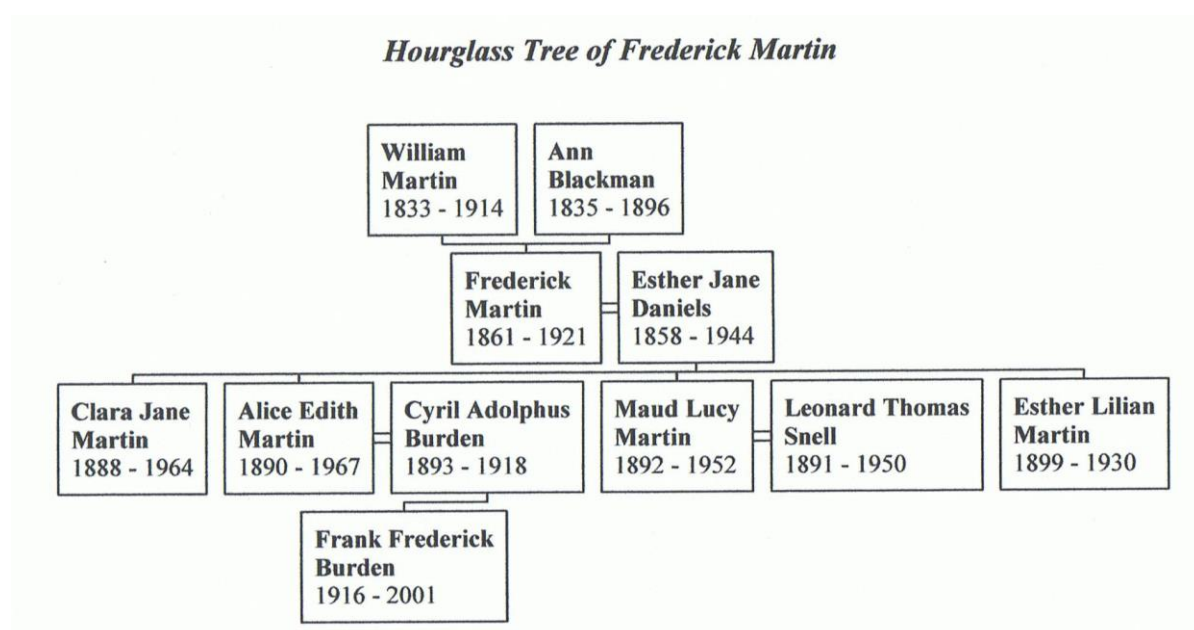


## Frederick “Nutty” Martin (1861-1921) : Professional Cricketer

I was asked to supply a photo of the grave of Frederick Martin in East Hill Cemetery, Dartford by a relation of his. Frederick was a professional cricketer who played for Kent and England. He was known as “Nutty”, although he said that he could not fully explain the reason. Nevertheless, the name stuck throughout his life.<sup>1</sup>

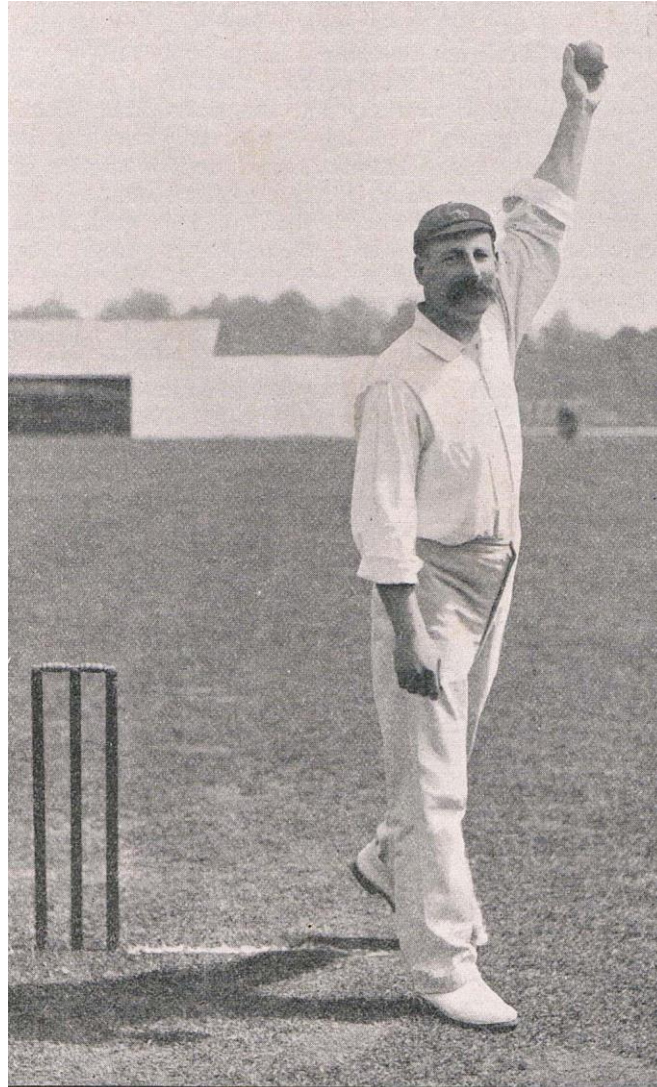
Frederick was born on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1861 in Dartford. He was the third of eight children (six boys and two girls) born to William and Ann Martin. Frederick was baptised on November 24<sup>th</sup> at Holy Trinity church, Dartford. The 1871 census shows William Martin (aged 38, a labourer in iron works) and his wife Ann (34) living at 67 Waterside, Dartford with their children Elizabeth (14), Walter (12), Frederick (9), Clara (6), William (3) and Horace (1).



