

# Finedon Local History Society



*The Pavilion, c1910  
Finedon Dolben Cricket Club*

*Image: Courtesy of the Finedon Dolben CC*

Newsletter  
May 2020

## Finedon's First Professional Cricketer

### Richard Buckby

It may be surprising to learn that some local clubs fielded a professional, or two, during the early days of league cricket; Wellingborough and Rushden were two such clubs. Finedon Dolben CC did not, partly because of financial constraints but also because the club's captain, Arthur George Henfrey, held the view, expressed at the FDCC Annual Supper in 1900, that: *"If a game was worth playing, it should be played for the love of the thing."*

When Finedon entered the inaugural Kettering & District Cricket League in 1896, Henfrey was their mainstay, but another player emerged as a genuine talent during the first league season. John Reynolds Clapham was always known as 'Ren' and appeared as R Clapham on score-cards to distinguish him from various others of the Clapham family who represented the club.

'Ren' Clapham, a left-arm bowler, was also a forceful middle-order batsman whose best performance in the 1896 campaign, when the Dolben finished as runners-up to Desborough, was against Brigstock on August 15th; but even his six-wicket haul could not stave off defeat against the bottom side in the table.

<b>BRIGSTOCK CC</b>		<b>FINEDON DOLBEN CC</b>	
<b>First Innings</b>		<b>First Innings</b>	
M Prentice bowled Clapham	10	R Vickers st. Swan b. Green	3
W Beeby run out	0	F Addis bowled Green	4
J Swan bowled Clapham	2	W Tapp bowled Green	6
O Green st. Garfield. b. Clapham	0	R Clapham st. Swan b Green	6
W Spriggs bowled Clapham	1	A Abbott bowled Green	0
HE Binder not out	36	H Jackson c. Starsmore b. Green	3
W Starsmore bowled Ward	0	J Hodson bowled Green	0
H Creed c. Vickers b.Ward	3	T Addis c. sub b. Starsmore	2
A Shriver st. Garfield b. Clapham	7	M Ward bowled Green	0
FJ Steward lbw b. Clapham	0	J Garfield not out	0
HT Binder bowled Addis	9	A Robinson c. and b. Green	4
extras	5	extras	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>

Matches were played to a scheduled time finish; the side batting second often continued their innings after passing their opponents' total. In the event of two low first-innings scores, a second innings was played. In league games, however, the points allocation was based solely on first innings scores.

During the 1897 season, when Finedon finished eighth in the league, Clapham took five wickets, or more, in an innings on five occasions, his best return being seven for 19 versus Irchester on June 19th. He topped the club's bowling averages with 55 wickets at 4.26 apiece and was third in the batting list with 134 runs at an average of 11.2 - highly commendable at that time.

However, reporting on the annual meeting of the Dolben club on March 11th 1898, the Wellingborough News informed readers that: "*Mr R Clapham, who in recent seasons has rendered valuable assistance to the club as a bowler, has been engaged [as a professional] by the Tamworth CC for the season.*"

Club professionals were almost always bowlers as one duty was to bowl at members in the nets as and when requested. While amateur players were usually listed with their initials on score-sheets, professionals were identified solely by surname.

Clapham was not only a loss to Finedon cricket; he was captain of the Finedon Reserves football team and, if this seems to be a moderate achievement, it is said that in the late C19th, Finedon Revellers beat Leicester Fosse (now Leicester City), and supposedly dished out a 15-0 drubbing to Northampton Town.



*Right. J R Clapham. Finedon Reserves FC, 1898.*

On April 30th 1898, the Tamworth Herald informed readers that: "*Clapham, who comes from Finedon, near Wellington [sic], will be the professional for Tamworth in place of Kirk.*"

Division 1 of the Tamworth and District Cricket League comprised five clubs who played each other home and away to give eight fixtures; clubs still played friendly matches in the main. Press coverage of local cricket was sporadic: sometimes full score-cards were published but at others, events were outlined in no more than a brief paragraph. The game against Freasley on May 14th was, however, recorded in full.

