

# INSIDE EDGE



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## *KCHT Progress Report*

*From Jo Rice - KCHT Chairman*



The first full year of the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust has gone by very quickly, and it has been a busy but very enjoyable twelve months. The main achievement we can report is the acquisition of four new display cabinets, which are now in the Chiesman Pavilion, thanks to the generosity of the Supporters' Club and three other individual donors. Please take a look next time you are in the Pavilion – they are a splendid addition to our displays.

We have also set about the task of indexing the Kent Yearbooks, a task in which Derek Barnard is now on the finishing straight, and have held two informal members' meetings after play during the 2014 season. The display on Kent's contribution to the Great War, held during Canterbury Week last year and masterminded by Martin Moseling, received many favourable comments, and "Inside Edge", the third copy of which you are now reading, will always try to explore the more intriguing byways of Kent's cricket heritage.

We will continue to work alongside, but separately from, Kent CCC, in bringing the heritage of cricket in Kent to as large an audience as possible, and have plenty more planned for 2015, especially as the Australian tourists and a Women's Ashes Test are both coming to the Spitfire Ground. We very much hope that you will continue to support the work of the Heritage Trust by joining, participating and encouraging your friends to do so too.



## Message from the Jamie Clifford, Chief Executive Officer, Kent County Cricket Club

It has been very pleasing to see the progress made by the Kent Cricket Heritage Trust since formation.

In a short time some tangible progress has been made. The excellent display of items in relation to The Great War during Canterbury Week 2014 and then the presentation of Display Cabinets in the Pavilion are two examples of just what the Heritage Trust can achieve. I know that there are further plans that include putting on speakers of note and this is much anticipated.

It is reassuring for those who care about the Club to know that there is a separate organisation set up with the expressed intent to safeguard and champion the Club's great history and traditions. I would like to put on record my thanks to the volunteers who are working so hard to get it established.

Finally, I would encourage anyone with Kent Cricket's interests at heart to become a member and help support the establishment of the Trust.



## *New Display Cabinets for The Long Room*

Thanks to the generosity of the Supporters' Club and three individuals, the Trust has now purchased four display cabinets that arrived in early February. They have been placed in the Chiesman Pavilion and now look splendid with some of the Club's collection of silverware and other items on display. A plaque recording the donors will be unveiled early in the season.

We hope that during the course of the season it will be possible to augment these with further cabinets so that some of the special bats, items of clothing and other parts of the collection, can be made available for members and supporters to enjoy. If you are interested in sponsoring a cabinet, please contact David Robertson.



## *The Blythe Family Grave*



Andrew Renshaw, from our sister group in Hampshire, has drawn our attention to the Blythe family grave in Brockley Cemetery, south-east London. Colin Blythe is commemorated there although as is probably well known, his grave is in the Oxford Road Cemetery between Ypres and Passchendaele in Belgium.

Apart from Colin, the gravestone commemorates three of his brothers:- Alexander (1892-1912) who died of tuberculosis. Sidney (1897-1916) who died on the Somme, and Walter (1886-1927) who died of tuberculosis in Wellington, New Zealand. The latest name on the stone is the father, Walter Blythe (1854-1932) who took his own life. HM

## *Gone but Not Forgotten*

First of a series in which John Websper dips into his extensive collection of photographs of Kent cricket grounds to reveal those whose cricketing days have passed. HIGH HALDEN: Picture taken in 1992 is a general view of the ground which was situated behind Hathwalden Grange (on the right when approaching on A28 from Ashford). Within four years the pavilion was already showing signs of neglect. Looking through the A.K.C.C. Yearbooks 1995 was probably the final season.





