

NORMAN FRANCIS BORRETT (S31-36)

Little can be added to what has already been said about this hugely gifted sportsman and teacher.

The following is the obituary that appeared in ***The Times*** on 30 December 2004

Amateur sportsman who excelled nationally and internationally in hockey, squash and cricket

NORMAN BORRETT was probably Britain's most talented postwar all-round amateur sportsman. Uniquely, he captained his country many times at hockey and squash, while also playing first-class and minor-county cricket. As a schoolmaster he inspired generations of pupils to achievement in work and sport.



Born in Wanstead, Essex, where his father was a farmer, Norman Francis Borrett was educated at Framlingham College in Suffolk from the age of 13. There he revealed an outstanding talent for all athletic pursuits. He ended his school career as captain of hockey, cricket, squash, fives, athletics and swimming, secretary of the debating society and school captain. In the holidays of his last year he managed to fit in matches as fly-half for the Eastern Counties Schools rugby XV as well as winning the Evans Cup Public Schools Squash Handicap, playing cricket for Essex Young Amateurs and scoring 63 at Lord's in the Young Amateurs v Young Professionals match. He went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1936, read geography, won two hockey and three squash blues, captained the university in both, and won his first three England hockey caps in his last hockey term, 1939.

After war service in the Army he became a schoolmaster, first at Allhallows School, Devon, from 1945 to 1950, then at Framlingham, from 1950 to 1980, where he eventually became second master.

At hockey Borrett played inside-left 30 times for England and 7 times for Great Britain, in an unbroken run of 15 years, captaining England 23 times and Great Britain 7. He led Great Britain to the silver medal at the 1948 Olympics. His ratio of goals to games played remains the highest by an English player.



Described in the press of the day as "the incomparable Borrett", he was without question the best player of his era, and in the view of many the most naturally gifted and skilful of all British players.



While at Cambridge he played twice for Essex at cricket, but not, strangely, for the university. After the war he was also picked for Essex, against Nottinghamshire in August 1946, his third and last match for the county. Thereafter he played for Devon in the Minor Counties championship each summer holidays, from 1947 to 1959, save for 1951 and 1955 when he was touring South Africa respectively with the British hockey team and the Great Britain squash team. He played 50 matches for Devon, scoring 2,408 runs at an average of over 36, with 4 centuries. He still holds the Devon record for the 4th wicket — an unbroken 262 against Oxfordshire in 1949, of which his share was 134 not out.

It was in squash that Borrett's remarkable talent stood out most starkly. While a virtual unknown, he won the English Amateur Championship in 1946, and again in each of the next four years, winning each final in straight games. He was a racing certainty to have won it in the sixth year but had to withdraw with food poisoning. But the astonishing aspect of his domination is that it was achieved without proper, or indeed any, competitive practice.

Squash was centred entirely on London in those days. Borrett lived in Devon, where there was no one he could play, so he had to use the first two or three rounds of the amateur



championship each year to get his eye in. The other competitors all played regular top-class squash in London.

He captained the England and Great Britain squash teams, playing 12 times for England when hockey and school commitments permitted. Until 1952 he had lost only once to any amateur in the world since the war.



He played golf to a handicap of 4, accumulated enough tournament ranking points to qualify for the Wimbledon tennis championship, but was too busy to enter, and was invited by a friend to be his co-driver in the Le Mans 24-hour race — an invitation he declined. He was president of both the Squash Racquets Association and the Hockey Association as well as chairman of the England hockey selectors, president of the Travellers Hockey Club, a member of MCC, the Tramps, the Gentlemen of Essex, the Jesters and numerous other clubs. He wrote two well-received instructional books on hockey.



The war deprived him of the years between 22 and 29, otherwise his sporting record would have been even more extraordinary. At the age of 35 arthritis was diagnosed in both hips. He continued to play international squash until the age of 38, and Devon county cricket until 42, subsequently undergoing four hip replacements which left him crippled in later years.

He is survived by his wife Mullie, whom he married in 1940, and by their two sons, Anthony and Timothy.

Norman Borrett, amateur sportsman, was born on October 1, 1917. He died on December 10, 2004, aged 87.

