

# B.O.O.K R.E.V.I.E.W

## *England's First Soccer Captain*

Review by Derek Leach

Who can name the first captain of an England soccer team? If you can, do you know where he was born? The name is Cuthbert Ottaway who was born in Dover in 1850. The story of his short life is told in a book called *England's First Football Captain* by Michael Southwick.

Cuthbert was born at 5 Hammond Place on 19 July 1850. His father, James, was a surgeon, a Justice of the Peace and Mayor of Dover 1859/60. By 1861 the family was living at 7 Camden Crescent. Cuthbert went to Eton in 1863 as a King's Scholar - a scholarship which meant that the family paid only 75% of the fees. Cuthbert was soon involved in many of the sporting activities at the college including the Wall Game. He excelled at cricket, playing for the Eton First XI against the MCC. In his last year at Eton he scored nine centuries and also at the age of 19 played for Kent, being bowled out twice by W. G. Grace. Cuthbert played for Eton against Harrow at rugby and the Wall Game.

He went on to Oxford in 1869 where, in addition to reading Classics, he represented the university at five different sports: cricket (as captain), rackets, real tennis, athletics and soccer. Opening the batting with W. G. Grace, he toured the USA in an England XI and played in the annual Gentlemen versus Players match.

Despite not having played soccer until he went to Oxford, he was soon in the team. The University team, including Cuthbert, entered the FA cup for the first time in 1872/73 only losing in the final! He was selected for the England team to play Scotland in November 1872 and was made captain. In 1874 he played again for England.

After university and whilst studying to be a barrister Cuthbert played cricket for Middlesex and football for the Old Etonians, reaching the FA Cup Final twice. Damage to his ankles, however, ended his football career, but not cricket - he played for Middlesex until 1876. After corresponding for five years with a Canadian girl, he married her in August 1877, but their happiness was short-lived. After only a few months Cuthbert died, probably of pneumonia, at the age of 27. His wife, Marion, was pregnant with their first child.

So ended the short, sporting life of the first ever captain of an England soccer team who was born in Dover.

Copies of the book price £8 are available by post from Tony Brown at 4 Adrian Close, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 6FL (or see [www.soccerdata.com](http://www.soccerdata.com)). Please make your cheque or postal order payable to Tony Brown and include postage and packing of £1.50.