FREASLEY CC		TAMWORTH CC	
Phipps c. and b. Kinson	1	Nugent b. Boulstridge sr.	5
Jeffcote bowled Kinson	1	Yates b. Boulstridge sr.	0
I Lawrence c. Whitehouse b. Kinson	3	Argyle lbw b. Boulstridge sr.	0
Clark bowled Clapham	2	Archer c. Boulstridge b. I Lawrence	11
B Lawrence bowled Kinson	2	Clapham bowled Boulstridge sr.	1
C Boulstridge bowled Clapham	3	Whitehouse c. Lawrence b. Boulstridge	0
Grice bowled Clapham	12	Day bowled I Lawrence	0
Colley lbw Clapham	3	Ordish c. Phipps b. Boulstridge jr.	4
Allen bowled Kinson	0	Godderidge c. Phipps b. Boulstridge jr.	4
W Boulstridge sr. b. Clapham	0	Kinson bowled Boulstridge jr.	0
W Boulstridge jr. not out	0	Atkins not out	0
extras	2		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>

By the end of the season, Tamworth occupied the mid-table spot with nine points (3 wins, 2 defeats and 3 games drawn); Freasley were the champions. Clapham made 77 runs in seven innings, including 1 not out, at an average of 12.83. No bowling averages were published which says much about the emphasis in late C19th cricket.

Clapham still played soccer as the extract from a report on the match between Tamworth Athletic and Twogates Wanderers indicates: *“Questionable tactics were resorted to by some of the players, and the result of some rough play was that Clapham, the popular pro. of the Tamworth CC, was injured and retired from the field for a time.”*

In February 1899 the Tamworth Herald reported that, at the Tamworth CC AGM: *“Mr R Clapham informed the members that he had closed with the Porthill CC as professional for the next season. The Chairman said that they would be very sorry to lose him. They had, in Clapham, found an excellent man and one who gave every satisfaction. The wish of the Tamworth club was that he would be equally successful in his new situation.”*

Clapham was engaged by Porthill at £2 per week for the 1899 season on the basis of his good batting and bowling record at Tamworth; £2 in 1899 equates to £247 in 2019.

Porthill had just moved to a new ground at Wolstanton, then a village on the edge of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and competed in Division 1 of the North Staffs & District Cricket League along with clubs such as Stoke, Stone, Leek, Crewe, Fenton, Burslem, Norton, Longton and Silverdale. Their exploits were covered on a somewhat ‘hit-and-miss’ basis by the Staffordshire Sentinel.

In his first season at Porthill, 'Ren' Clapham took 63 wickets at 6.2 runs apiece and was re-engaged for the 1900 campaign when he made an impact as early as April 21st against Norton.

NORTON CC		PORTHILL CC	
G Holdcroft bowled Clapham	4	J Poole bowled Beckwith	2
J Hodgkiss bowled Clapham	0	Dr. Storer lbw b. Beckwith	24
E Monel bowled Clapham	4	HF Ward bowled Monel	0
J Smith lbw b. Walker	1	G Fenton bowled Beckwith	12
J Stonehewer c. and b. Walker	12	WS White bowled Beckwith	0
Beckwith bowled Walker	1	W Wood c. and b. Beckwith	4
W Brookes bowled Clapham	4	Clapham bowled Beckwith	29
J Jackson bowled Walker	0	FE Brown run out	2
JE Worthington run out	0	WE Walker not out	9
J Milward not out	1	J Hesketh bowled Beckwith	0
W Rushton bowled Clapham	2	J Stockton bowled Beckwith	0
extras	7	extras	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>

The Sentinel reported that: “[The Norton] *innings was singularly devoid of incident, and the good bowling of WE Walker, with four wickets for 9, and Clapham, who took his usual five wickets for 22, proved too much for the batsmen.* [When Porthill batted] *Clapham signalled his return by a merry innings of 29, which we hope will prove the precursor of others, it being just the style of play most valuable in Saturday afternoon cricket.*”

Clapham put in another fine performance with 5 for 28 against Bignall who were all out for 48 on June 9th. Even so, Porthill were languishing in ninth place in the league but recovered in the second half of the season to finish fourth in the final table.

Information for the 1901 and 1902 seasons is scarce, but it is on record that 'Ren' made a number of appearances for Staffordshire County Cricket Club which, along with Northamptonshire CCC, competed in the Minor Counties Cricket Championship.

