



Updated 21st June 2021.

Female Cricket at Bexley Grammar School

By John Daniels



Kent Women team 1984

Back row (L-R): Kate Brown, Caroline Barrs, Janet Eliot, Pauline Weeks (Bexleyheath School, staff), Angie Bainbridge, Jane Northwood (Bexley Grammar Staff), Front row: Clare Eveson (Bexley Grammar pupil), Julie May, Jill Sellek, Tina Preece, June Edney.

This document only came about while I was researching female cricket in the borough of Bexley, at clubs, primary schools, secondary schools, district, outdoor and indoor winter cricket.

I already had information on Bexley Grammar's involvement since around 2000 but a chance remark from a sports teacher at Chis + Sid suddenly alerted me to a period that BGS were active in the 1970s and 1980s that I was previously unaware of.

The information from that era below is largely due to an email I received from former staff member, Andy Leech and the history of the school written by the late Robin Ackerley, who was an English teacher at the school.

I quote below an email kindly sent to me by Mr Leech who set the girls team up originally.

quote

Jacqui Snelling forwarded this on to me. I was on the staff 1975-82 but am now helping the OBA with their website. As it happens, I started up that cricket team in my time at BGS. I don't think I can provide too many exact details as it was a long time ago!

However, I am in touch with Claire Eveson and have recently exchanged a couple of emails. She has some details for Jane Northwood who last she heard was living in Australia but not the others. Many years later I have learnt that both Claire and Diane Allery from that team went on to play cricket at county level. Claire is in touch with Lynne Wardle but not the others. Jacqui is in touch with Diane's sister who regularly supports the OBA and still lives in Welling. In that era we had an excellent player, Catherine Munro who left BGS when she was around 14 and did not play seriously again thereafter, but she had lots of talent and was significantly responsible along with Claire and Diane especially for BGS beating the established Chislehurst and Sidcup Girls Team, the only local opposition on multiple occasions over a two year period. Jane joined the staff PE department and played a good standard cricket in Kent. We all played in the staff team of the era which I captained and organised.

Claire will be happy to do her best to answer any specific questions you may have. You will have learnt that sadly Robin Ackerley died in 2019. You did not say to Jacqui or at least not in this email exactly what you are researching and within what timescale and for what purpose, but if you do unearth more aspects of BGS history I would readily publish or promote elements on the Old Bexleians Association website (www.oldbexleians.com). Maybe it will also be of interest to your son. We began rebuilding it about eleven months ago and are proceeding gradually.

Yours sincerely

Andy Leech.

Unquote

I would love to hear from any of the ladies mentioned in Mr Leech's email, perhaps someone has some team pictures or end of season stats etc or remembers any other teams (apart from Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School) that they may have played against that came from the borough of Bexley, or indeed did Old Bexleians play any female matches. Also, career information of players involvement playing for the county or other representative teams.

During the 1970s and 1980s the school were affiliate members of both the Women's Cricket Association (WCA) and the Kent Women's Cricket Association (KWCA).

The school was listed in the WCA handbook between 1980-1981 and 1983-1987 (not 1982) as affiliate members.

(The WCA was the leading authority for Womens Cricket from 1927-1998).

And were listed as affiliate members of the KWCA.

(1984 was the last record I could find but could well have had a longer association).

The references from the 1970s and 1980s below are mainly gleaned from Robin Ackerley's book and the KWCA handbooks.

The first reference I can find for girls' cricket at the school was an entry in the Kent Women's Cricket Association Handbook which reported: -

2nd July 1978 - Bexley Grammar school won the Kent Junior 6-a-side competition held at Chislehurst and Sidcup GS.

Players had to be in the 3rd form or below (year 9 in today's money I think). They won all three of their games.

9th Feb 1980 - Clare Eveson and Dianne Allery represented the school at the Kent Indoor Double Wicket Championship held at Langley Park School but were unplaced.

4th May 1980 - The school were unplaced at the Kent Senior 6-a-side trophy at Dartford College.

14th Feb 1981 - Kent indoor 6-a-side competition at Eltham Hill school. Bexley Grammar were unplaced.