## *On a Cricket Ground in Tunbridge Wells, September 1914*

Recently to hand is this post card of troops in occupation of the Lower Cricket Ground on Tunbridge Wells Common, clearly dated September 1914, just a few weeks after the outbreak of the Great War. Presumably, their next step was disembarkation to France. The card was sent by a niece to her aunt, a Miss Hilbert in Ryde, Isle of Wight. It reads:-

*"Dear Aunty – I expect you saw in the Courier that we have about 300 "Terriers" here. (Birmingham Engineers.) This gives you a bit of the Lower Cricket Ground. The boys are very fit. Fred wants to join now. Ted & Vic were home last Monday week for 12 hours. Hope you are well. Love Rose."*

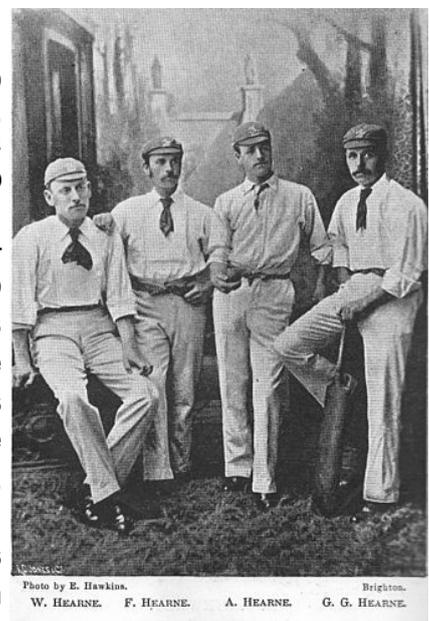
One is fearful for the fate of Fred, Ted and Vic and the soldiers and, not the least, the horses in that photograph. HM



## *The Hearne Collection*

One of the most famous of cricketing families had twelve members who played first-class cricket. Five were Kent players and among them was Alec, whose 409 appearances for the County were spread over the period from 1884 to 1906. He is one of only two Kent cricketers (the other being Frank Woolley) to score more than 10,000 runs and take over 1,000 wickets for Kent.

The Kent CCC has recently received from his great-granddaughter and great-grandson, the gift of a most interesting collection of archive material relating to the career of Alec and other family members. There are more than 100 items including silk scorecards, printed scorecards, original photographs, some Mockford postcard photos of Hearne's contemporaries and a few from Alec's time in South Africa. The collection also includes a number of very scarce single sheet rhymes on Kent cricketers and games, written by "A.C": Albert Craig, Cricket and Football Rhymester, and known as "The Captain of the Crowd". Although a Yorkshireman, he spent much of his time with the southern counties in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, compiling his verses, having them printed on single sheets and selling them to the crowd. Among the small collection gifted to the Club are "**Our Alec, Canterbury Week 1903**", "**The Joys of Tunbridge Week**", "**There's only one Walter Wright**", and "**Matchless Canterbury Week**" which was written in honour of Kent's four-fold successive victories against Surrey, Sussex, Somerset and Warwickshire in 1896. It is intended that these items and the scorecards of special significance, will be framed and displayed. DR





## *Who's Who at KCHT*

President : Hon. Christopher Cowdrey  
Trustees : Jamie Clifford - Kent County Cricket Club CEO  
David Robertson - Kent County Cricket Club Honorary Curator  
Howard Milton - Kent County Cricket Club Honorary Statistician  
Jonathan Rice - Kent County Cricket Club Main Committee Member  
Tony Kilbee - Kent Cricket Heritage Trust Treasurer

### **KCHT Committee**

Chairman - Jonathan Rice - [jnhrice@googlemail.com](mailto:jnhrice@googlemail.com)  
Jamie Clifford - [jamie.clifford.kent@ecb.co.uk](mailto:jamie.clifford.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)  
Martin Moseling - [acricketsortofchap@gmail.com](mailto:acricketsortofchap@gmail.com)  
Derek Barnard - [cricketologist@btinternet.com](mailto:cricketologist@btinternet.com)  
John Websper - [jhwebsper@freenetname.co.uk](mailto:jhwebsper@freenetname.co.uk)

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## *Wants*

Fraser Beale writes:- I have collected Kent memorabilia for many years and I am very proud of what I have built up particularly around my great uncle Les Ames. At present I am slowly collating what I have but an overview I would say is that I focus on postcards, signed letters, autographs and items relating to Ames. Fraser can be contacted at 13, Banner Way, Stone Cross, Pevensey, East Sussex. BN24 5FE or at [fraserbeale@live.com](mailto:fraserbeale@live.com). If you have a wish list or a collection you want to let us know about, please contact the Editor.