On May 9th 1903, Clapham put his club on the road to a five-wicket victory over Leek by dismissing three top-order batsmen in rapid succession and returning figures of three for 26, while on June 27th he wielded the bat to good effect against Silverdale with a quick-fire 19.

The Sentinel reported that: “*Clapham drove to the boundary thrice-hand running and 14 runs were taken off one over.*”



*Porthill CC c.1901 Clapham is in the foreground  
Photograph courtesy of Simon Ellam, Porthill CC*

Further evidence of his batting ability was reported in the Sentinel on June 18th, 1904: *“Clapham scored 77 in very quick time, including two successive hits [for six] which dropped on the Marsh amid loud applause. This applause was renewed on the completion of his first half-century this season, for which a collection was made, realising £1-17shillings [c.£220 in 2019].”* The match, versus Leek Highfield, ended in a draw.

1905 began disastrously for Porthill who took only one point from their first six fixtures, and this courtesy of a match curtailed by rain. However, matters improved, and Clapham turned in at least two fine performances, one with the bat and the other with the ball, that were noted in the Sentinel.

June 17th saw Porthill declare at 184 for 7 against Stoke: *“The great feature of the afternoon’s play was a magnificent stand by HF Wood and Clapham to the tune of no fewer than 111 runs. Neither innings was quite chanceless, but both were capital displays of free and forceful cricket. In one over of Hardwicke’s, Clapham sent five successive deliveries to the boundary and was eventually out to another big hit, being well taken on the rails.”* Sad to say, Clapham’s score was not reported.

On July 15th Clapham took five for 19 against Fenton, but league averages showed Clapham with 27 wickets at 15.18 apiece; the leading wicket-takers had accounted for more than 40 victims at a cost of 7.0 or under. Yet another mid-table finish did not satisfy Porthill's general committee and minutes taken at the time show that, as early as May 1905, a small committee had been tasked with finding a new professional.

By June, contact was made with SF Barnes who was in dispute with his current club, and Barnes signed a two-year contract with Porthill at £12 per week [c. £1,390 in 2019]. Signing Barnes was a master-stroke: local businessmen covered at least a third of his wage; club membership increased as did attendances. At big games Porthill were taking more than £70 [£8,440] in gate money as people flocked to see a star player.

Between 1901 and 1914, Barnes made 27 appearances for England, taking 187 Test wickets at an average of 16.43.

The Sentinel reported that the engagement of Barnes was announced at the Porthill CC AGM. The item continued: *"A letter was received from R Clapham, in which he said it was seven years since he came to the club as a professional and that now he was leaving he was anxious to convey to the members and supporters his sincerest thanks for the kindness he had invariably received at the hands of all those connected with the club. He would always look back on the past seven years as some of the happiest years of his life. Any time that they thought he would like a game, he would be only too pleased to play. He hoped they would have a good season. [applause]. The cause of Clapham's retirement is that he has to stand down for twelve months in order to qualify for an amateur. It was decided to write [to] Clapham acknowledging the letter and expressing the hope that he would be able to play with them in 1907"*. There is no available evidence that this ever happened.

On February 28th, 1943, the Wellingborough News reported thus:

***"Former Finedon cricketer- death of Mr JR Clapham  
1873-1943"***

*"A cricketer who made his mark as a professional, Mr J R 'Ren' Clapham, has just passed away at Melton Mowbray hospital aged*

70. His wife passed away five years ago; three sisters, Mrs F Manning, Mrs A Lacey and Miss A Clapham are bereaved.

*“He was the only son of a former cricketer, the late Mr John Clapham of South View Cottages, Finedon. He was born and brought up in Finedon, and, like his father, showed an aptitude for cricket. As a young man he played for Finedon Dolben contemporary with the late AG Henfrey and other well-known cricketers. He came to the notice of Tamworth CC where he became a professional, and his left-arm bowling attracted notice and brought him into the Staffordshire CC team. Later he assisted at the Porthill club where he was succeeded by SF Barnes.*

*“In later years, he resided at Asfordby Hill where he was groundsman to Holwell Furnaces Sports Club, a position he occupied at the time of his death. He was a much-respected character, and for years made it his practice to visit Finedon Feast on the occasion of the [annual] Dolben versus the late Mr CW Clarke’s XI game in which he frequently stood umpire.”*

Richard has written a book entitled “1836 and All That”, the history of the Finedon Dolben Cricket Club up until 1939. Full details can be found of the back page.

