

Through a Glass, Brightly

A group of photographs of an I Zingari team at Lord's in 1859 were discovered recently in a Victorian album, and have been confirmed as the earliest known photographs of cricketers taken at the Ground, as [Paul Smith](#) reveals

Early cricket photographs are rare and those of 'action' on the field of play rarer still. The earliest such photograph, taken by Crimean War photographer Roger Fenton at Hunsdonbury in Hertfordshire, dates from 1857 and is a good 20 years before any image of cricket at Lord's is known to have been taken. Or, rather, was known, for a chance discovery in Sussex in 2014 began a trail which led from the playing fields of St John's Wood, via Maidenhead, to the far north-west of the United States. There, in the city of Portland, Oregon, a series of four photographs have been found which are, for now at least, confirmed as being the earliest known photographs taken at Lord's. They include an image of staged on-field action, the earliest known photographs of an I Zingari (IZ) team, and the earliest photographs of Lord's leaseholder, James Dark. They reset the history of photography at Lord's to five years before anything previously discovered.

In July 2014 I went to the Horsham Cricket Week, while researching the life of the cricketer Edward Chandos Leigh, MCC President in 1887 and for many years Secretary of IZ. At Horsham I discovered an article that local historian Susan Djabri had written for a journal on another IZ member, Edward Tredcroft, which included photographs of cricketers from

a Victorian photograph album owned by Myrna Goldware of Portland. Myrna had contacted Susan as she was interested in learning more about Denne House, Horsham, images of which featured in the album. From then on, they researched the entire contents of the album together, and all the photographs and the results of their research have been published online. Studying their website following my trip to Horsham, I immediately grasped the possible significance of four photographs of IZ said to have been taken at Lord's in 1859. Visits to the MCC Library to authenticate the images confirmed them as the earliest photographs ever taken at the Ground.

The large and splendid album acquired by Myrna Goldware was compiled in 1861 by Charlotte Ricardo (1828-1906), the wife of the wealthy financier and gentleman cricketer Albert Ricardo of Maidenhead. The majority of the 268 photographs in the Ricardo album are studio pictures of people known to the Ricardos, but the album also contains photographs relating to Ricardo's pastimes and activities, including cricket matches played by IZ at Lord's, Phoenix Park, Dublin, and Badminton between 1859 and 1861. Ricardo (1820-1908) was an early member of the IZ cricket team, founded in 1845, and also of the Windsor Strollers, a group of amateur actors similar to the

Old Stagers, which was formed in 1842 and was closely connected with IZ and the Canterbury Cricket Week. In his *Wisden* obituary in 1909 Ricardo was described as 'not much of a player, but his presence was always welcome as he was a most cheery and pleasant companion. He had been a member of MCC since 1866.'

Ricardo played for IZ in their sixth match in 1847, and subsequently in over 60 matches up until his last one in 1891 at the age of 71. He captained the side on occasions in the 1850s, but often failed to trouble the scorers. Ricardo played in the first match between IZ and the Household Brigade at Lord's on 5 June 1856, which was played in support of the British soldiers returning from the Crimean War. Dark offered free admission to all non-commissioned officers and privates in any regiment in Her Majesty's service, including their wives. Prince Albert, the Prince of Prussia and the Prince Regent of Baden arrived late and rode on to the ground during the match. As Patron of MCC, it was Prince Albert's second visit to Lord's.

Three years later, on 9 June 1859, Ricardo did not play in what was now an annual fixture, but four photographs taken that day are in the Ricardo album. The match was regarded as an important social occasion - in the *Morning Chronicle* dated



I Z. Lords 1859.

Saturday, 11 June 1859 it was reported that 'such an assemblage of spectators, comprising so large a number of rank and fashion, is rarely witnessed on a cricket ground as that of Thursday presented at Lord's. It was announced that a "grand cricket match and musical fete" would take place and such proved the case, the bands of the Royal Horse Guards (Blues) and Grenadier Guards being present and playing during the afternoon. The ground was in excellent order and was decorated with the flags of the Household Brigade and I Zingari Club and some national flags of other countries. The "play" commenced about twelve o'clock, and the list of players showed twelve on a side, the "Brigade" taking first possession of the wickets, while the "wanderers" took the field.'