In 1881, the family consisted of William (47, labourer in iron works), Ann (44), Frederick (19, labourer in iron works), Clara (16, pupil teacher), William (13, errand boy), Horace (10), Ernest (7) and Frank (4). Their address was 69 Hythe Street, Dartford. This was the same road where they were living in 1871 - Waterside was renamed Hythe Street. In the 1911 census (after he had retired) William's occupation was described as “formerly at engineering works, labourer charge hand”. It seems likely that William and Frederick were working for J & E Hall Ltd, the biggest iron / engineering works in Dartford and very close to Hythe Street.

Frederick played cricket for the Darenth Vale and Dartford Albion clubs<sup>1</sup>. In 1882 he appeared for a district team against Kent. In 1885 he was picked to play for Kent against Sussex at Gravesend. He played half a dozen matches for Kent in 1886 and then regularly from 1887 until 1899 when he retired from county cricket. His main contribution to the team was as an accurate, left handed medium pace spin bowler although he also had some success as a lower order batsman later in his career. Between 1885 and 1899 he played in 234 matches for Kent taking 979 wickets at a cost of 17.95 runs each. He also scored 3,410 runs with an average of 11.75. In a match in 1890, Frederick bowled Dr W G Grace in both innings, the first time before he scored. Frederick played for England (captained by W G Grace) against Australia in 1890 at the Oval. The pitch was affected by rain and the

conditions suited Frederick's bowling. He took 12 wickets (6 in each innings) for 102 runs and England won a close match by two wickets. Frederick was also part of the England team that toured South Africa in 1891-92. His test match appearances were restricted by competition from two other notable English spin bowlers, Johnny Briggs and Bobby Peel.



MARTIN ABOUT TO DELIVER THE BALL.

In 1887, Frederick married Esther Jane Daniels, who came from Fordwich, near Canterbury. He was aged 26, she was 29. They had four daughters, all born in Canterbury. They were Clara Jane (b 1888), Alice Edith (b 1890), Maud Lucy (b 1892) and Esther Lilian (b 1899). The 1891 census shows Frederick as a visitor in the household of Henry Palairit (a Justice of the Peace) in Woolverton, Somerset. Henry had played cricket for the MCC and had two sons, Lionel and Richard, who also played first-class cricket. Esther, Clara and Alice were living at 78 Old Dover Road, Canterbury. In 1901, the family were still at this address and consisted of Frederick (39, a professional cricketer), Esther (40, she was actually 42), Clara (12), Alice (10), Maud (8) and Esther (1).

Frederick was a regular umpire for two seasons in 1902 and 1903<sup>2</sup>. He was a member of the ground staff at Lord's cricket ground in 1908, when the committee there decided to make the match between Middlesex and Somerset in June that year a "benefit" for him (meaning that

he received the gate receipts). The excellent support for this match spoke volumes for his popularity<sup>1</sup>. The 1911 census shows Frederick and his family living at 10 The Brent, Dartford. This house (which is close to East Hill Cemetery) still exists. It is a substantial semi-detached three storied property built around 1900. It seems that Frederick had done well financially from cricket! The census return says that the house had eight rooms. Those living there were Frederick (49, a professional cricketer), his wife Esther (52) and three of his daughters, namely Clara (22), Maud (18) and Esther (11) as well as a boarder.

Alice Martin (Frederick's daughter) married Cyril Adolphus Burden in 1915. They had a son, Frank Frederick Burden in 1916. Cyril was a sergeant in the Middlesex Regiment during the First World War and died in France in October 1918, less than a month before the war ended. Alice's sister Maud married Leonard Thomas Snell in December 1918. They didn't have any children. Frederick's other two daughters, Clara and Esther, did not marry.



Frederick later in life

Frederick and his wife continued to live at 10 The Brent. His occupation on Maud's marriage certificate was "munition worker", presumably his contribution to the war effort. He took up bowls and joined nearby Hesketh Park Bowls Club. He went to bed on Monday December 12<sup>th</sup> 1921 in apparently his usual health, but during the early hours of the next morning he had "an apoplectic seizure" that resulted in his death, aged 60, a few hours later<sup>1</sup>. The West Kent Advertiser reported his death under the headline "Passing of a Great Cricketer". They described his cricketing career and concluded:

*Dartford has lost one of its best known characters by the passing of Mr Martin, a sportsman of whom we are justly proud. With ever a kindly smile, however discouraging the circumstances, he kept a brave wicket to the end, and the town is the poorer for his loss."*

Frederick's death was also reported in The Times, together with a description of his career.

Frederick was buried in East Hill Cemetery in the same grave as his sister Clara. The stonework is inscribed:

*In loving memory / of / CLARA JANE MARTIN, / for 17 years head mistress of / St Albans Road Girls School / who died May 8th 1908 / aged 43 years / Erected by scholars, teachers, managers / and other friends in recognition of / her meritorious work / Also of FREDERICK MARTIN / who died Dec 13th 1921, aged 60.*



Frederick's grave

Esther Jane Martin (Frederick's widow) died in 1944 aged 85 and is buried at Watling Street cemetery in the same grave as their youngest daughter Esther Lilian, who died in 1930 aged 31.

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*If you think that you have a relative buried in East Hill Cemetery, Dartford and would like to find them in the cemetery records and/or be sent a photo of their grave, feel free to contact me.*

#### References

1. *Death of Mr. Fredk Martin*, article in W Kent Advertiser, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1921.
2. *Frederick Martin (Cricketer)*, item on Wikipedia (read December 5<sup>th</sup> 2013)