

# WILLIAM 'BILLY' BATES



William 'Billy' Bates (1855-1900) might well have been the most brilliant player produced by the 'Yorkshire nursery' at Lascelles Hall.

When he was a boy he showed so much talent that his pals never wanted to play with him in case they didn't get a knock. He was widely regarded as the best batsman of his day – and he was a brilliant bowler too, taking the first-ever hat-trick by an England bowler against Australia, at Melbourne in 1882. He had begun to play as a professional while still at Lascelles Hall and made his Yorkshire debut in 1876. He would score nine centuries and four times he topped 1,000 runs in a season.

He was also a great success on the Test stage. But it was on the 1886-87 tour of Australia that Bates's first-class career came to a tragic end. He was struck in the eye by a ball during net practice. His sight was badly damaged, ending his first-class career.

He was so demoralised that he attempted suicide on the voyage home. He survived, however, and continued to play cricket, appearing for Lascelles Hall in the 1891 Heavy Woollen Cup triumph. Bates was also known for his stylish, dapper appearance.