**Society Website Update**  
**[www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)**

**Finedon in the News**

**Graham Sherwood**

We have now added in excess of forty old newspaper clippings to the website featuring a wonderful range of events, happenings and dare I say it, misdeeds, all featuring Finedon during the 1920s.

**Old Wedding Photographs**

We have also created a new archive section on the FLHS website covering pre-1960 wedding photographs of Finedon couples and are appealing for more material. If you would like to have some of your family’s old wedding photographs added to the website, please get in touch in one of the following ways.

By email either via the website or personally to  
[grahamrsherwood@icloud.com](mailto:grahamrsherwood@icloud.com)



It would be incredibly helpful if those persons portrayed in the photographs could be fully identified and dates given for each wedding. We look forward to receiving, scanning and returning your material, which we hope will help build a comprehensive collection of local familial associations

### **Finedon Star Boys' and Girls' Clubs**

**John Bedford**

Following a good response to my article about Fr. Brian Matthews in a recent issue of the Parish Magazine, the History Society have offered to create an archive dedicated to these clubs.

They are looking for any photographs, press cuttings or anecdotes about the clubs from their inauguration in the early 1950s at the Star Hall to the closure of the mixed club in Orchard Road in the early 2000s.

If you have anything that you think may be suitable please first check (if you have a computer) to see if it has already been published on our website [www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk). If you do have any items, John would be pleased to hear from you on 01933 398905, text on 07757 404185 or e-mail to [johndor@ntlworld.com](mailto:johndor@ntlworld.com).

#### **COVID-19**

Owing to the present Coronavirus situation our monthly meetings and Monday morning workshops have been cancelled until further notice.

To keep up to date with when we will be resuming please look out for information at [www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk) or our Facebook page. For those of you who do not have access to a computer, you may call me on 07988 065010 and I will keep a list of telephone numbers to call when our "normal service" is resumed.

At the time of writing (early April) is it highly likely this May edition may be late before it hits the doormat. Keep safe.

*Mick*

**Finedon Boys' and Girls' Clubs.**



*Finedon Boys' Club. Dover - Ostend Ferry.*

*Brussels - Luxembourg Cycle Tour 1956*

*Back row, l to r. Barry Coleman, Roger Chapman, George Sweeting, Garry Coombs, Fr. Brian Matthews, Brian Foster. Front row, l to r. John Bedford, Joe Farey, Graham Jose, Dennis Pearson. Donated J. Bedford*



*Finedon Star Girls' Club 1950s.*

*l to r. Hazel Hobbs, Jane Brown, Pat Brown, Roberta Toseland, Christine Sharman. Donated by Michael Shipton*



Finedon Star Girls' Club, Finedon Carnival "Holidays Float"  
*Standing, l to r. Dawn Drage, Pat Godfrey, Diana Knight, Ann Ford, Hazel Hobbs. Sitting l to r. Doreen Fowler, Gillian Anderson, Janet Richardson, Jeanette Luck, Veronica Brown, Sylvia Mellows, Jean Shelton, Roberta Toseland. Donated by Ann Goddard (nee Ford)*



Finedon Star Boys' Club, Finedon Carnival 1957  
 "Cycle Tour of Cornwall and Lands' End"  
*Back row, l to r. Harry Twelvetree, Tony Newton. Middle row Mick Young. Front row l to r. David Munns, Alan Mitchell. Donated by Brian Foster.*

## The Wheatley Collection of Photographs

**Mick Britton**

*Finedon-born Carol Jackson, nee Wheatley, of Darlington, who has recently joined the Society, along with her sister Jean of Wellingborough, and their second cousin Bob Wheatley (son of William Sydney) of Higham Ferrers, have donated a number of fascinating family photographs with a local connection.*

What is so interesting is that the photographs were taken and probably printed by their own past family members. Carol and Jean's grandfather, Arthur Wheatley, and two of his brothers, William Sidney and James Leonard were interested in photography. Arthur Wheatley's father Charles, born 1850 in Draughton before moving to Finedon c1870, had a photographic studio built in the back garden of his home at 9 Obelisk Road, Finedon, and that is where several of the family portrait pictures were taken. Carol and Jean think they might have even had a small "cottage industry" as Carol previously purchased, from eBay, the photograph below which has "J L Wheatley" embossed in the corner of the image.



