

## Repton steam train and CB Fry by Ray Pearce

I recently had a holiday in North Yorkshire based in Harrogate. On the Tuesday it was a coach trip to Whitby then a steam train journey on the North Yorkshire Moors railway to Pickering. When the engine steamed into Whitby it was the former Southern Railway Schools class, Repton. This engine was built in Eastleigh in 1934 and operated in the Bournemouth area.



The next part of this story was my admittance to Good Hope hospital with what turned out to be pneumonia. I was anxious to be out as soon as possible as the following Saturday week we, as a family, were placing my late brother's ashes under a sapling in a forest near Lilbourne on the Northamptonshire Warwickshire border. The Greenhaven burial forest is dedicated to the memory of people who prefer not to have a conventional funeral. My late brother was trained at Kew Gardens and when he was Landscape development officer for Telford New Town bought trees by the thousand and so wanted this outdoor ceremony. Afterwards the family went on to a hotel for a family lunch then all proceeded to their own homes.



My niece Jacqueline and husband decided to stay in the area for a day or two before going home to Formby. Next day she sent me a text to say she was at Repton and had I heard of CB Fry as he was buried there. Had I heard of CB Fry, you bet I had. My story now goes back to a Boy Scout camp in Lancashire near Chorley with the 6<sup>th</sup> Crosby Scout Troop in 1948. I had been bitten by an insect and my leg was quite swollen. The Camp doctor advised me to stay in the tent for two days. The only reading material I had was The Playfair cricket annual for 1948. This contained all the cricket records for 1947 and other cricket. Among these was the fact that CB Fry had scored 6 consecutive centuries in 1901. That was how I knew about Mr Fry and his remarkable life.



Let us now consider this life. He was born in Croydon in 1872, attended Repton school and on to Wadham college Oxford where he obtained a first class degree with Hons. At Oxford he excelled at sport winning 12 sports Blues including football, cricket, rugby, golf, swimming, tennis and throwing the javelin. He played football for Southampton against Sheffield United in the 1902 Cup Final. He later held the world long jump record in 1893.

In 1901 he was captain of England and Sussex cricket teams, that season apart from the 6 consecutive centuries he scored 13 hundreds and over 3,000 runs. A team mate at Sussex was KS Ranjitsinhji and with him was an Indian delegate at the League of Nations where he was offered the vacant throne of Albania. He declined the offer. Had my niece not found Mr Fry's grave at Repton this story would not have been written.

**Ray Pearce 19.7.2023.**