17th March 1981 - The school were unplaced in the Kent Indoor Double Wicket competition held at Chislehurst and Sidcup GS.

28th June 1981 - the school were unplaced in the McDonald Cup.

The school have had some notable female cricketers as pupils and staff, in particular during the 1980s. The school generously supplied me with a copy of the excellent "Bexley Grammar School - A History 1995-2005" written by R.D.Ackerley, an ex-teacher at the school. It mentions several players (and one member of staff) that are well worth a mention here. Some of the actual career dates may be a little inaccurate on my part.



*Claire Eveson, 76-83
Junior : Cricket*

(illustration from Mr Ackerley's book)

Claire Eveson (above) - Was invited to train with the England u19s squad when she was only 14 in 1978 and subsequently debuted for the under 19s against England u25 in 1980. By 1981 she was playing for the England u25s and Kent. She played her club cricket for Kent Nomads WCC. Described in the Kent Womens Cricket handbook 1983 Jubilee edition as "fast bowler and lower order bat".

Jane Northwood (PE teacher 1980-1986). On arrival at the school, transformed the girls cricket team from a group of novice players into a team unbeaten during the season, in which they won the Kent Junior Cricket Trophy.

A talented cricketer herself having played for Kent 1st XI and 2nd XI from at least 1978 (maybe earlier). She played her club cricket for Invicta CC and was described in the Kent Womens Cricket handbook 1983 Jubilee edition as "an all-rounder and exceptionally good fielder" On 14th Aug 1983 she scored 164 from 117 balls (then the fastest ton) for the Women's Cricket Association team (opponents and type of match unknown). The WCA was the leading administrators for female cricket at the time until being taken under the wing of the ECB in 1999.

Claire and Jane toured New Zealand with the Kent Ladies touring side in 1982/3 season.



Kent Women team 1984

Back row (L-R): Kate Brown, Caroline Barrs, Janet Eliot, Pauline Weeks (Bexleyheath School, staff), Angie Bainbridge, Jane Northwood (Bexley Grammar Staff), Front row: Clare Eveson (Bexley Grammar pupil), Julie May, Jill Sellek, Tina Preece, June Edney.

Pat Webb - Was captain of the girls' team in 1980 and in 1981 was selected for the Kent Junior Ladies 2nd XI.

Cheryl Collins - Was also selected for the Kent Junior Ladies 2nd XI in 1981.

During this period the following pupils at the school also made their mark at cricket. Diane Allery (young England Trials), Julie Rogers (Kent u19), Rachel Scott (Kent u19) and Helen Sharpe (Kent u19).

2nd May 1982 - Kent 6-a-side competition held at Dartford College. An admin error put the Bexley Grammar school SENIOR team into the JUNIOR competition which they comprehensively won.

13th June 1982 - The school were placed 3rd in the McDonald cup, and were only denied the runners up spot on run difference.

12th Feb 1983 - The school entered the Kent INDOOR 6-a-side trophy at Eltham Hill school but were unplaced having attained last place in their qualifying group.

5th March 1983 - Kent Indoor Double Wicket Competition, the school were unplaced.

1st May 1983 - The school entered the Kent 6-a-side outdoor competition for SENIOR and JUNIOR teams scheduled for Dartford PE College. The competition was rained off. Bexley Grammar were deemed to have retained the JUNIOR trophy as winners the previous year.

1984 - Shared the McDonald Cup 6-a-side competition with Chislehurst and Sidcup GS.

Post 2000

In the post 2000 era the school facilities (indoor and outdoor) are regularly hired to host competitions, trials and net sessions for girls, boys and men's teams in the area.

2004/5 - Entered a team for an ECB indoor competition for u15 girls. Competing in a local qualifying competition against Chislehurst and Sidcup school, Bexley Development and one other school from outside the borough. No record of results are available but the competition was won by Bexley Development and BGS did not progress to the next round of matches.

21st March 2012 - u13 Lady Taverners Indoor Competition, Maidstone cluster at New Line, Maidstone.