Prior to the discovery of these four photographs, there was no known image of cricketers on the field of play at Lord's dating from earlier than the late 1870s, which was itself a tentative dating. Yet here we see, in a crisp image captioned 'IZ Lords 1859', a view across the wicket at Lord's taken from the south-west corner of the Ground, with the newly built villas of Elm Tree Road in the background. The 'action' is obviously staged, as it was in the photograph taken by Fenton

at Hunsdonbury in 1857. The lengthy exposure time required by cameras of the period rendered true action photography impossible. The scene appears set for play to begin: two wickets can clearly be seen, with an umpire and bowler at one end and a batsman, wicketkeeper, slip and point fielder poised and ready. The Lord's pitch at this time was still considered to be rather poor, but here the grass looks well maintained. The famous Lord's slope angles down towards the photographer. There were no stands aside from the old Pavilion (often derided at this time as a 'wretched penthouse' or 'cowshed'), which was located to the left of the photographer. Within ten years the construction of the new Grand Stand would make this view unrecognisable.

The other three photographs are taken from the north side of the old Lord's Pavilion looking back towards the side of the building, with the subjects facing the camera and looking towards Elm Tree Road. In two of them, some of the most eminent MCC and I Zingari members can be seen, among them Spencer Ponsonby, Captain Fred Hervey-Bathurst and Edward Chandos Leigh.

What happened to the album after the Ricardos died is uncertain. At some point during the latter half of the twentieth

I Zingari v Household Brigade, Lord's, 9 June 1859. The earliest known cricket 'action' photograph taken at Lord's.

century the album was acquired by Bill Jay (1940-2009), a publisher, photographer, author and photographic historian, who coincidentally was born in Maidenhead. Jay moved to the United States in 1972 and founded the Photographic Studies programme at Arizona State University, where he taught for 25 years. On his retirement in 1998, his personal library, including the Ricardo album, was put up for sale, and was bought by a rare book dealer in Portland. In September 2012 the rare book dealer showed the album to Myrna, who works at his bookshop. Enthralled by its contents, she purchased it from him in January 2013.

Thanks to the magic of photography, it is possible to look back at some of the earliest known cricketers and reconnect to the world that has been preserved in the Ricardo album. The entire album, with a detailed commentary on all the photographs, can be viewed online (ricardophotoalbum.com).

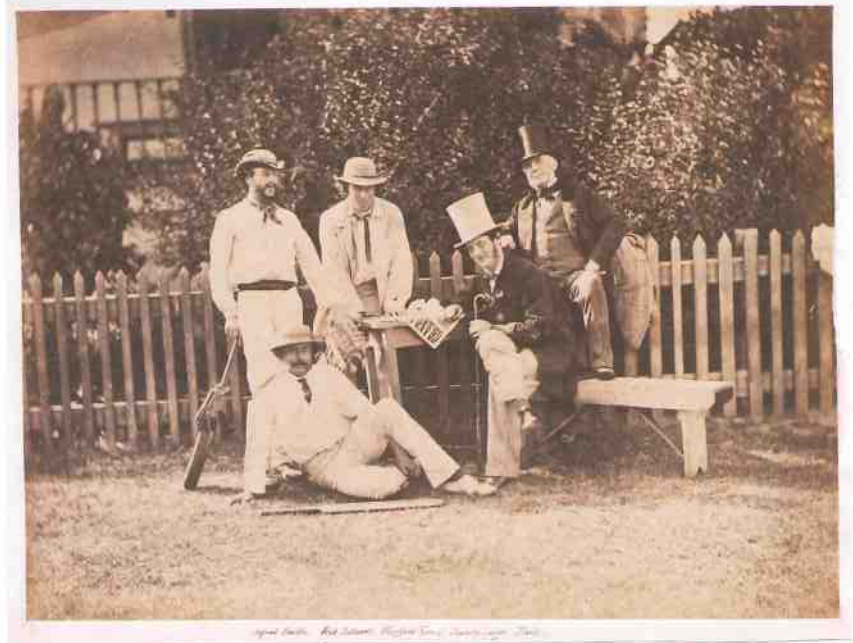
Thanks are due to Myrna Goldware and Susan Djabri, both of whom have contributed to this article.