## *Future Events*

Apart from the KCHT AGM after close of play on May11, we are looking to put on the following events:-  
June 25-28 during the Australians' match, an exhibition celebrating the 40th anniversary of Kent's famous win. August 11-14 during the Women's Test Match, an exhibition on women's cricket September 1-3 meeting with a guest speaker after close of play on one of the days of the Lancashire match

## *Editorial Notes*

We are still anxious to have contributions from members for this newsletter. For instance, we are looking to start a series called *Ex Libris*, featuring a short review of a favourite past book on Kent cricket. If you have anything which may be of interest, including any initiatives which might progress the Trust onwards, please let us know either through David Robertson on [david.robertson81@btinternet.com](mailto:david.robertson81@btinternet.com) or at the Kent County Cricket Club at The Spitfire Ground St Lawrence, Canterbury, or for the newsletter in particular, Howard Milton on [howardmilton@btinternet.com](mailto:howardmilton@btinternet.com) (*nb a change of e-mail address*) or at 46 Elmfield Close, Gravesend DA110LP.

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## *Report on Progress on the "Who's Who"*

Trust members will no doubt be aware that founder member, Derek Carlaw, has been working on a Who's Who of every cricketer who has made a first team appearance for Kent. The project, supported by the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, has reached a significant stage in so far as Derek has completed biographies of every cricketer excluding those covered in the *100 Greats* book, published some years back, and more current players of the last twenty years. In figures this means he has covered 665 of the monumental 870 players to date who should be covered. Derek has now gone back to the beginning to update earlier ones on whom newly accessible information has appeared (e.g. 1911 census and wills).

Allowing for the 100 Greats, it leaves 105 more recent cricketers still to be written up. Given the enormity of this work, the obvious resting-place is likely to be a website when additional and corrected information can be added as and when. HM

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## *I Have Often Passed This Way but Never Stopped* *(The brief life of Charles John Norman Adams).*



For thirty-four years I have driven along Maidstone Road, Nettlestead as I made my way to see Gillingham play soccer or to see my beloved Kent County Cricket Club at Canterbury. Nettlestead is a small village about 5 miles South West of Maidstone. As you drive the B2015 from East Peckham, the parish church of St Mary the Virgin is the first large building that you encounter in Nettlestead. The church lays on the east side of the road, some 20 metres above the River Medway to the East.

Over the past month I have been reading Andrew Renshaw's book "*Wisden on the Great War-The Lives of Cricket's Fallen 1914-1918*". In this book all the obituaries have been updated with new information about the subjects' lives and deaths, their families and memorials. On page 378 I came across the following entry: "*2<sup>nd</sup> LT Charles John Norman Adams (6<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshire Regt) who died of wounds on November 14, 1918, aged 29, was in the Eleven at King's School, Canterbury in 1906-07-08. Later he was an assistant master at Marlborough.*" Later still it mentions that Adams's name is on the war memorial inside the lych-gate leading to St Mary the Virgin, Church, Nettlestead, Kent.

Returning from Canterbury recently I stopped the car and investigated the memorial inside the lych-gate. Yes Charles Adams is one of seventeen names on this war memorial. I needed to investigate further. Up to about 20 years ago the field to the north of the church was a small cricket ground on which Nettlestead played cricket. Today it is overgrown (Nettlestead having merged with East Peckham in the 1990s) and occupied by horses and very loud geese, but I suspect that Charles Adams played on this ground for the village in the years prior to the First World War.

Charles Adams was born on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1889, the son of Rev George Adams who was the Rector of St Mary the Virgin, Nettlestead. and his wife, Beatrice. Charles was the second offspring of the marriage his elder brother Theodore being born in 1885 and his younger sister Evelyn being born in 1891. Theodore was decorated with the Order of St Michael and St George for his years of service in East Africa and he did not die until 1961. Evelyn survived until 1967. Charles's father died in 1936, but his mother passed away in 1916 and never knew the fate that awaited her second son in the Great War.

