

Chapter 28: Interest in Sport

I don't recall my grandfather being particularly interested in sport apart from wrestling on the television! His diaries do not really challenge that impression. However, there are a few references to different sporting events that are of some interest. As far as I am aware, granddad did not play any particular sports although in January 1922, he did note playing his first game of chess and, in 1943, he taught mum to play. I recall playing chess with him and I inherited his chess set from mum when she died. As far as I recall, he would never let me win but he would play without his queen. Apparently, my grandmother's brother, Bert, was a good chess player. I do not recall him as he died in 1961 when I was only one year old. The photo of him below has been labelled by mum that he was a "chess champion of somewhere".



Granddad noted attending a number of cricket matches, many of which featured local teams¹ and were played on "the acre", i.e. in [Kingsway Park](#)² and in neighbouring towns, such as Hucknall. He went with family members including his brother, Cyril, and his brother-in-law, John. Teams he saw included [Crown Farm](#)³, Kirkby Portland⁴, Mansfield and District Police, Newstead⁵ and Sutton.⁶

¹ There are quite a lot of posts about local cricket on the [Kirkby Living Memory Facebook group](#), see

² The road that leads to the park from Fairhaven is called The Acre.

³ The name of a colliery in Mansfield – see

⁴ Still an [active cricket team](#).

⁵ Confusingly, there is a Newstead Cricket Club in Australia! There is a current cricket club in Newstead called [Nomads](#).

⁶ The Nottinghamshire History [website](#) has quite a lot of information about cricket in Sutton.

In June 1921, grandad went to see a cricket match in Nottingham between Nottinghamshire and the touring Australians. The day he went, the Australians scored 608 for 7 and grandad noted that an Australian player called Macartney had scored 345. Grandad noted the next day that [Australia had won by an innings and 517 runs](#). Indeed, in their only innings, Australia scored 675 with Nottinghamshire only managing 58 in their first innings and 100 in their second. As grandad noted, [Charles Macartney](#) scored 345 himself. It was an Australian record score and was the fastest triple century in first-class cricket and the highest score by a batsman in a single day of play. He reached 300 in 205 minutes and the [entire innings took four hours](#).



Public domain photograph obtained from [Wikipedia](#)



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Above left – Charlie Macartney who scored 345 on the day grandad attended
Above right – the Australian team
Below left – Georges Carpentier



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In December 1919, grandad noted a boxing match in London between Georges Carpentier and Joe Becket with Becket being [knocked out](#) in 70 seconds. In September 1923, he went to Doncaster Races. It is possible that this was for the [St Leger](#).

During this period, grandad was interested in cars and driving. In September 1920, he noted having a day's holiday and going to Mansfield and to the Clipstone motor races. Clipstone Drive was the first private road used for speed-trials in England. Located on the Duke of Portland's Welbeck Estate, this drive provided a straight one mile course and the first trials took place there in May 1900. [Various events](#) were held there until 1924. Grandad went there again, in 1922, with Dick Clover.

As far as I know, grandad had little if any interest in football although my understanding is that the entire family "supported" Notts County. My father certainly did although he always said he really supported

Mansfield Town! He explained that there was a clear divide between support for Nottingham Forest, from Nottingham itself, and for Notts County, from the county as a whole. My father would give short shrift to anyone who dared shorten the Nottingham in Nottingham Forest to "Notts"! It is therefore surprising that the only football match that my grandfather recorded attending during this period was

on Christmas Day in 1923 and appears to have been a [Forest game](#).⁷ The game was against Chelsea and Forest won 2-0. As far as I can find out, Notts County did not play on Christmas Day that year. They played Arsenal home and away on the 26th and 27th. At that time, it was not uncommon to play matches on consecutive days and the playing of reverse fixtures also appears to have been common practice as Nottingham Forest played Chelsea again the following day. Football matches continued to [played on Christmas Day](#) until the 1950s.

⁷ Apparently, a [programme](#) from this game sold for £850 in 2007.