BGS (36-6 in 8 overs) lost to Highworth (38-5 in 8 overs).
BGS (28-1 in 8 overs) lost to New Line (35-8 in 8 overs).
BGS (40-2 in 8 overs) lost to Highworth (53-4 in 8 overs)
BGS (66-0 in 8 overs) beat New Line (29-3 in 8 overs)

19th Dec 2012 - A Bexley Girls Secondary Schools u14 championship was played at Bexley Grammar School and organised by Jemma Conner a 6th form pupil at the school, with Suzie Rowe of England officiating.

Results

Townley GS (262-4) beat Bexley Grammar "B" (216-4)
C+S GS beat Bexley Grammar "A" (scores not available)
C+S GS beat Bexley Grammar "B" (scores not available)
Townley GS (276-2) beat Bexley Grammar "A" (237-7)
Townley won the competition, C+S were 2nd with the Bexley GS teams placed 3rd and 4th

2nd Feb 2013 - Jemma Conner was awarded a Schools Sports award for her work at the school at the Bexley Young Peoples Awards ceremony at Harris Academy, Falconwood.

Soon after leaving the school she also received the Kent County Young Coach of the Year award.

Jemma has an impressive cricketing CV.

2 seasons with Kent u11s (Vice Captain for one season)

2 seasons with Kent u13 "B" (Captain for one season)

She also played for Keele University from 2013-16 and coached the university team for all three seasons, was team captain for 2014 + 2015 and club captain from 2015-2016.

She is also a Level 2 children's coach

The school were selected as a KCB HUB club for an experiment where girls from any schools could attend free sessions in an after-school club initiative. Mainly aimed at school year 7, 8 and 9. There were 21 girls in attendance at the first session but mainly Bexley Grammar School pupils, it was poorly attended by girls from other schools.

12th March 2014 - Took part in the Lady Taverners u13 indoor competition at North West Kent College. They came 4th in their group of 4 teams.

BGS lost to C+S (no score recorded)

BGS (52-4) lost to Colfes "A" (91-4)

BGS (46-6) lost to Tonbridge (92-6)

While at the school Jennifer Williams played club cricket for Sidcup CC and on leaving the school played for Lancaster University in the following seasons

2016-2017, 2017-2018 (as captain), 2019-2020 (as captain)

Steph Rooney also played for Lancaster University after leaving the school.

4th July 2018 - Won the Bexley Borough Year 7 girls' secondary school outdoor competition held at Bexleyheath Academy.

Results

Bexley Grammar (264-1) beat Bexleyheath Academy (247-3)

Bexley Grammar (267-1) beat Erith School (239-2).

24th Jan and 31st Jan 2019 - The school hosted the Borough London Youth Games u13 girls team trials.

3rd July 2019 - Took part in the Bexley Borough u13 softball competition at Townley Grammar.

Results

Bexley GS (252-0) beat Chislehurst + Sidcup (210-4)

Chislehurst + Sidcup (250-1) beat Townley (231-1)

Townley beat Bexley GS (scores not recorded)

Each team won and lost one game and the result was declared as a 3-way tie.

Since my research into Bexley Grammar school began I have received the following correspondence from people active at the school

Received from Andy Leech - September 2020

Quote

I've sent the document and our previous correspondence on to Claire Eveson. She may well contact you.

Re the staff cricket team, when I was at the school we played a few matches each year against other local staff teams. If they were available Sue McNally, then Head of PE and Jane (or was it Jayne?) Northwood, after she joined the staff both played for our team. Jane was a more than useful bowler and cricket was her sport. She regularly bowled her overs economically. Both it a few runs as well. I think one other team had a female player but usually it was men. We were the exception.

Regards - Andy Leech

unquote

Received from Claire Eveson - Oct 2020

Lovely to speak to you last week. I have had a good look for photos of cricket teams from my school days but sadly I have none at all. I have also drawn a blank on stats.

The following details may be of interest from my memory banks.

Early years

I played cricket with my elder brother, we had a park behind our house in Hurst Road and he mowed a wicket each summer. I can't remember learning to bowl, I could just do it.

