

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 1994

RESULTS

An extremely wet May, with the first half of June and September not much better, meant that the total number of matches abandoned and cancelled exceeded the total under any other category. Among the casualties was the Torry Hill weekend, when no ball was bowled on either day.

This is reflected in the averages, where only 15 members managed to play five innings. Jonathan Larken took advantage of Rory Macleay's absence abroad and headed the averages, while Guy Dunning just outscored Charlie Redmayne. Hugo Machin, the hero of Lord's in 1993, made a century on his only appearance.

The weather affected the bowling averages even more, and only six members bowled in five or more innings – surely the lowest ever. Rupert Gouriet, as usual, took most wickets, closely pursued by Tom Prest, who headed the averages, and Tom Fleming.

Of those who did not play in five matches, Dick Robins took 8 for 45 in four – closely followed by Tom Parnell and Malcolm Hogg.

Right in the middle of the rainy season one match which survived was that against J Paul Getty's XI at Wormsley. Having caught the cricket bug, reputedly from one of the Rolling Stones, Paul Getty's support for cricket has been legendary; but not content with assisting the first class game he commissioned Harry Brind, the Oval groundsman, to construct a ground, just beyond the lawns of his house, for Club Cricket of a high standard to be played in the old-fashioned style which barely survives elsewhere. Brian Johnston was his first Cricket Manager, now succeeded by Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie, and his XI is selected from a pool of past and occasionally present test match players (from many countries), present first class players (from a county without a match on the day) and young club cricketers of the "right" sort. He has created a really beautiful ground, to rank with any I have seen in that league – Arundel (in Duke Bernard's time), Gezira, Upper Club (before Dutch elm disease) – and a wonderful fixture list, on which the Ramblers have the good fortune to appear. I would advise any Rambler who is lucky enough to receive an invitation to a match at Wormsley to accept.

The end of the 1994 season saw Peter Miles's retirement as the Groundsman at Eton. For ten years he had been a most enthusiastic supporter of the Ramblers, preparing up to ten pitches a year for us. We were able to bid him an appropriate farewell when he was our guest at the Match Managers Dinner after the Committee Meeting in December.

CRICKETER CUP

For the second year running the Ramblers fell at the first fence, this time at Dulwich, and in circumstances very similar to 1993. We were not able to field our strongest team, partly because three of that number were involved in exams at northern universities; but it is said that the strength of a good team is its reserves, and no doubt the Old Alleynians had similar problems.

It was another day when cricket should not really have been played, and parts of the ground were waterlogged throughout – far from ideal circumstances for Michael Brooks, the new Rambler captain, to try to contain a goodish batting side while squeezing the last few overs out of his depleted attack. I think that Dulwich would have settled for their final

score of 205 for 5 in the conditions and, although we got to within 19 runs of the target, chiefly through Brooks's own valiant contribution, it never really looked as though the Ramblers were quite going to get there. That margin probably just about represented the home ground advantage.

In 1995 we have been drawn away to Radley in the first round on Sunday June 4th, and Rambler support will be most welcome.

LORD'S 1994

Eton won the toss and put Harrow in to bat. After two years when they averaged almost exactly two runs per over, and against not too penetrating an Eton attack, Harrow scored a little faster this year; they declared at 236 for 6 after 86 overs, leaving Eton what turned out to be 46 overs in which to score the runs.

Mathematicians will calculate that this required a scoring rate of a little over 5 runs per over, and Eton set off at, and held, a rate of about 4.5, arriving at 183 for 3 with 6 overs remaining.

In 1993 Machin, coming to Lord's for the first time with no great reputation, overshadowed his captain and made the highest Etonian score for over 60 years: this year he failed to score and left the stage to Fulton, the sixteen year old son of RHG (XI 1966/67) and Hardy, son of another well-known Eton cricket name. Hardy played well, but Fulton's innings was thought by many present to have been exceptional by any standards, and particularly from one so young. Together they put on 170 and, although Hardy was out by then, paved the way for one of the most exciting last half hours in recent years.

With 54 needed from 6 overs Fulton, with a succession of partners, brought the possibility of victory closer and closer; he reached his century in the grand manner and hit the next ball for six as well for good measure. But the target proved a little too much and 230 for 7 completed a most honourable draw.

To avoid what is very apt to happen in this match in years when one side is considerably stronger on paper, and which has also happened when this is not the case, as in 1992, there have been calls from various quarters to make Lord's, and indeed all school matches, limited overs games. This is not going to happen, at least in the near future, but suggestions about rationing the side batting first to an agreed maximum number of overs – perhaps 70 or 75 – are beginning to find some favour among the schools. Eton have, perhaps, suffered more than their share of late declarations in recent years and I know that John Claughton is an interested participant in this debate – not of limited overs, but of rationing.

Once again there were far more Wanderers than Ramblers in evidence in Q Stand, only partially explained by the number of Ramblers who had private boxes. The Hon Asst Sec has plans, which were supposed to have been put into operation in 1994, to redress the imbalance in future years. This year the date is Tuesday 27th June and the same arrangements have been made.

DINNER 18TH OCTOBER 1994

151 members attended what many said afterwards was the best Rambler Dinner for years. Peter Lowndes, organising it for the 5th time, had made all the arrangements most meticulously, and the Savoy produced an excellent meal. We were entertained by a most erudite speech from Staughton mi KS (now Lord Justice Staughton), including a reminder of his prowess on the field at school, which he proved by exhibiting his Strawberry Choices; and by a reply from John Barclay, whose "deadpan" delivery of a dissertation on Rambler cricket in general, and of his team which won the 1992 Cricketer Cup in particular, had many members literally rolling in the aisles.

