

The Telegraph

By Colin Gleadell
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Here's a question for the masterminds of cricket on the eve of the Ashes Test Match, or, more appropriately, any village cricket match being played up and down the country.

On June 22 1850, The Illustrated London News published an image of a cricket match with gentlemen in seasonal, if uncomfortable-looking, attire with their tight breeches, waistcoats and broad-brimmed hats. They are spread around the pitch as a bowler, going round the wicket, is held back from running in by the umpire's raised right arm while the batsman takes his guard. It's an idyllic scene, familiar to any cricket lover, with a small crowd of onlookers gathered outside a marquee in the shade of a towering oak.



Edward Duncan's A village cricket match (1839) is to be priced at £130,000 | CREDIT: MacConnal-Mason Gallery/ The Treasure House Fair

The painting, by the established member of the Royal Watercolour Society, Edward Duncan (1803-1882), is about two-foot wide and dated 1839. It was recently discovered in a private collection where it had been for over one hundred years, and acquired by St James's dealers, MacConnal-Mason, who will display it this month at The Treasure House Fair in the grounds of The Royal Hospital Chelsea where it will be priced at £130,000.

An accompanying text suggested its location as Kent, "ever ranked first among our counties for its cricketers." But precisely *where* is a mystery. Could it be Canterbury or West Malling where, in the engraving of the painting, there is a church with a similar spire?

Answers on a postcard.