

**Leslie "Les" Ethelbert George Ames**

Rank: Squadron Leader

Service No.: Not Known

Enlisted: Not Known

Royal Air Force

Residence: Fairfield Cottage, Elham

Before Service:



Les Ames visits his boyhood home, Fairfield Cottage in 1986 (L. Ames)

Born at Elham on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1905, from an early age Les never doubted he would become a cricketer.  
From the age of 2 he held a bat in his hands.



Les aged 2 1/2 (Photo by E. Smith)



Francis A. Mackinnon (Kent CCC)

In 1908 Les, aged 3, received a Christmas card, it reads: *“A bat, ball and stumps from F.A. Mackinnon an old Kent County cricketer to Leslie Ames young beginner, hoping he will keep straight, his character, his bat and his bowling, and that he will make as good a bowler as his father. Acrise Park Xmas 1908.”* As a friend of the family, Mackinnon had seen Les practising his skills outside Chichester House on the Triangle.

Lewis Hubble, Elham’s grocer often had visits from his brother Jack, the Kent wicket keeper. Jack was exceedingly popular and was known to the boys in Elham as “Uncle Jack”. Despite their difference in age Les and Jack became good friends, a friendship that was to last many years.

Les went to school at the Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone and at the age of 14 registered his first century, 104 not out in 90 minutes. At 17 he was brought to the notice of the Kent Cricket Team authorities. He took up wicketkeeping in 1926 and by 1927, he won his place in the Kent team for his first full season, being noticed for his aggressive approach to batting and his impressive form behind the stumps.

So rapid was his advance that he was playing for England two years later and by 1931 became England’s regular wicket keeper until 1939.

During Service:



*Wartime service: Squadron Leader Ames, with fellow officer and another sports celebrity, Dan Maskell, the tennis commentator (far right) (L. Ames)*

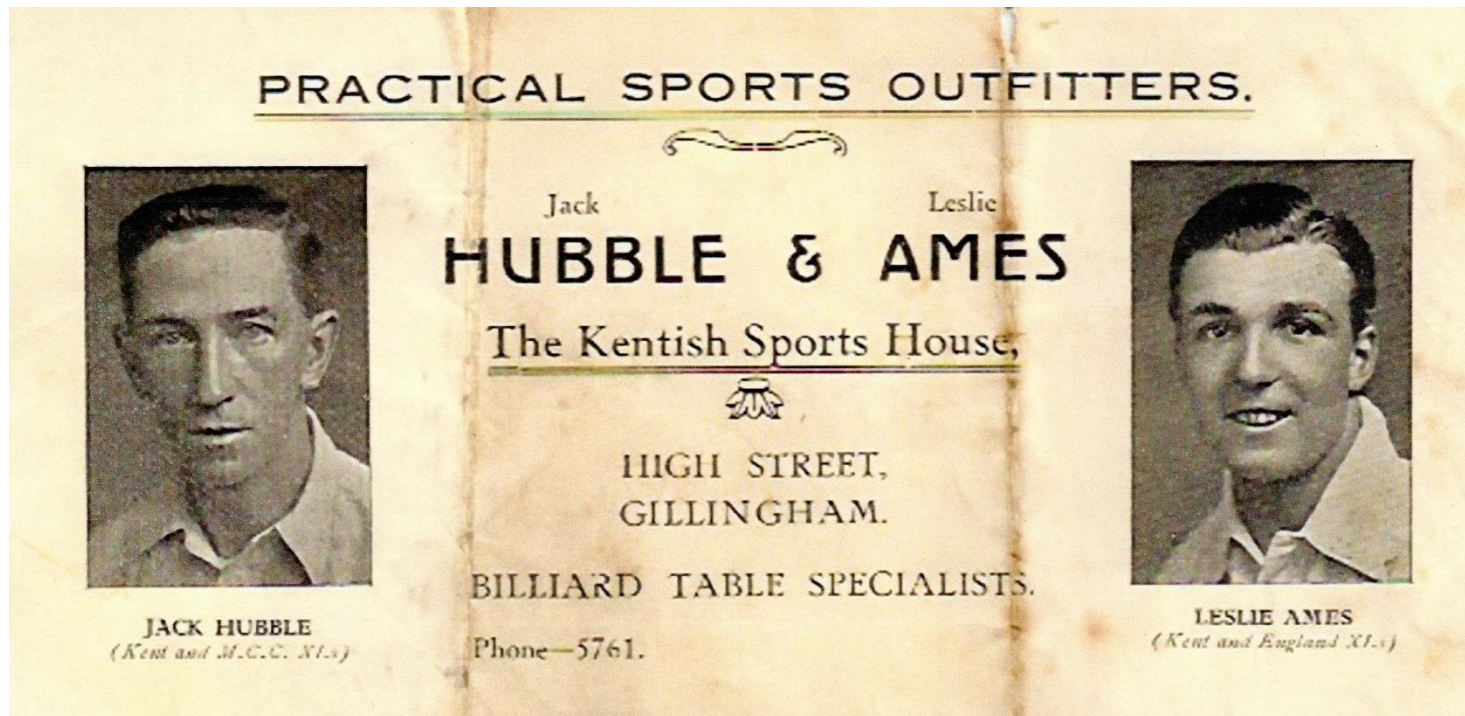
Les enlisted in the RAF and during WW2 he rose to the rank of Squadron Leader. Les served his own “modest war” as an administrator, liaising with air crews. He played a little cricket taking a hat-trick against Epsom.

The Elham Parish Magazine of July 1941 also records: *We congratulate Leslie Ames on making the splendid score of 127 runs not out for the R.A.F. v. The Army at Lord’s, and so winning the match.* Les apparently rode his motorcycle from the west country, where he was stationed, to these cricket matches.

In August 1945, Les returned to Canterbury for a charity match. There was an especially warm greeting from his old cricketing mentor, Francis Mackinnon, then aged 97.



After Service:  
His cricket career continued to flourish after the war.



He opened "Hubble & Ames" Practical Sports Outfitters, The Kentish Sports House, High Street, Gillingham with his friend and colleague Jack Hubble.



Frank Ames & Les in the shop.

After his final playing season in 1951, Les became a successful manager and administrator.



The Elham Sports Centre opened in 1987 and Les demonstrated his tennis skills to the school children.

Les Died on the 27th February 1990