Right The man sitting with the white top hat reading the Grand Match scorecard (produced by Fred Lillywhite in the MCC printing tent) is **Edward Chandos Leigh**. He would subsequently become MCC President in its centenary year in 1887. He started playing cricket for Stoneleigh Cricket Club, and then played for the Harrow XI from 1848 to 1851, captaining them to victory against Eton in 1851. He played for the University of Oxford between 1852 and 1854, and was an officer of the IZ and a regular IZ player from the 1850s to the 1870s. In 1859 he was training to become a barrister and subsequently became Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

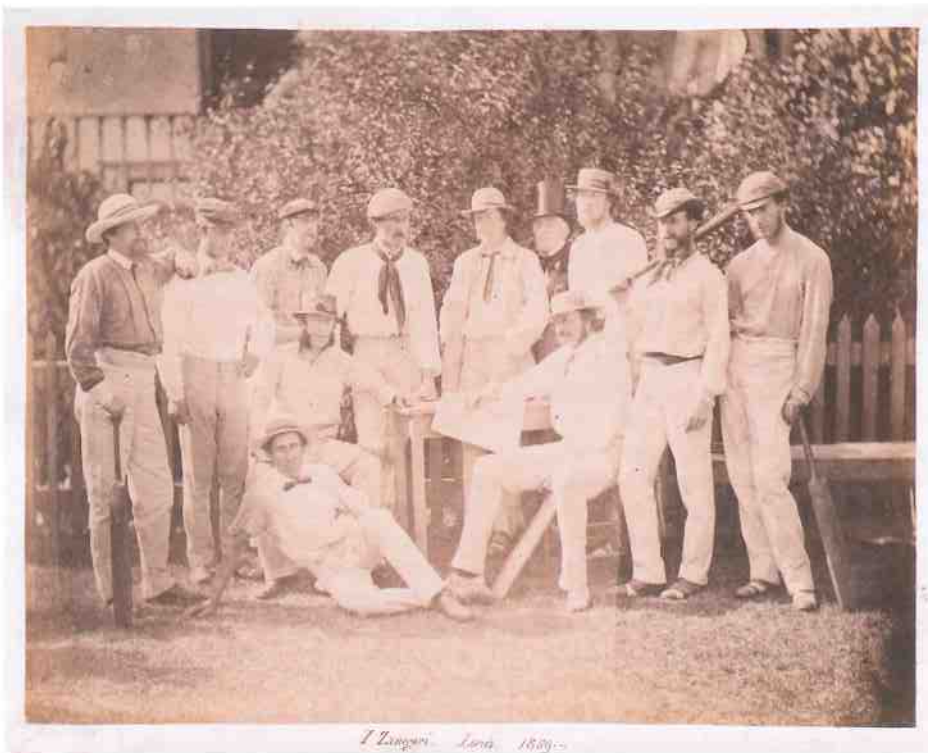
Behind him in the black top hat is **James Dark**, who was the current leaseholder of the Ground. Over the previous 24 years he and his extended family had set up and operated various cricketing business enterprises on the Ground, including making bats, stumps and bails at M. Dark's manufactory on the Ground from local willow trees. So closely was Dark identified with the Ground that it was popularly called Dark's instead of Lord's.

Alfred Baillie, who is standing on the far left, played regularly for IZ from 1849 to 1862 but died young in his thirties. His brother Duncan Baillie was playing for the Household Brigade in the match.

Captain Fred Hervey-Bathurst, sitting on the ground in front of Baillie, also played for the Household Brigade on this occasion, but was a regular player for IZ, MCC and Hampshire from the 1850s until the 1870s. He played his last match for the Eton Ramblers at the age of 62. His father was Sir Fred Hervey-Bathurst, a renowned MCC cricketer from the 1830s to the 1850s, who became MCC President in 1857. His son and grandsons continued the Bathurst family cricketing tradition.