Primary School

1975 1976 cricket was played at primary level in Bexley Borough.

I attended Holy Trinity Lamorbey and captained the team in 1976, from memory I was the only girl playing. Mr Harris was the teacher in charge and I remember playing against Burnt Oak Lane and Longlands schools.

Senior school

In 1976 I transferred to Bexley Grammar. Long story why I did not go to Chis and Sid as I lived opposite that school, and my elder brother went there, but strange how things work out for the best. I have fabulous memories of my senior school days.

I think girls' cricket was started at the school by Andy Leech in conjunction with Brain Burgess at Chis and Sid and Kent ladies, who ran a series of winter coaching sessions at Chis and Sid 1977/78? Brain was passionate about all cricket, I know as my brother was taught by him. Andy was a good cricketer himself, Brian an enthusiast, I don't think he played.

I can't recall names of any girls other than those you already have, but I still see Lynne Wardle and Catherine Munro on a fairly regularly basis, even though we do not live near each other. Neither continued cricket after school.

I don't recall playing many other schools in Bexley Borough but tournaments were held at a few venues in the wider area, primarily where a teacher had an interest or a girl had ability. These were run but Kent WCA.

Eltham Hill School - Jill Selleck attended, fast bowler, played for Kent and U19 England.

Langley Park School - Julie May attended, spinner and middle order bat, played Kent and Full England - Chris Watmough taught there, strong bat, played full England in 1970's.

Dartford Area, unsure of schools name - Teacher was Pauline Weekes who later taught at Bexleyheath school, Kent player

Kent Juniors

John this is from memory so may not be 100% factually correct.

Girls in the area with ability were channelled into club cricket and the Junior County side and matches were played against other Junior Counties. If not locally these would be on weekends when the senior side was playing the same county, i.e. Junior county on Saturday and seniors on Sunday. This allowed seniors to drive the juniors to the venues and umpire coach etc. We stayed with members of the opposition. Of course, all of this was in the amateur days and only possible due to peoples' love for the game.

Juniors with some ability were often playing for senior county sides as well as the juniors. This was a national thing depending on the county's strength in depth. I think I played senior county for Kent from about the age of 16. I was lucky enough to go to New Zealand aged 18 with the Kent side celebrating Kent Ladies 50th anniversary.

It was a wonderful introduction to the rest of the UK, travel being a bit less frequent and more difficult in 1970's than it is today, no M25 !!! I still have friendships I made at that time.

Annually there was the National Junior 6 a side tournament, held at Morden in Surrey. Every county sent several teams to this. It acted as a national selection weekend, 6 a side tournament on the Saturday then 11 a side games on the Sunday if selected, and from there invitation to Junior England training. This took place a couple of times per year at places like Lilleshall and Bisham Abbey.

The Junior England team, which I think I started playing for in 1979, played counties and other National sides, Holland, Denmark and Ireland had sides at the time. I know there was a Junior England tour to Holland and Denmark captained by Jill Hennessey, the year after I was too old for Juniors.

England level

England ran teams at U19, U25 and senior level, again all amateur and funded by the players themselves.

There would be training weekends for these squads, coached by ex-players both male and female.

The system for England selection was area teams i.e. North, South, East and West, and then I believe this became invitation to a Rep Selection weekend, sort of Probables v Possibles.

I played for England U19 and U 25's but never the full side. I distinctly remember a coach address us all one weekend saying you all have the ability but only a few of you will reach the top". This is true in all sports I think, that extra something mentally.

After leaving Uni I moved to Staffordshire, edge of Wolverhampton, where I still live.

I began playing for West Midlands then and stopped England level cricket in mid 20's. It all being amateur at the time work and other commitments do limit what one can do.

I played for West Mids until age of about 36. Around this time the amateur Women's Cricket Association merged with ECB and the game started to become far more professional. What a long way Women's cricket has come!!!