*Finedon Swifts 2nd Team, 1910 – 1911 Football Season.  
The embossed stamp is not discernible in this image.*

Carol also has in her collection another photograph embossed with "WS & JL Wheatley". From the details of the 1911 census, Arthur (27), William Sydney (21) and James Leonard (19) were living at 9 Obelisk Road and they were all employed in the boot and shoe trade.

The caption at the bottom of the photograph may well have been a "signature" of the Wheatley brothers as the Society holds copies of other Finedon sport-related photographs of the period with the same white annotation and style of writing.

*The Wheatley Family, 1913*



*Back row, l to r. Arthur Ernest Wheatley (Carol & Jean's Grandfather), William Sidney Wheatley (Bob's father), Bert Stanley (husband to Gertrude Ethel Wheatley), Thomas Edgar Wheatley, ? , ? , Alice Maine (Carol and Jean's Grandmother and the wife of Arthur Ernest Wheatley), George Edward Wheatley.*

*Middle row, l to r. Edith Manning (wife of William Sidney Wheatley), James Leonard Wheatley, Laurel Flook (wife of Thomas Edgar Wheatley, Evelyn Ada Wheatley.*

*Front row, l to r. Mary Ellen Wilson with son Leonard Wilson on her knee, Gertrude Ethel Stanley with baby Charles H Stanley on her knee, Great-grandfather Charles Wheatley, Great-grandmother Sarah Ann Wheatley, John Wilson, Rose Emily Laundon (wife of George Edward Wheatley), the young boy on the ground is Edgar Wilson.*

It had been the intention of the Society to host a “pop-up” photographic exhibition entitled, “*Finedon Through The Lens*” in May this year when the Wheatley collection of family photographs would have been shown along with other images from the archives. However, this has had to be deferred.

In the late John Baileys’ book, “Look at Finedon”, he acknowledges the “Wheatley Bros. of Finedon” as one of his sources, in his list of photographers although the family have no idea which of the Wheatley Bros. photographs were used in the book.

If any member of the Society can provide any additional information or has any “JL Wheatley” or “WS & JL Wheatley” photographs tucked away in a family album, then Carol, Jean and Bob would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact me on 07988 065010 or at michael.britton@ntlworld.com and I will pass the information on.

**George Hedley Roberts,  
Finedon St John Ambulance and the Boer War**

**Mick Britton**

*Recently I received an email, via our website, from Jane Hedley Roberts of Buckinghamshire who asked, “I am currently researching my family tree and have David and Isabella Roberts, (my great, great, great grandparents) who lived in Dolben Square and then the Volta Tower. I believe David Roberts either managed or maybe owned a shoe and boot factory. Can you assist me?”*

From a search of local census records, trade directories of the period and searches of local newspapers, I established that David Roberts was indeed a Boot and Shoe Manufacturer (Roberts and Baker) and their premises was the factory on the junction of Tenter Lane and Avenue Road, which is now private apartments.

However, during my research I came across a small newspaper article in the Wellingborough News of 23rd March 1900 relating to George Hedley Roberts, the second son of David and Isabella, that was to take Jane’s family history research in a new and fascinating direction.

## FINEDON.

VOLUNTEER FOR THE FRONT.—Amongst the latest volunteers of the St. John Ambulance (Finedon Division) who have been accepted for South Africa is Mr. H. Roberts, second son of Mr. D. Roberts, Volta Tower, Finedon. It is expected that he will set sail the latter end of next week.

*Wellingborough News, 23rd March 1900.*

George Hedley Roberts was born in Finedon on 19th September 1880 and was baptised in St. Mary's Parish Church in November of the same year by the Revd. George Woodfield Paul. Despite having been given the first name of George he was known as Hedley throughout his life. At the time of the 1881 census (3rd April) the family were living in Dolben Square and his father's occupation was recorded as a "clicker" in both the census and Hedley's baptism record. By the 1891 census the family were living in the Volta Tower and Hedley's father David was recorded as a "Shoe Manufacturer".

