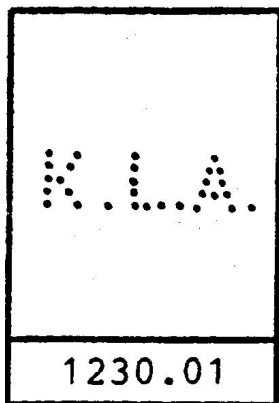


## KENT LUNATIC ASYLUM

from John Luft



John has loaned me (Ed.) a cover, with very interesting letter enclosed, from his collection. The stamp is a 1d lilac: postmark Maidstone: dated 6-JUNE-1890: perfin K.L.A. (K1230.01)

It is the letter, which pulls at the heartstrings and when I read it, I could see why John found it so intriguing. Is this die letter of the insane inmate or of one of the innocent detainees of the time?

### **Kent County Asylum, Barming Heath, Maidstone**

*Dear George,*

*I regret that my confinement here (which I hope you will kindly keep secret if not already published in your quarter) has prevented me fulfilling my promise in regard to returning your exquisite booklet the beautiful binding of which, I am sorry to say, has been seriously damaged. I always was rather unfortunate but I think my stay here will set me up phisically though it may incline people to think I am insane always. However I trust with Gods help that my actions may prove my sanity. Give my love to my brother sister & Dad I hope you will write immediately and let me know how you all are and how business is flourishing. I am taking the liberty of staying in the day room to write while the other paitents are enjoying the cool evening breeze and the strains of music from the band of the institution. The view from this room gives extensive sight of Kent hills artificial scenery in the foreground agricultural & silvian for middle distance. I went to a paitents ball the evening before last the doctors and some relative ladies also were dancing they were in evening dress by the by my evening dress and luggage are still at ..... would you kindly enquire if the rent is still going on as I am sure they cannot take on a new tenant with all my boxes there they take up so much room I should like my Guitar and a few books to read and play in my spare time then I would be as happy as a king if only I had a private bedroom and a key. I have been planting a circular bed (with petunias parithium and lobelia) today it was quite enjoyable I dug it over and prepared it with a little assistance; it looks quite nice and professionally done. It has an evergreen tree in the middle & a circular plot of grass round it I have also transplanted some poppies & done some weed hoeing now am going to enjoy the fragrant weed called here baccy. Yours truly -----*

The punctuation is as written and I had difficulty not correcting the three obvious spelling mistakes: but what a picture painted in this positive sounding letter. It had me hoping that the person, and I am still not sure of gender, did 'get out on the other side'.