MCC

Fortunately for me at about the time I was finishing at county level [I took up triathlon], the pressure Racheal Heyhoe Flint had started to exert bore fruit with MCC and ladies were accepted there. Several older England players were given honorary membership but there was a desire to allow ladies with cricketing backgrounds to become members more quickly than the very long normal waiting list for membership would allow. There has always been an MMC playing section for men, after a certain number of years and matches men can apply for full MMC membership. A women's equivalent was started. Ladies who had played to England level were given a reduced qualifying period and after 2 years and the required number of games I was able to become an MMC member in 2000. There is no better place to watch the game.

John I don't think this will add much but hopefully it will be of interest.

It is great to be back in touch with Andy and we hope to meet up to play golf next year, the sport many aging sports man and women turn to!!

Claire

Also from Claire

Quote

I do remember another anecdote, when I was in my first year at BGS there was a school fete. There was a 'bowl out WG Grace' game. I think Andy was the batsman and I bowled him out, hence my cricket ability became known.

Jane Northwood was a PE teacher not a pupil. She came to the school when I was in 6th form I think, so I was already playing Rep cricket by then. She was a county level player and an exceptional fielder.

Re playing against national sides. Not sure I would be first local player to play at that level. We would need to look at the Kent cricket archives, I think. It is however true to say that Dartford and Nonnington PE colleges were a source of county players who settled in Kent after their time at college.

I played for Kent against West Indies and India when they were touring. Also, for Junior and Young England definitely played against Ireland and Holland.

I toured Ireland with England U25s and played at Canterbury against Holland opening the bowling at the pavilion end. Fabulous memory.

I will have to look up cricinfo records, but am pretty sure I played against NZ and Australian rep sides for Kent, West Mids and/or England U25's. My friend Julie may [I mentioned] was from Bromley and played full England.

I will have a look at the attached info now, and thanks for the letter re current cricket in Kent, pleasing to know girls are still playing.

Unquote

Photographs supplied by Claire Eveson



Above - 1982 England under 25's v Holland at Canterbury - Claire in back row last on right. I would be 17 years old.



Above - Kent 1983. Claire - back row 3rd from left as you look at picture, age 18. Pauline Weekes (Bexleyheath School) is on my left i.e. 4th from left



Kent 1985 Area Champs final at Hastings.
Claire 2nd from right Jayne Northwood 4th from right. Both back row.



South of England v India 1986 - I think at Gravesend.
Claire 5th player from left back row.



Taking the field against India. Claire and Jane Northwood.



West Midlands v West Indies, I can't recall the year, I am front row first on left



Same West Midlands v West Indies match – front row 3rd from left.



Claire – bowling in the nets in Wolverhampton 1990s



Taking the field against West Indies, left of wicket keeper

In Conclusion

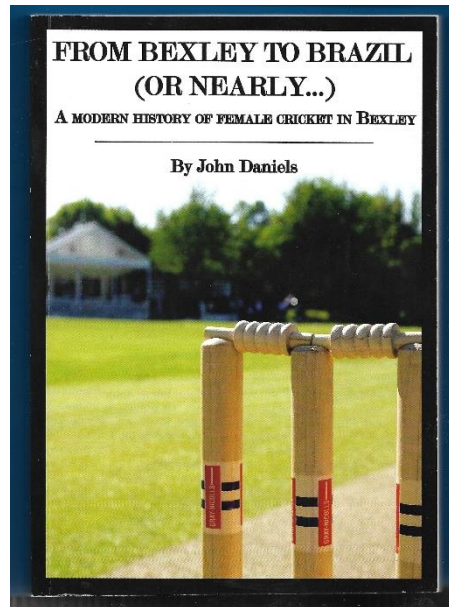
I am indebted to Andy Leech and Claire Eveson for their notes, they were speaking from memory of course but I feel that they have provided a great insight into female cricket during their era at the

school. I am profoundly grateful to them for taking the time to share their experiences. Their notes above have been pretty much copied as they were written.

I am always interested to hear from any other people with information on female cricket at the school and his document will be updated if any further information becomes available.

John Daniels

Email – Johnwilliamdaniels@gmail.com



Published in 2020 – covers female cricket in the borough, schools, clubs, district, indoor + outdoor.

292 pages

£15 + postage

All proceeds donated to support female cricket in Bexley Borough