

A FAMOUS KENTISH CRICKETER

The field upon which the Ash Fete takes place and where Ash Cricket Club hold their matches is known as "Little Bow" and could well take its name from the field where the longbowmen and archers practised their art and the view looking across to the church and Ash Place, built in 1637 by Sir Edmund Fowler, must be one of the pleasantest places to sit in a deck chair and listen to the crack of the ball against the willow!

On the wall behind the Altar in the Lady Chapel is a memorial to William Hodsoll of

South Ash, a gentleman who died 30th November 1776 and whose claim to fame is that he was a member of the Kent Cricket Team which beat the England Team at the Artillery Ground, London on 18th June 1744, the earliest first class match of which a full score sheet has been preserved.

ENGLAND

J. Harris	b Hodswell	0	b Mills	4
S. Dingate	b Hodswell	3	b Hodswell	11
Newland	b Mills	0	b Hodswell	3
Cuddy	b Hodswell	0	c Danes	2
Green	b Mills	0	b Mills	5
T. Waymark	b Mills	7	b Hodswell	9
J. Bryan	St Kips	12	c Kips	7
R. Newland	not out	18	c Sackville	15
J. Harris	b Hodswell	0	b Hodswell	1
G. Smith	b Bartrum	0	b Mills	8
Newland	b Mills	0	not out	5
	Byes	0	byes	0
		40		70

KENT (with Sawyer)

Lord J .P. Sackville	c Waymark	5	b Harris	3
Long Robin	b Newland	7	b Newland	9
Mills	b Harris	0	c Newland	6
Hodswell	b Harris	0	not out	5
J. Cutbush	c Green	3	not out	7
Bartrum	b Newland	2	b Newland	0
Danes	b Newland	6	c Smith	0
Sawyer	c Waymark	0	b Newland	5
Kips	b Harris	12	b Harris	10
Mills	not out	7	b Newland	2
V. Romney	b Harris	11	c Harris	8
	Byes	0	byes	3
		53		58

William Hodsoll was at the crease when Kent won by one wicket, he may have made the winning hit, but his major contribution to that result was taking 4 England wickets in each innings. Sixteen Kent matches are recorded between 1745 and 1751 and both William Hodsoll and Val Romney are named as players. But who was this eighteenth century cricketer?

William Hodsoll was the third son of John Hodsoll (1681-1720) and Rebecca, daughter of Nicholas Tucker of Sutton Valence. John Hodsoll was Lord of the Manor of South Ash from 1699 until his death in 1720. The four sons were William who died an infant on 4th June 1707, John born 1712 and who died unmarried on 28th August 1741 whilst the youngest son was Thomas Hodsoll who died in 1751. He and his wife Barbara are commemorated by their stone in the Lady Chapel.

William Hodsoll succeeded his father as Joint Lords of the Manor of South Ash in 1720 and held this for 56 years having outlived his brothers. William and his wife Hester had no children and he left South Ash Manor with the Lordship to his cousin Charles Hodsoll who, with his wife Mercy Kettell, is also commemorated in the Lady Chapel. William seems to have been a Tanner at Dartford.

We will never know whether in the Eighteenth Century cricket was played in Ash but one can only speculate that William Hodsoll learnt his bowling prowess within the parish and that when Ash Cricket Club are playing a match on Little Bow field the ghost of William Hodsoll will be satisfied with the success of his twenty first century counterparts.

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