

FREDERICK DELIUS PLAYING CRICKET FOR PARIS IN 1898
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The 'Eleven of Notts County v Sixteen of Paris' game, played at the 'Tir aux Pigeons' ground in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, on Friday the 26th and Saturday the 27th August 1898, was a remarkable cricket match on two counts.

Firstly, the match appears nowhere in any archives, including 'CricketArchive', or the comprehensive published history of the Standard Athletic Club of Paris, despite extensive cross-checking and consultation. The only reference in the UK seems to be in 'The Sporting Life' for the 1st September 1898. There, it was described at length in fulsome prose and with complete scorecards given.

The match was an irregular one, so to speak, and with irregular teams. The Paris team, for example, comprised expatriate Englishmen, formed from the larger Standard Athletic and Albion Cricket Clubs of Paris, whilst the Notts' team was called a Notts County XI, simply because of one young county professional playing. Notts teams were earlier frequent visitors to Paris, and with varied names, such as 'Notts Castle' or 'Notts County Amateurs' – forerunners of the County team. Paris teams also visited the UK - sometimes called 'Paris Amateurs' or 'United Paris'. Cricket in France, and in Paris, was long-established, and there was a strong presence of cricket from the 1860s, although the game there dates from much earlier. By about 1900, there were twelve cricket clubs around Paris and a French Cricket Championship.

Secondly, the match was noteworthy in that two players, one on each side, achieved fame in the different fields of classical music (Frederick Delius, 1862-1934) and cricket (John Gunn, 1876-1963). Moreover, and coincidentally, each played a key part in the performance of the other and in both innings.

Frederick Delius, the developing classical composer, young cricket enthusiast (NCS Booklet 2017, 10-11), and later keen club cricketer in Yorkshire and Lancashire (NCS Booklet 2018, 12-13), was playing for Paris whilst living in Grez-sur-Loing, south-east of the city. This is the only instance found so far of him playing in Paris, although Eric Fenby, Delius's assistant (and amanuensis) for six years until Delius's death wrote, without precise details, that Delius 'often played for an English XI in Paris'.

Delius had arrived in Paris in 1888, aged 26, and so may well have played cricket for ten years before this 1898 match - and for some clubs, now almost forgotten. A return match of 'Fifteen of Paris' against Notts Castle on the Notts Castle ground on August 4th and 5th, 1899 had no Delius - or Gunn - playing. This 1898 match, then, may have been the peak - and end - of Delius's cricket-playing in Paris and France - at the age of 36.

By 1898, moreover, Delius was having success with his compositions. Among the more familiar orchestral pieces being published and performed by then were the *Florida Suite*, *Sleigh Ride*, *Summer Evening*, *Over the Hills and Far Away*, *La Calinda* (from the Opera *Koanga*), *Appalachia*, and *American Rhapsody*.

For John Gunn, aged 22, this Paris match was his first foray into cricket abroad - his only time in Europe with a visiting Notts team. There seems to be no mention of this match in any writing about John Gunn or his career, and it may be his only match of this kind.

Gunn, of course, later became one of Nottingham's cricket greats: an all-rounder who scored 24,557 runs and took 1,242 wickets, completing the double four times consecutively, an England Test player, and a 1904 Wisden Cricketer of the Year.

In 1898, Gunn's first full season of county cricket, he had played in fourteen county matches before this Paris match, including two against Yorkshire, at Headingley and Trent Bridge. The county season ended on the 18th of August, and the Eleven of Notts County arrived in Paris on Thursday the 25th August.

In this low-scoring match (which the Notts team won by 25 runs), Notts made 60 and 74, whilst the Sixteen made 51 and 58. The scorecard shows that Delius caught Gunn (batting at 4) in both innings, whilst Gunn caught and bowled Delius (batting at 5), and then clean bowled him in the 2nd innings:

1st inns) J Gunn c Delius	b McArthur	0	2nd inns) J Gunn c Delius	b Braid	6
1st inns) F Delius	c & b Gunn	2	2nd inns) F Delius	b Gunn	0

Gunn had some success as a bowler, totalling 22 overs, 6 maidens, and taking 5 for 43, whilst Delius bowled in total 4 overs for 11 runs.

As well as catching Gunn in both innings, Delius took three more catches in the Notts 2nd Innings. Gunn, however, was solely responsible for all his five wickets taken, with Delius in the two innings, and then three other wickets being clean bowled in the 2nd innings.