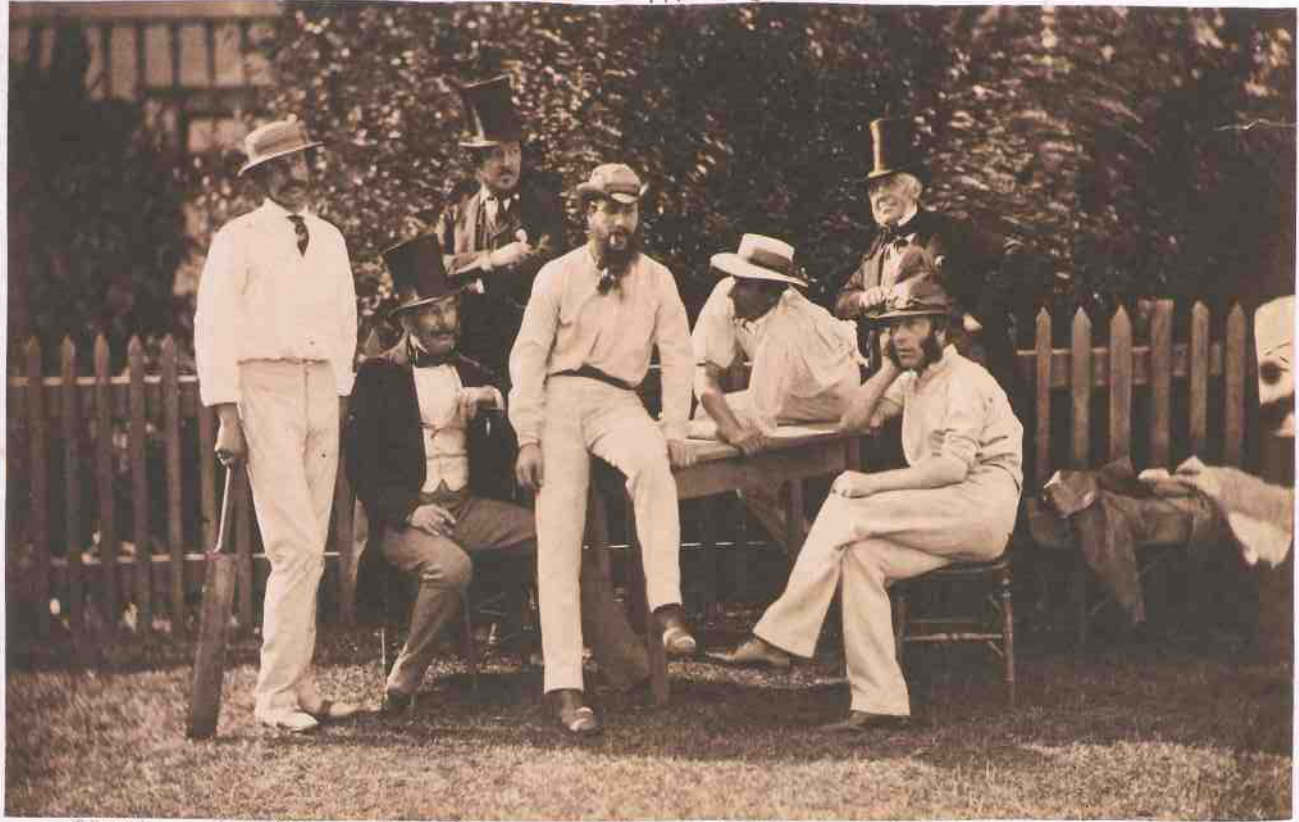


Standing and leaning on the table in the middle is **Wingfield Fiennes**, cousin of Edward Chandos Leigh and a descendant of Lord Saye and Sele. His brother Cecil Fiennes, who was Secretary of IZ at the time, took the second recorded hat-trick three months later in Dublin and was presented with a white hat with IZ ribbons by the Earl of Carlisle, which is on display at the 21st Lord Saye and Sele's home, Broughton Castle.