At some point Hedley became a member of the Finedon Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade. The St. John Association was formed in 1887, with uniformed first-aiders being recruited ten years later under the title of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Later, the two associations became one.

The first test of one of the aims of the St. John Ambulance, the aid of the sick and wounded in wartime, came with the outbreak of the Boer War in South Africa in 1899. Medical services for the war were organised by the Central British Red Cross Committee, which entrusted the arrangements for the despatch of ambulance material to the St. John Ambulance Association.

The Wellingborough News of 17th November 1899 reports, "*HOSPITAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA, ANOTHER CALL FOR AMBULANCE MEN. The offices of the Wellingborough Ambulance Corps on Wednesday evening received an invitation from the Headquarters staff of the St. John Ambulance Brigade that over 40 ambulance men: four supernumerary officers, twenty first-class orderlies and twenty second class orderlies are required for service in South Africa. They will work under the Director General of the Medical Army Corps on the line of communication and at the base hospitals...*"

Further newspaper reports give very concise details of the joining routines including: “each man is asked to bring two day shirts and two night shirts.” and details of their pay: “38s shillings and 6 pence per week for officers; first-class men and second-class men received 23 shillings and 4 pence and 21 shillings, respectively”.



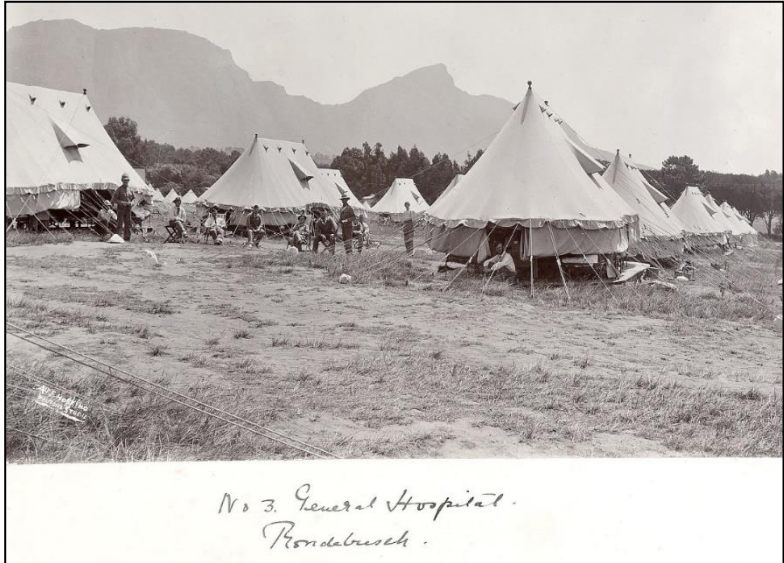
*George Hedley Roberts  
The Roberts Family*

Hedley was accepted for service in South Africa in March 1900. One other Finedon St. John Ambulance man, Private F. York, also served although I have not been able to establish if they departed together in the same detachment. All Brigade volunteers for South Africa reported to St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London (now the home of the Order of St. John Museum and Archives) for training. The men were treated very well during their stay, with newspaper reports recording how the men were entertained by evening invitations to theatres and restaurants. The evening before sailing for their six-month deployment in South Africa the men attended a service at the St. John's Church.

At this time, the Medical Army Corps were low in numbers; barely enough for peace-time requirements so the provision and support of trained St. John Ambulance Brigade men (known as “Johnnies” throughout the conflict) was essential. Their main role was to replace army medical staff working in hospitals who were better qualified and required at the front. Around 1800 “Johnnies” served during the Boer War, of which 61 of their number died during their service, mainly from enteric fever (typhoid), contracted from the wounded men they were caring for and/or the poor quality drinking water.



Hedley was assigned to No.3 General Hospital. This tented hospital was first set up in Rondebosch in the suburbs of Cape Town from the start of the Boer War until June 1900 when it then transferred “up country” closer to the action at Kroonstadt in the then province of the Orange Free State, later renamed Free State following the end of hostilities in 1902.