Some interesting questions arise from this match: did either player even remember or mention their early meeting on the cricket field to anyone, or later know of, or even follow, the other's success?

We can now only speculate based on facts and the contexts around both men. Would Delius have commented later to anyone about Gunn: 'this was the county player I got out twice in Paris in 1898', or 'this was the Test player who got me out twice in Paris'? Fenby wrote that Delius, in banter, '... used to brag how, in his prime, he had never let a loose ball go by without punishing it unmercifully, and never dropped a catch in the slips...'. Perhaps Delius fielded there against Gunn and his team-mates.

Delius was known to be an avid follower of cricket scores and matches. In a talk in Leeds in 1950, Neville Cardus recalled that in conversation with Delius, all Delius wanted to talk about was cricket, not music, and, curiously, nowhere in Delius's existing 610 published letters does he mention cricket to anyone. It seemed he wanted to keep these two areas of his life separate: cricket was for conversation with knowledgeable enthusiasts.

Earlier in life, Delius would have had access to English newspapers and match scores and details, both in France - brought by visitors from England - and when in England on frequent visits before becoming ill in 1918, although these were not always in summer.

In Yorkshire, Delius often stayed with his sister Clare in various places - Harrogate, Ilkley, Lothersdale, and Wibsey - and so can be presumed to have studied Yorkshire and England scores there whenever possible. There were also visits to (and around) London and other large cities. Delius, then, would likely have been well-informed about cricket and cricketers on these visits.

It is highly likely, therefore, that Delius would be familiar with both the Test Match details of Gunn on tour with MacLaren's XI to Australia in 1901-2, soon after this 1898 match, and Gunn's two home Australian matches in 1905. But Gunn also featured regularly in 50 matches against Yorkshire between 1897 and 1923, with 29 in the county. Four were at Park Avenue in Bradford - surely attracting Delius's interest, having earlier played there himself three times in 1881 and 1882 - as would eight games at Scarborough, a boyhood ground.

Even when increasingly incapacitated, Delius was keen to know and discuss scores and details of matches, especially Test matches, read to him by Fenby from 1929 onwards. By 1932, though, Gunn's career was over, and Delius died soon after, in 1934.

What of John Gunn? Later in life did he ever remember this connection between himself and Delius. It is likely Gunn would remember this Paris match - his first abroad and in his first full season. This, despite him playing over 500 matches in a career lasting 36 years. Did he know about Delius? Did he ever remark to anyone that he was caught out twice by the classical composer, or that he bowled out Delius twice?

In retirement, from 1932 to 1963, Gunn was an avid reader of cricket statistics, including Wisdens, even over breakfast. Perhaps he kept a scorecard of this unrecorded match to peruse, although this might be a faint hope. Gunn, too, had a musical connection, being a keen amateur singer, a light baritone, singing in the Lady Bay Male Voice Choir and a church choir. Delius did, in fact, write songs for unaccompanied chorus and also songs with piano accompaniment, though it is a little unlikely that Gunn's choirs would come across these.

On balance, then, it would seem that Delius could well have been much more familiar with Gunn's cricketing career than Gunn was with Delius's musical career. Two people who might have known some details of this are no longer alive. John Townsend, Gunn's highly-esteemed, portrait-painter grandson and possibly the remaining person who might have helped with this, died in 2003. Eric Fenby, who lived with Delius and his wife from 1928-34 in Grez-sur-Loing, and who discussed cricket with him, died in 1997. Sadly, it seems no-one remains to discuss this match and any connection between the two men.

Acknowledgements: British Newspaper Archive. Cardus, N (1950), 'Neville Cardus remembers great moments in Yorkshire cricket,' *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28th January, 1950, p4. Carley, L (1983), *Delius: A Life in Letters, Volumes 1 & 2*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Carley, L (2019), President, The Delius Society, Personal information to the writer. CricketArchive. Cully I, et al. (1990), *The History of the Standard Athletic Club, 1890-1990*, Paris: The Standard Athletic Club. Fenby, E (1966), *Delius as I knew him*, London: Icon Books. Gehardi/Steinweg Collection (1897), Photograph of Fritz Delius, London: The Delius Society. Haynes, B & Lucas, J (1985), *The Trent Bridge Battery: The Story of the Sporting Gunns*, London: Collins. Lloyd, S (ed)(1996), *Fenby on Delius*, London: Thames. Wynne-Thomas, P (2018 & 19), Archivist to Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club. Personal information and advice to the writer.

(1,500 words excluding heading and Acknowledgements).