald* reported on a general meeting of the club when Mr Howard confirmed that he would maintain the cricket ground at his own expense. The paper continued:

*It is seldom a village possesses so perfect and picturesque a ground as that of Sibton, and this should not only be an inducement to those in the neighbourhood to become members, but also be a great attraction to visitors.*

Mr Howard organised his gardeners to lay the square and used imported special turf. Faggots (bundles of sticks and branches) were laid under the playing area to help improve drainage. Mr A B Collins, the village bootmaker supplied specially made leather boots for the horse that pulled the roller to avoid leaving horseshoe marks on the pitch. Two months later, in May 1903, *The Folkestone Herald and Hythe and Sandgate Standard* reported on a match held at Sibton Park against Stanford. Sibton Park declared after achieving a total of 124 runs for 4 wickets. Stanford bravely batted but the wickets soon fell, with 7 men bowled out, 2 run out and 1 catch. They achieved a grand total of 5 runs.

*The Folkestone Herald*, published on 20 February 1904, reported on the general meeting of the club and, despite 51 members paying a nominal subscription of 2s 6d (about £10 today), the club only achieved a small profit of 4s 6d (about £18 today) for the year. The financial predicament could not continue and it was hoped that the support would continue for the coming season. Fortunately, the club continued and although records are rather thin on the ground about the early years, one claim to fame is that Leslie Ames, a local player from Elham and Kent and England Cricketer, scored one of his early centuries at Sibton Park.

In 1912 a photograph was taken of the Team at the St Lawrence Ground, Canterbury when Sibton Park played St Lawrence (Figure 2). The gentleman wearing a dark suit and hat in the middle of the front row is Mr John Howard, President of the club. Sitting on his left-hand side is A Broadley the team captain.



*Figure 2 - Sibton Park Cricket Team at the St Lawrence Ground 1912*

The *Kentish Express* and *Ashford News* published on 14 July 1923 gave a detailed account of the Lyminge Cricket Week held at Sibton Park. The event had started the previous year and was very popular. Spectators, some who may have arrived in Lyminge by train with the station just ten minutes from the ground, gathered each day to enjoy cricket matches and, according to the newspaper, “pass a pleasant time, in which task they have succeeded.”

The first match took place against the East Kent Hunt team. Sibton Park were defeated but there was some consolation that the team's opening batter, C Maggs managed a not out innings and scored 50 runs. Unfortunately, towards the end of the match, C Langley, the Club's secretary whilst batting had to retire after a ball “rebounded from the pitch and hitting him a severe blow below the heart.” He was not able to take part in the match held the next day. The second match was against Simon Langton School, Canterbury. Sibton Park won the match. The newspaper reported that “the boys' score was no criterion of the interesting cricket which the game furnished to the spectators.” The third match was against a St Lawrence Team and the match proved the most exciting of the week with Sibton Park winning by just three runs. A W Roff was the highest scorer for Sibton Park with 39 runs. Captain A S Platt for the visitors, scored 35 when he was caught by C Maggs. For St Lawrence, their bowler, Weeks, took 9 wickets for 21 runs and for Sibton Park, A W Roff took six wickets for 15 runs.

Following the outbreak of the 2nd World War the club closed but reopened in 1946 as the Lyminge Sports and Social Club. Five years later, Sibton Park Cricket Club was reformed with Frank Clayson as Chairman (Frank would serve as Chairman of the Club until his death in 1970). The financial position of the club at this time was a healthier £8. 8s. 6d. (about £300 today) and the club has flourished ever since.



*Figure 3 - The Cricket Pitch flooded and frozen in the 1920s  
(Photograph reproduced by permission of Sibton Cricket Club)*

A recurring problem for Sibton Park is the drainage of rain water when heavy rain results in the Nailbourne Stream rising and flooding the pitch. Figure 3 is a very old photograph of the pitch showing major flooding that froze in the winter in the 1920s and provided a skating rink for villagers. The minutes of the Club in 1928 reported on works required because of *"the serious condition of the Ground due to heavy rains."* In 1961 *The Cricket in Kent Year Book*, the Official Handbook of the Association of Kent Cricket Clubs, reported on the flooding at the ground in 1939 and in 1961 when the water reached a depth of some three feet and reaching the steps of the pavilion. In 1962 the *Year Book* stated that the start of the season was delayed due to the condition of the ground after the rising of the Nailbourne Stream.