*Number 3 General Hospital, Rondebosch, Cape Town.  
By kind permission of the Museum of the Order of St John,  
Photograph LDOSJ:PHA723.*

After his 6 months service Hedley returned to England on a hospital ship tending the sick and wounded before returning to Finedon and a “civilian life”. The public feeling towards the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the “Johnnies” who served in those appalling conditions were held in one of high regard, both nationally and by the communities they served.

The Wellingborough News of 7th November 1902, in a gushing, patriotic and lengthy report entitled, “*THE AMBULANCE MOVEMENT – PRESENTATION OF MEDALS*” records “*The work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade has always been taken with enthusiasm in the Wellingborough District. No centre in the country did better than Wellingborough in the number of men sent out to*

*hospital service in South Africa. Forty-nine men of the corps have served their country in this manner during the present war, and five of their number gave up their lives in the heroic service.”*

A sumptuous banquet and presentation of medals to the 44 men, and to the relatives of the 5 men who never returned, was held at the Wellingborough Corn Exchange on the evening of 4th November. Civic dignitaries of the district and local councils were amongst the many guests invited to attend; these included Hedley's father, David Roberts, along with Arthur Henfrey as representatives of Finedon Council. For his service Hedley was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal (with Cape Colony and Orange Free State clasps) and the Order of St. John South Africa Medal by Lord Northampton.

I said at the beginning of this article that this “discovery” was to send Jane's own family history research into a new direction as she had no idea her great grandfather Hedley had served in South Africa. Jane contacted members of her extended family and learned that Hedley's medals were held by two of his grandchildren. She also met with the granddaughter of Hedley's elder brother Harold who was able to provide additional background family information.

After Hedley returned to Finedon at the end of the Boer War he continued his career working in the boot manufacturing industry for most of his working life in both administrative and boot buying roles. He married Lillian Langham at Lambeth, London in 1908.

Towards the end of the First World War, aged 38, he was conscripted and called to the colours joining the 22nd Battalion (The Queen's) of the London Regiment.

Hedley and his wife “Lil” were known throughout their lives by their family for their loving generosity and support, including during the dark days of the Second World War when tragedy was to strike.

George Hedley Roberts died in 1962 in New Malden, Surrey aged 81 after a full life; as a 19-year old he answered the patriotic and loyal call to aid the sick and the dying of the Boer War during the fast-fading twilight of Queen Victoria's 63-year reign.



*George Hedley Roberts Medals*

*l to r. Queen's South Africa Medal (with Cape Colony and Orange Free State clasps), British War Medal, Victory Medal (both WW1) and the Order of St. John South Africa Medal*

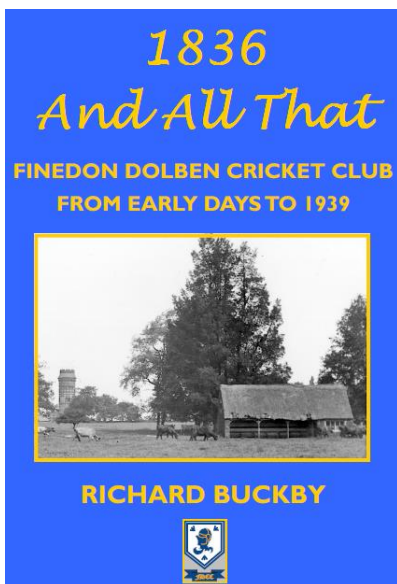
*The Roberts Family Collection*

*The assistance of Robert Wharton of Wellingborough Museum and Rachel Job of the Museum of the Order of St. John with this article is very much appreciated.*

### **The Society Newsletter**

The first Society newsletter, two pages of A4, appeared in the summer of 2002. The publication has gone through several changes, an increase in the number of pages and the type, style, and length of articles. Consideration is now being given to changing the name/title of this publication to something that better reflects its role in the society. I would be pleased to hear any suggestions you may have; I can be contacted on 07988 065010 or at [michael.britton@ntlworld.com](mailto:michael.britton@ntlworld.com)

*All the Society newsletters can now be seen at  
[www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk/society/newsletters](http://www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk/society/newsletters)*



**COMING OUT IN  
JULY**

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FINEDON  
DOLBEN CC**

by

**RICHARD BUCKBY**

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