Original Article: [The Times - 30 December 2004](#)

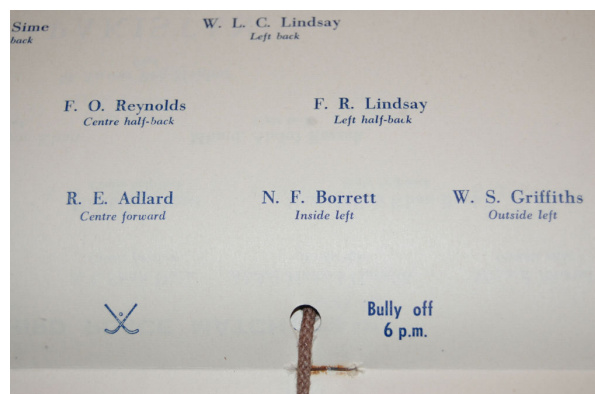
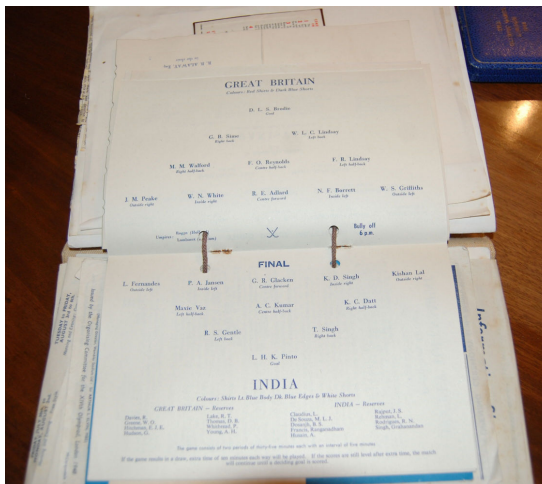
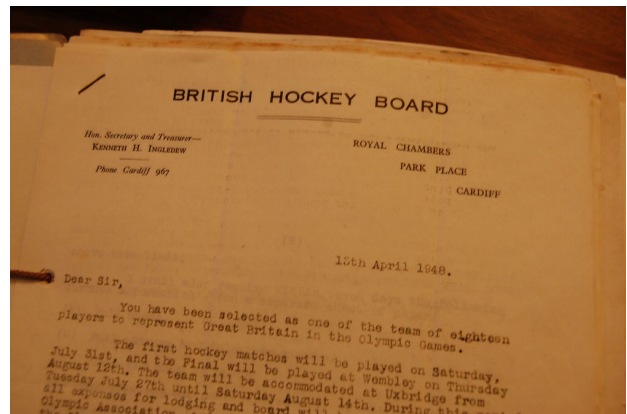


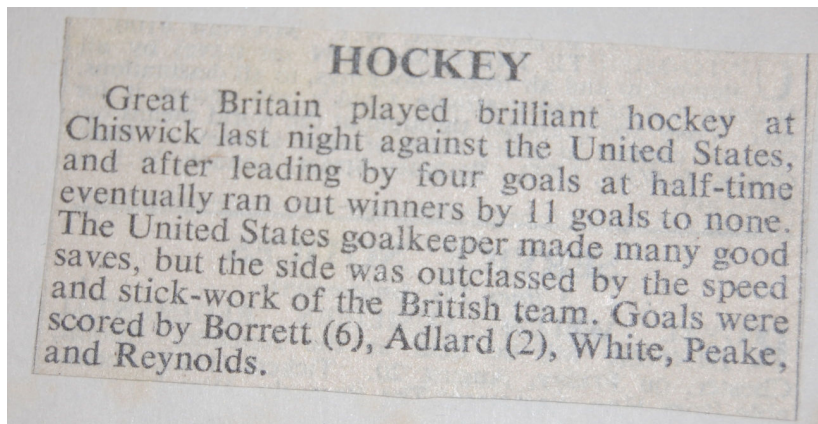
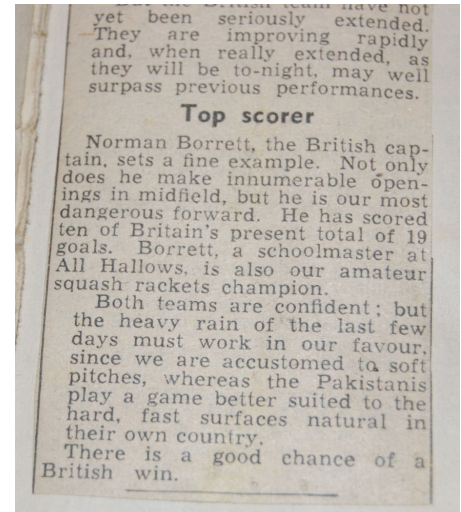
This is a link to the story on the SOF website at the time of his death
<http://www.oldframlinghamian.com/article.php?story=20041212025740616>

Just before Christmas 2008 BBC Essex interviewed Mullie about Norman's career. You can see an article on this at http://www.bbc.co.uk:80/essex/content/articles/2008/12/18/hockey_olympics_feature.shtml You can listen to the interview, which also includes reflections from Norman Porter here http://www.bbc.co.uk/essex/realmedia/2008/12/23/hockey_1948.ram

See below a great selection of additional photos

OLYMPIC GAMES 1948





SQUASH



NORMAN & MULLIE