Left This photograph features eleven IZ members who were playing for either IZ or the Household Brigade, with **James Dark** standing in the black top hat in the background. The players who can be identified are as follows: on the far left, **Edward Tredcroft**, who was a regular IZ player in the 1850s and 1860s; standing third from the left is **Heneage Finch, 6th Earl of Aylesford**, who (as Lord Guernsey) was MCC President in 1850; sitting in front of him is **Spencer Ponsonby**, and standing by his left shoulder is **Captain 'Handsome Fred' Marshall**, who was to become President of Surrey CCC and a General in the Army; sitting on the ground at the front is the **Revd Edward Tyrwhitt Drake**, who was a regular player for IZ and took 12 wickets in the 1859 Lord's match; **Captain Fred Hervey-Bathurst** is seated on the right with **Alfred Baillie** standing at his left shoulder.

Other players known to have been in the IZ team were A.P. Law, R.H.B. Marsham, the Earl of Stamford, the Earl of Coventry, Lord Skelmersdale and F. Berkeley (later Lord Fitzhardinge). The Earl of Coventry was just beginning his MCC presidency at the age of only 20, and is still the youngest ever president. Within the year he would choose as his successor Lord Skelmersdale, who was 22 years old and was playing alongside him in the IZ team. Other future MCC presidents playing in the game included Robert Grosvenor, who was playing for the Household Brigade, and Edward Chandos Leigh.



F. Bathurst, Col. Moncrieffe, Spencer Lyttelton, Alfred Baillie, E.T. Drake, Spencer Ponsonby and Dark.

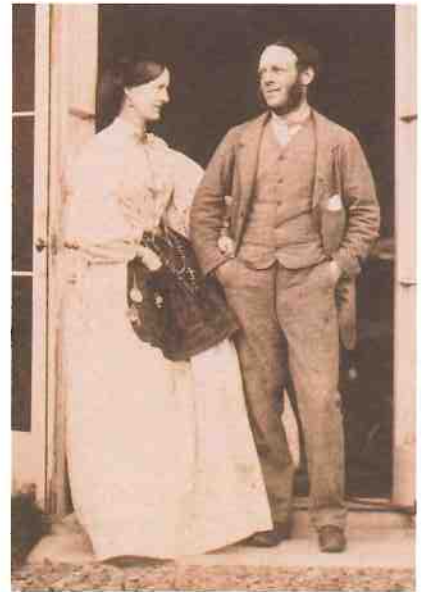
Above From left to right, the names are given as F. Bathurst, Col. Moncrieffe, Spencer Lyttelton, Alfred Baillie, E.T. Drake, Spencer Ponsonby and Dark. **Captain Fred Hervey-Bathurst, Alfred Baillie, the Revd Edward Tyrwhitt Drake and James Dark** have already been discussed on the previous page. Colonel Moncrieffe (sitting in a top hat and suit) was **Sir Thomas Moncrieffe, 7th Bt (1822-79)**, who served with the Grenadier Guards and Atholl Highlanders, and was an Honorary Colonel of the Royal Perthshire Rifles. He played first-class cricket for MCC between 1841 and 1852 and for I Zingari between 1850 and 1862.

Standing behind Moncrieffe is **Spencer Lyttelton**, who was an MCC Member and Marshall of Ceremonies to the Royal Household. He was a spectator at the 1859 match at Lord's.

His brother was the 4th Baron Lyttelton, who famously wanted eleven sons so he could form a cricket team. He managed to produce eight sons, some of whom were future MCC presidents, and included Alfred Lyttelton, who was notable for playing for England at cricket and football and was involved with the start of the Ashes.

Spencer Ponsonby (later Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane), sitting on the far right, was one of the founders of I Zingari in 1845, and of an amateur theatrical group, the Old Stagers, in Canterbury in 1842. He was a future Governor of IZ, MCC Treasurer for many years and Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

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Albert and Charlotte Ricardo.