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**WILLIAM MARTINGELL 1818-1897**



**William Martingell** was born at Nutfield, Surrey, on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1818. He was the eldest of ten children of Russell and Sarah Martingell. Russell Martingell played cricket for Surrey in 1828 and William clearly inherited his father's love and talent for cricket. Russell was a shoemaker and taught William and his two brothers the skills of the boot and shoemaking trade as well as an appreciation of the game of cricket. Russell and Sarah Martingell had three sons and seven daughters, their family included four sets of twins at regular five year intervals.

William was almost 21 years old when he played for Lingfield Cricket team against the Montpelier Cricket team from Walworth, London, on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 1839. The game was played at a cricket field in Dormans Land. William was an amateur cricketer who earned his livelihood as a shoemaker and gamekeeper. William Martingell's talent for the game was spotted by a reporter working for the *Sussex Agricultural Express* who published a report of the match in the newspaper the following week, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1839:

Montpelier\* v Lingfield

'The Gents from town seem destined to be outdone by the Countrymen, for in this match, which came off at Dormans Land on Monday last, Lingfield beat

their opponents in a single innings with 20 runs to spare. Their score was a formidable one, amounting to 134 in their first and in fact their only innings.

The Montpelier 11 being sent to the right about for 12 runs (8 of which only were obtained from the bat) in their first innings; they were again put in upon the runs, and succeeded in scoring this time 102, which left them still in a minority of 20. We know not to what we are to attribute the bad success of the Montpelier club, unless it be to the bowling of Martingell, which was splendid. He is a most promising bowler, and we understand is about to go to Marylebone, where we have no doubt he will meet with that patronage which he so richly deserves.'

The Lingfield Players were Cheal, W Stanford, T Longley, J Stanford, Hooker, W Martingell, G Chapman, Esq, C Head, & Holmden.'

[\* **Montpelier Cricket Club** was formed in 1795, becoming one of the strongest clubs in south-east London. In 1845 their ground, **Montpelier Gardens**, was taken for development so they moved to new premises at the Oval and became one of the founders of the Surrey Cricket Club.]

The site of the cricket field at Dormans Land is speculative but was probably the cricket field so marked on a later map of the Ford Manor Estate (dated 1874). Access to the Cricket Field was by footpath from Hollow Lane, which began at an opening in the hedge opposite to Ladycross Cottages, passing a brick-field, through woodland and on to the cricket field. The Ford Estate in 1839 was owned by John Fullerton Elphinstone.

One week after playing for Lingfield, William played for Godstone in a two-day match played on the village green, July 22nd and 23rd 1839. The match was between Godstone and Camberwell Clarence, which Godstone won by 5 runs.

William Martingell (popularly known as 'Grannie') was a round arm, right-arm, medium pace bowler; he was described as a 'bowler of unusual excellence with a strong curl from leg'. Before 1835 the bowling was all underarm but in 1835 the bowler was allowed to raise his arm as high as the shoulder, over-arm bowling was legalised in 1864. Pads and gloves had come into general use by about 1850. The method of scoring was by cutting notches on sticks.

Martingell was persuaded to play for Kent in 1843 by another great cricketer, Fuller Pilch. By that time William Martingell was a Professional Cricketer. After a season or two in Kent, he returned to Surrey on the formation of the County Club but continued to play for Kent for several years as well as playing for Surrey. William Martingell and George Brockwell were the very first two professionals appointed by the Surrey County Cricket Club on its formation in 1845.

Meetings of the Surrey Cricket Club took place at the Horn Tavern, near Kennington Oval in 1845. The Minute Book records the decision to

'commence at the Oval the first club day in May...On Monday May 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Oval – Nine gentlemen of the Marylebone Club, with

Hillyer and Lillywhite against nine gentlemen of the Surrey Club, with Martingell and Brockwell'.

William Martingell was selected to play for the All England Eleven between 1847 and 1850, and the United England Eleven between 1854 and 1856.

William married Caroline Evans at Monks Kirby, Warwickshire, in 1850. They eventually settled in Eton Wick in Berkshire. In 1860 William Martingell received a benefit worth £260 at the Oval Cricket ground.

He died at Eton Wick on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1897.

Kennington would in time become globally famous for the Oval, still England's biggest cricket ground. Named after the 10-acre market garden it replaced rather than the shape of the ground.

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Sources:

*Sussex Agricultural Express*, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1839

*Cricket on the Green 1749 - 1983*, by Reg. Dumbrill

Surrey History Centre: Surrey County Cricket Club Archives:

Ref. 2042/1/1: Surrey C C Minute Book Oct 1845 – June 1855

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