

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 1997

All members will wish to join me in congratulating Matthew Fleming on being the first Rambler to play for England since Gubby Allen and George Mann just after the war. We hope that his considerable success in Sharjah, after being called up as a late replacement to the England 1-day side, will be repeated in the West Indies at just about the time you are reading these notes.

RESULTS 1997

These show 10 wins against 11 losses, with no less than 14 matches being cancelled, many because of the rain in June.

The number of members batting or bowling in 5 or more innings is still low in comparison with days gone by: around 1960 the “regulars” – including David Barber, John Farmer, Ken Hedley, Julian Jenkinson and James Leonard – used to play in 20 or more games. There were indeed more matches then and, which is probably at least as relevant, no leagues. Those of us who were at Oxford had at least 5 matches on the doorstep to start off with when, Christ Church apart, the Rambler team was often made up of 10 resident undergraduates plus the Regius Professor of Pure Mathematics, Henry Whitehead, a most tenacious opening bat. He was in the World League in the former discipline, and many honours came his way, but he used to say that the happiest day of his life came when he made 50 against a Home Park side which included David Macindoe in the year that he captained the Gentlemen.

Whatever the reasons, a number of our leading batsmen did not manage enough innings to qualify for the averages proper, in which Charlie Redmayne emerged in first place, just ahead of Benjy Fry, who also kept wicket with distinction, and the Hon. Treasurer. Of those who did not qualify, however, no less than seven had higher averages, led by Chris St. George who scored two centuries in an average of 142.5; Rory

Macleay was relegated to fourth place – with a mere 71. Among the bowlers, Rupert Gouriet's name returned to the top, just ahead of Charlie Huntingdon in both wickets and average.

CRICKETER CUP

We are still looking for our first victory since Vincent Square in 1992. By the Captain's own admission we played badly against the Radley Rangers and lost a match we probably should have won. For several years we have had great difficulty in fielding anything like our strongest side for the first round, due to the calls of Universities and the Combined Services. No doubt other schools have the same problems, but Rory Macleay, who has been reappointed Captain, believes that, if we can surmount that first hurdle, things will improve.

In 1998 we meet one of the few schools we have not played before, Blundells, at home on Sunday 31st May, when support will, as always, be very welcome.

LORD'S 1997

For the first time in the 162-year history of the oldest fixture at Lord's the match was abandoned without a ball being bowled. This was particularly disappointing for an Eton XI which came to Lord's with six wins and no losses, and whose batting was considered the strongest the school had produced for many years. In nine starts Hugo Loudon and David Kay-Shuttleworth had only once failed to put on 50 for the first wicket, averaging over 100 and including 230 against Winchester.

Not that it would have made any difference last summer, the thought of turning the match into one of limited overs is again being debated. Both schools now play a significant number of limited overs matches: Eton beat Millfield in a 55 over first-time fixture last year, The latest suggestion I have heard is to have two matches each year. An ordinary game at one of the schools, and a limited overs match at Lord's.

Whatever the future may hold, the match at Lord's next summer will be played on Friday 26th June.

It was very encouraging to find three members of recent XIs, Charlie Lightfoot, Peter Morgan and James Fulton, in the Oxford XI in 1997; I wonder if any member can tell me when this last happened? Congratulations to James Fulton on being appointed Captain for 1998.

OVERSEAS TOURS

The next tour will be in March 1999 to Capetown and Zimbabwe; the arrangements are being made by Bruce Powell and Rory Macleay.

RAMBLER ADDRESS LIST

This has been very well received but, inevitably, it produced more address changes after publication than before. With the approval of the Hon. Treasurer, and as we had enough covers in stock, the List is being republished this year in what will be far more accurate form.

The List had some errors, mostly because the printers got behindhand, thus preventing the final proof-read. Among these were a few omissions, now restored, and for some reason the inclusion of the name of a well-known Harrovian journalist.

One member used the List for advertising purposes, producing a number of complaints to the Hon. Sec. and to me. I am sure that this will not be repeated.

OBITUARY

Colonel F Gordon Maxwell CBE DL (XXII 24) was one of the oldest Ramblers and, until a few months before his death, very active. His obituary in the Times – one of the nicest I have read – began “Gordon Maxwell was an Old Etonian who ran the London Underground for nearly a quarter of a century after the Second World War, during which time not a day was lost through strikes.” Would that more Ramblers worked for the Underground today.

Tony Hanbury-Williams, another casualty from Sam Spearing’s XXII of 1951, was of that rare breed which I have never fully understood – a good wicket-keeper who had no interest in batting whatever and was an automatic choice for no. 11.

FINANCE

The Hon. Treasurer assured us in December that the small loss shown in the accounts gave no cause for concern. The increase in printing costs reflects the new members list, and is offset by Julian Jenkinson’s generous donation; the matters of match fees and the cost of lunches, particularly as they affect the younger members, have received much consideration in recent years and a new formula has now been introduced which Michael Brooks is confident will stabilise the position.

RAMBLER DINNER

The next dinner will take place in October 1999 and details will be circulated in next year's mailing. The indications are that, following the departure of Giles Shepard, the Savoy's prices have suffered a very severe increase; a sub-committee is at present investigating alternatives.

COMMITTEE

Sir John Hogg has decided that the time has come to lay down his last office in the Ramblers and to retire as a Trustee. He was first elected to the committee in 1935; research is still going on, but it seems probable that his years of service to the Ramblers as Committee Member, Hon. Treasurer, President and Trustee come very close to those of Buns Cartwright. The Club is immensely grateful for all that he has done for us, and we look forward to continuing to see him from time to time.

As I hinted last year was likely to happen, Peter Lowndes has handed on the duties of Hon. Sec. to Rory Macleay, to whom we wish all possible success. During his 11 years in that office Peter has put in an enormous amount of devoted work on our behalf, and I am sure that all members will join me in thanking him for a job very well done. I am delighted to say that he has been elected to fill the vacancy in the ranks of the Trustees.

During its 135 year history the Club has elected no more than half a dozen Honorary Members. I am delighted to report that John Cloughton, who retired last year after ten years as Master in Charge, during which time his contribution to Eton cricket was, in the opinion of the Committee, outstanding, has accepted our invitation to join that number.

FLOREAT ETONA

Cedric Gunnery
President

January 1998.