Charles was educated at the Junior King's School, Canterbury from 1897 and at the King's School, Canterbury from January 1902 to July 1908. He was Captain of the School in 1907, and played Rugby and Cricket for the School. During the 1908 season he averaged 29.7 with the bat, with a top score 69 not out against Highgate School The Cantuarian recorded "*Immensely improved bat with much increased power and variety of strokes. Good field as a rule*". I wonder if the Kent County Club ever took a look at young Adams.

In 1908 Adams won an open Classical Scholarship to St John's College, Oxford where he obtained degrees in Classics and History. He played for the college at both rugby and cricket and captained both teams. In addition he was President of the Debating Society On leaving Oxford he was appointed to the staff of Marlborough College, Wiltshire where he was a Lieutenant in the Officer



## *I Have Often Passed This Way but Never Stopped* *(The brief life of Charles John Norman Adams).* *Continued*

### Training Corps.

In May 1918 Adams was commissioned as a probationary 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards (not the 6<sup>th</sup> Warwickshire Regiment as stated in the 1919 Wisden). He landed in France in September 1918. On the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1918 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards were ordered to advance to support the Coldstream Guards for an attack on the line of the Fresnay-Wargnies-Le Petit road then to pass through



The Lych Gate at St Mary The Virgin, Nettlestead where the life of CJN Adams is commemorated

them and secure a second objective some 2000 yards beyond. The attack began at 7.20am but after earlier rain there was a mist, which reduced visibility to no more than 200 yards. As the leading companies passed over high ground the mist suddenly lifted and they came under devastating machine gun fire and suffered heavy casualties, but secured their position. Charles Adams was wounded while leading his platoon

in this attack and was evacuated to hospital in Rouen arriving there on 8<sup>th</sup> November. He had been wounded in the lower spine and his lower limbs were paralysed. Had he survived he would have been confined to a wheel chair for the rest of his life. His family were summoned on 13<sup>th</sup> November but he died on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1918.

Charles John Norman Adams was buried at St Sever Cemetery Extension Rouen a few days later. There are two other memorials to Charles Adams. He is commemorated on the Common Room Memorial outside the chapel at Marlborough College and on the war memorial in Canterbury Quad at St John's College, Oxford. So ended another life, which had promised so much on the cricket fields of England and in Kent in particular.

Derek Barnard



## *Charles Dickens & Cricket in Town Malling*

Any reader of Charles Dickens will know that no small proportion of the characters and places that fill the pages of his works have been influenced by places and people known to him. Among the most famous is of course the cricket match between Dingley Dell and Muggleton played out in *The Pickwick Papers*. By the description of the site and the coincidence of its serialisation (1836) with the dominance of Town Malling as a centre of Kent, if not English cricket, it was watching the game there that was probably the genesis of the fictitious contest.

Speculation such as this gave rise to a whole library of books in the years after the great man's death whereby various authors journeyed around "Dickens-Land" matching up sites with incidents in his novels. Among these was William R Hughes, who in 1888, with an illustrator, F G Kitton, in tow, produced *A Week's Tramp in Dickens-Land*. Most



interestingly it was sufficiently close to Dickens being alive he was able to talk to many people who actually knew him. At Town Malling he was "directed to the cricket-ground, which we visit, and find to be but a few minutes' walk from the centre of the town, bearing to the westward. It is a very fine field, nearly seven acres in extent, in splendid order, as level as a die, and as green as an emerald. It lies well open, and is flanked by the western range of hills of the Medway valley." His illustrator produced this accompanying drawing. The second revised edition of this book published in 1893 is available via Amazon or AbeBooks for £40-50. Recent paperback reprinted editions are available for somewhat less. There is also John Goulstone's two part account of *All Muggleton and Town Malling* in *The Cricket Quarterly* for Winter 1967/68 and Spring 1968. For an overall picture of Charles Dickens's interest in the game, not the least in the grounds of his home at Gad's Hill in Higham, there is Irving Rosewater's eleven page monograph *Charles Dickens and Cricket*. Not so easy to obtain this volume. Last seen, it was on sale for around £500, perilously close to £50 a page!  
HM



Original Illustration from the *Pickwick Papers*