We had hoped that Eric Anderson, the recently retired Head Master, would be able to come so that we could thank him for all he had done for cricket at Eton, but his duties as Rector of Lincoln – where he has already made his mark by doing valiant, although ultimately unsuccessful, work against the abolition of the Oxford entrance examination – would not permit him to come to London that evening. His successor, John Lewis, was delighted to meet a number of Ramblers who had been up to him during his earlier time at Eton, and to make some new friends. A useful club cricketer himself, he has our best wishes for a successful tenure of office.

SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

Arrangements are now almost complete, and the touring party, organised by William Russell, Michael Brooks and Bruce Powell, and including several wives, will leave London on 11th January 1996, visiting Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Pietermaritzburg, Durban and Johannesburg, arriving back on 4th February – just in time for a report of the tour to appear in next year's mailing.

FINANCE

Keen students of the enclosed accounts will see that the Club sustained a small deficit during the year; but the new Hon. Treasurer assures us that this was merely technical (caused by such things as the election of a smaller number of candidates than usual last year and the drop in income from match fees due to the very wet May) and that the finances are in a healthy state.

At the Committee Meeting in December, as well as confirming the election of the new members of the XI, we elected 19 candidates, 6 of them sons of members. Among this number were three who had left Eton before I arrived, one of whom, at the age of 75, may be the oldest candidate ever elected to the Ramblers. These three were excused the usual requirement of playing in two qualifying matches.

OBITUARY

Fergus Hughes-Onslow was the youngest of three Rambler brothers and the father of Anthony (XI 1975). Although a more expert rugby player than cricketer at school, he became an enthusiastic Rambler and for many years took the field at St Cross, sometimes for the Ramblers and sometimes for the Green Jackets. In more recent years he became involved in the affairs of Hampshire, serving his year as High Sheriff in 1986, and of golf; he was a past Captain of the OE Golfing Society, and he died as he might have wished, but many years too early, on the course at Swinley. During the address at his memorial service, held at St Columba's Pont Street the day before these notes went to press, we were reminded that Fergus was one of that number, of whom I have always been most envious, who seemed to know Wisden from beginning to end; I was sitting next to my old friend John Woodcock, who had edited that publication for seven years, and he confirmed that Fergus's knowledge far exceeded his own.

Mark Norman, Sir John Hogg writes, was a good but not outstanding athlete (XXII & Fives Choices): in every other respect the good fairies must have clustered very thickly round the cradle at his christening. He had a long and healthy life: he was exceptionally good looking and had great charm: he had an excellent brain; he had the good fortune to become one of the early proteges of that remarkable little man Edward de Stein, which led him to a varied and interesting working life: he had a very happy marriage and family life, and finally he was endowed with enough of this world's goods to enable him to enjoy all these things to the full.

After Oxford he joined (through Edward de Stein) the tobacco firm of Gallaher in Ulster, but after two years returned to London and joined Lazards. In 1939 he enlisted in

the Hertfordshire Yeomanry but soon joined SOE under Peter Fleming for an improbable project in the Middle East. Getting out of Greece in 1941 he was badly wounded and spent the rest of the war in the War Cabinet Offices.

In 1946 he became a partner in Edward de Stein & Co, and when that firm merged with Lazards, a Managing Director of Lazards. He returned to Gallaher as a Director and later Chairman (1963-75). After retirement he followed a family tradition, becoming first Finance Director and then Deputy Chairman (1969-80) of the National Trust, where he did outstanding service. He leaves us a Rambler son David (XI 1959).

Peter Herbert was one of those Ramblers who had never been a great exponent of the game but who was a most devoted member of the Club; during all the years when the Ramblers had a box at Lord's his attendance record, accompanied by his family, was second to none. No accurate register survives, but I doubt he missed a single year.

Lord Revelstoke was, I believe, the only living Rambler to own a tennis court – built by his father in 1922. I have played on most of the courts in the northern hemisphere, except for the three that have been built in the last ten years: but many paumiers, far more expert and better versed in the game's history, will, like me, never have heard of Lambay Island. Indeed it had not seen any play since before the war until a couple of years ago when a number of enthusiasts, including the head professional at Queens, played an exhibition match there. He tells me that the first task was to drive the sheep out (it is an open court and had acquired a good crop of grass) and that an extra half-set of balls was advisable because, the netting having long since perished, any shot to the main-wall galleries which, with the extra penthouse above them, contribute an unusual feature to the court – went sailing straight into Dublin Bay. Let us hope that the next Baring who lives at Lambay Island is a tennis player.

Referring back to last year's notes, Bay Hodgson did indeed play again, at the age of 70, and I was present for his last match, against the Gemini at Sunningdale. Some of the old sleight of hand had gone, but he might have taken a wicket if a hideously difficult chance at mid wicket had stuck. He has now accepted honourable retirement after over 50 years as a playing member.

I mentioned that work was being done on Rambler statistics. Technical troubles have caused a delay, but some interesting figures are now beginning to flow from John Farmer's pen. I hope that, in phase II of this exercise, some comparisons will be possible with the giants of old – particularly Buns Cartwright and Gubby Allen – but for the present only post-war deeds are under scrutiny. Both are still playing, and so nothing is final, but Peter Lowndes recently overtook James Leonard's aggregate of runs scored, 13,698 against 13,384 at the latest count; and the Hon. Sec.'s position as the leading centurian, with 13, fell in 1993 to Rory Macleay (who missed the 1994 season due to a business posting abroad), with 14. John Farmer himself, who has reminded me that he, too, is still playing, comes next with 12; he is the only Rambler, certainly since the war, to have scored a century over the age of 50: to advance further up the ladder he will need to score his next over the age of 60!

FLOREAT ETONA

Cedric Gunnery
President

January 1995