Despite the flooding problems the club flourished and by 1968 was able to field the A XI for the first time. On 29 June 1969 Mr Tom Pearce opened a new pavilion. In the following years the club had considerable success in the Jack Godden Knockout Cup and the Indoor Six-A-Side competitions. The introduction of a Coaching Scheme and Colts Matches proved to be of great value providing a route for young players to become future players for the Team.

On Saturday, 10 February 1979, the Club held a Dinner and Dance to celebrate the Club's 75th Anniversary and it was a time for the Club to reflect on how much had been achieved playing cricket at Sibton Park that began with the enthusiastic patronage of John Howard.

Rosemary Piddock

## *Items for Sale*

Whilst completing the inventory of the Club's collection, it became apparent that we have a great number of duplicates. We ask all donors for permission to dispose of such items on the understanding that 100% of the proceeds will be used by KCHT on managing and conserving the collection.

With Christmas approaching, we are offering a few select items that might "fill a gap" in your own collections. The "price" is a suggested minimum donation and compares favourably with dealers' prices. Please let me know if you'd like more information. In the coming months, we'll be offering duplicate scorecards, postcards, books and benefit brochures (and Wisden's) so please contact KCHT if you'd like more information.

### *WISDEN CRICKETERS' ALMANACK*

1901 Original paper back with minor damage to front cover, and barely any creasing to the spine. Complete with photo-plate. Overall, very good condition. *Suggested donation : £200*

1902 Original paper back with minor tear to front cover, tape repairs to photo-plate. Barely any creasing to the spine. Overall, very good condition. *Suggested donation : £180*

1903 Original paper back, covers in fine condition and barely any creasing to the spine. Complete with photo-plate. Overall, excellent condition. *Suggested donation : £200*



### *WISDEN CRICKETERS' ALMANACK AUSTRALIA*

A run of almanacks from 1998 (1st edition) to 2004/05 (7th edition). All in excellent condition, hard backs with original dust wrappers. *Suggested donation : £35*



## Who's Who at KCHT

**President :** Hon Christopher Cowdrey

**KCHT Trustees**

Keith Austin    Ian Phipps  
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**KCHT Officers**

Chairman - Jonathan Rice - [chair@kcht.co.uk](mailto:chair@kcht.co.uk)  
Secretary - John Piddock—[john.piddock@btinternet.com](mailto:john.piddock@btinternet.com)  
Treasurer - Keith Austin - [treasurer@kcht.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@kcht.co.uk)

**Kent Cricket**

CEO—Simon Storey - [Simon.Storey@kentcricket.co.uk](mailto:Simon.Storey@kentcricket.co.uk)  
Heritage Officer - Ian Phipps -- [ian.phipps23@gmail.com](mailto:ian.phipps23@gmail.com)

**Also on the Committee**

David Robertson - [david.robertson81@btinternet.com](mailto:david.robertson81@btinternet.com)  
Howard Milton - [howardmilton@btinternet.com](mailto:howardmilton@btinternet.com)  
George Cocks - [mikegeorgecocks@aol.com](mailto:mikegeorgecocks@aol.com)  
Peter Francis - [p.mfrancis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:p.mfrancis@hotmail.co.uk)

**Contacts** (addresses above)

General & Membership Matters & Website— John Piddock  
Subscriptions & Financial Matters—Keith Austin  
Historical Enquiries— Jonathan Rice or Ian Phipps  
Inside Edge— Howard Milton

*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.

## KCHT Website

[KCHT.co.uk](http://KCHT.co.uk) then click KCHT media

Read the KCHT blog at –

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

## KENT CCC 1967

A black and white print of the Gillette Cup winning first XI. Player names printed beneath the image, and signatures in ink of all 16 players to the borders. Overall size c29cm x 23cm (image 19cm x 13cm). A VERY limited number available, each in fine condition.  
*Suggested donation : £20*



## THE HISTORY OF KENT CRICKET - APPENDICES 'I' AND 'J'

Issued as appendices to the original history, published in 1907, we can offer :

Appendix 'I' 1964 – 1984. Original covers, 163 pages, illustrated.

WITH

Appendix 'J' 1985 – 2002. Ltd Ed. of 500, hardback (acetate cover). 221 pages, illustrated.

*Suggested donation : £20*

Ian Phipps, Honorary Heritage Officer, Kent Cricket  
([heritage@kcht.co.uk](mailto:heritage@kcht.co.uk)) and [ian.phipps23@gmail.com](mailto:ian.phipps23@gmail.com))

