

GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (May 1998)

By Rob Upson
HARRY BOYLE

The date is 29 August 1882. The scene is the Oval cricket ground in London. It is the ninth Test Match to be played between Australia and England and in a low scoring game England require just 10 runs to win when the last batsman comes to the wicket. The Australian bowler runs in, bowls at the leg stump and is hit for 2 to square leg. The second ball just misses the off stump. The batsman takes a mighty swipe at the third ball and is clean bowled. Australia wins by 7 runs.

Four days later, the *Sporting Times* published this obituary notice :

In Affectionate Remembrance

of

ENGLISH CRICKET

Which died at the Oval

on

29th August 1882

Deeply lamented by a large circle of

Sorrowing Friends and Acquaintances

R.I.P.

N.B. The body will be cremated and the Ashes taken to Australia.

Hence was born the legend of the 'Ashes'. The Australian bowler who captured that last wicket, taking 5 for the match, was one Henry (Harry) Frederick BOYLE.

Harry Boyle was born in Sydney in 1847, but at an early age came to live at Sydney Flat, now known as Woodvale. The first English cricket team to visit Australia in 1861 played a match in Bendigo and inspired young Boyle and some friends to clear a piece of land opposite the family home and establish the Sydney Flat Boys' Cricket Club.

He went on to become one of Australia's most wiliest and skilful medium pace bowlers and with Fred (Demon) Spofforth, formed quite a formidable bowling combination that could be likened to a Lindwall and Miller or a Lillee and Thomson.

Harry Boyle played a total of 12 Tests for Australia between 1878 and 1884, scoring 153 runs (Avge 12.75) and taking 32 wickets (Avge 20.03). Of his contemporaries, only Spofforth had a better Test bowling average. His First Class career spanned between 1871 and 1890, scoring 1711 runs (10.24), including 1 century and taking 370 wickets (15.38).

One of the most amazing bowling performances took place in a match between Australia and the M.C.C. at Lord's in 1878. The M.C.C. team, which included W.G.Grace, was dismissed twice (for 33 and 19) in the same day by Spofforth

and Boyle. The former having match figures of 11 wickets for 20 runs and Boyle 8 for 17.

Harry Trott, who features in our Interpretive Centre, began his Test career in 1888 and both he and Harry Boyle played a prominent role in the development of cricket in Bendigo.

Harry Boyle is buried in the White Hills Cemetery and his epitaph reads –

Erected in Kindly Remembrance of
Henry Frederick Boyle
(Harry Boyle)

By friends and comrades as an expression of sincere regard
and in testimony of his prowess as a true cricketer also of
his honest, truthful and sterling qualities as a man.

Born Sydney 10th December 1847

Died Bendigo 21st November 1907

Note – His grave may be found in the area marked B2 on the map of the Self Guided Tour of the White Hills Cemetery put out by the Friends of Bendigo Cemeteries.