

# ETON RAMBLERS

## NOTICE 2002

I am delighted to say that the Provost accepted our invitation to become only the seventh Hon. Member in the history of the Club - a week or so after he became a Knight of the Thistle.

### *RESULTS*

Once again the results were a little disappointing with 10 wins against 14 losses. Rory MacLeay returned to his accustomed place at the top of the batting averages, while a new name, Ali Douglas, with 27 wickets at 12 apiece, headed the bowling averages. I understand that the Cricketer Cup selectors have noted this.

I regret to say that an error crept into the 2001 statistics, which I hasten to correct. The match against the Royal Armoured Corps was shown as cancelled due to rain; in fact it took place as advertised and, although the Ramblers lost, their senior bowler that day, Robin Thorne, aged 58, bowled 17 consecutive overs and took 5 for 115 - his best figures in 40 years of Rambler cricket. May I combine my apologies to Robin for the omission with congratulations to George, his father, on celebrating his 90th birthday and diamond wedding. An excellent photograph of that occasion appears in the Rambler book: George, of course, is wearing his Rambler tie.

### *CRICKETER CUP*

#### **1st Round - Upper Club, 2nd June**

**Eton Ramblers 254/6 - Old Wellingtonians 255/6.**

In the same way as in 1993, the year after our previous Cup victory, the Ramblers made the earliest possible exit in 2002. After our very narrow victory over the Old Wellingtonians in the semi-final last year perhaps it was right that they should get their revenge - which they did with 13 balls to spare as opposed to the 5 which we had had.

Although the match took place in June, by which time everyone should have had plenty of practice, it looked from the boundary as though the bowlers on both sides were playing their first game of the season, and the Wellington batsmen took slightly more advantage of this than did ours. Our new Captain, St George, made a fine 71 and MacLeay became the first Rambler to complete 1,000 runs in the Cricketer Cup.

For next summer's competition we were the first team out of the hat, so we shall hope to play four matches on Upper Club. The first round is against Dulwich on Sunday 15th June, and plenty of Rambler support will be very welcome. 2002 marked the first appearance of a female in the Cricketer Cup. I was on the original committee which drew up the rules of the competition, and such an event was so unlikely in those days that we did not think to restrict participation to males!

Brighton won their first round match with the help of Ralph Oliphant-Callum, the excellent cricket beak who continues to do much valuable work on the Rambler Committee; but he was not selected for the second round, and Miss Clare Connor took his place. She is an Old Brightonian and Captain of the England Ladies Cricket XI. The selection caused a good deal of media interest, and she gave a charming interview on the Jack de Manio programme. [She did not get an innings but bowled 5 overs for 14 runs and took what was evidently a distinctly good catch.]

### *LORD'S*

Rain mercifully held off for a change, and Eton won by 66 runs. The 221 which they posted in their 55 overs was always going to be beyond Harrow's reach; it was based on a fine 98 by Ben Thompson and rounded off by 36 in 30 balls by the wicketkeeper, James Mathias, including a six from the last ball of the innings. When Thompson is Captain of the XI this year he will be only the sixth person since the First World War to have been in the XI for four years, joining the distinguished company of Clem Gibson (Snr), John Mann, Charles Robins, Michael Dunning and John Barclay. [It was rather more common in earlier days, 10 boys having done so in the previous 50 years.]

This year the date is Tuesday 1st July.

### *RAMBLER DINNER*

This will be held on Thursday 23rd October, again at the Inner Temple, and the speakers will be our new Hon. Member the Provost and Peter Lowndes. A notice will be sent to all members during the summer, but please make a note of the date now.

This will be my fourth Rambler Dinner in the chair and I have decided that four is quite enough: some no doubt will feel that it is already too many! The Committee has appointed Peter Lowndes to succeed to the Presidency on 1st November.

## *OBITUARY*

Henry de Lotbiniere (XXII 1964), a regular medium pace bowler for the Ramblers, mainly in East Anglia, during the 60s and 70s, had suffered from a rare and particularly awful form of cancer - of the face - for 15 years, continuing to practice as a barrister the while. This is no place for lurid medical details; suffice it to say that the surgeon who performed no less than 17 operations on his face during those 15 years said: "It is trite, when talking about Henry, to speak of courage."

David Clegg (XI 1949) was a regular soldier in the Coldstream Guards and another of that dwindling band who played a few Rambler matches in Egypt in the early 50s. He thoroughly enjoyed his Rambler cricket, both there and at home, and was good enough to leave the club some money in his will. Such legacies are very much appreciated and enable us to keep the cost of playing Rambler cricket, particularly to the youngest generation, within reasonable bounds. I would urge other members to copy David's example.

## *RAMBLER HISTORY*

After one or two false starts towards the end of Buns Cartwright's Presidency, I think that we may, at last, be getting a little closer to producing Vol. III, thanks to the efforts of John Farmer and Christopher Horne. This enterprise has the support of the Committee, but no financial backing from the Club. The cost figures I have heard sound enormous, but John and Christopher seem confident of raising the necessary funds; if things continue as they hope, members can expect to receive some details in a couple of months' time.

## *THE FORSYTE SAGA*

Older members will recall the television series which was broadcast on Sunday evenings about 35 years ago, and I doubt if I am alone in the opinion that it was by some way the best thing ever to appear on that overrated medium; many a parish changed the time of evensong so as not to lose almost all the congregation. Last winter the first half of a new version went out [I watched part of one episode, but it was not at all to my taste]. During the summer we were approached by the producer and asked whether, during the second half, some of the characters might wear Rambler ties! We laid down certain conditions, to avoid anachronisms and to veto their wearing by people like Bosinney, but gave them permission - and sold them some ties. I do not know when these episodes are going to appear, but do not reach for the colour control if you see some ties that look familiar.

## *FINANCE*

Keen students of the accounts will notice that, although we made a loss in the year to 30.11.02, the Club's finances continue in a healthy state, On the advice of our excellent Hon. Treasurer the committee made a modest increase in the Life Membership fee which should take care of the deficit.

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Our congratulations to Rory MacLeay on his forthcoming marriage, and our thanks to him, Michael Brooks and Piers Inkin for all the work they do for the Ramblers; I am sure that they will be just as helpful to the new President as they have been to me; they will find communication easier, as Peter operates on E-mail, one of several modern gadgets - like mobile telephones - which continue to elude me. Finally, may I thank all members for having put up with me for more than 12 years, and may I commend Peter Lowndes to you. He will fill the office very well, and assures me that he will still be seen on the field of play from time to time. Other than one occasion when John Hogg, who had come to watch a match, was cajoled onto the field when the Ramblers were one short, no President has played for the Club since Buns's last game in 1965; but Peter Lowndes and his successors will do well to beat the record set by Lord Harris who made his last Presidential appearance at the age of 81.

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*FLOREAT ETONA*

Cedric Gunnery  
*President*

January 2003.