

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 1999

In an average season which brought 11 wins against 9 losses there was an encouraging increase in the number of members who batted and bowled in 5 or more innings.

A new name headed the batting averages, James Redmayne (son of Richard, brother of Charlie), who also made the highest score of the year with 163*. We hope to see him there (or thereabouts; the Hon. Sec. will be trying to get back to his accustomed place) for many years to come. It is some time since 6 batsmen averaged over 50.

Andrew Hussey continuing his form from the Southern African tour came top of the bowling averages. Charlie Lightfoot in his debut season took most wickets.

CRICKETER CUP

In the 1st round we played Shrewsbury Saracens on Upper Club in conditions which were not really fit for cricket. The weather was heavily overcast and very cold all day, with drizzle much of the time, but the wicket was good. Shrewsbury lost their openers quickly during a hostile opening spell by Bruce, but then put on 226 for the third wicket, ending with 270 for 6. The Ramblers openers having fared little better than their Salopian counterparts, Chetwood (66) and Morgan (111) added a rapid 145, putting us ahead on run-rate just as it was becoming apparent that bad light would intervene before the scheduled 55 overs could be completed. The middle order kept going at the same rate and by the time play was finally called off at 8.12 p.m. with 5 overs remaining, the Ramblers were ahead on the Cricketer Cup equivalent of the Duckworth/Lewis system.

We played the Robins at Felsted in the 2nd round in slightly better weather. Burgess and Dixon may not be, on paper, the most formidable pair of opening bowlers the Ramblers have ever fielded but they bowled uncommonly well before lunch and set the pattern which kept Felsted below 3 runs per over. Lightfoot took 2 for 16 off his 12 overs, and the few Rambler supporters (most had gone to Lord's for the World Cup Final) would gladly have settled in advance for Felsted's total of 173 for 9. The Rambler innings started well with Dixon and Lightfoot, followed by St. George and Fulton, making useful contributions. At 124 for 2 it looked to be all over, but

an all-too-familiar Rambler collapse brought us to 158 for 7, from which perilous position Brooks & Burgess rescued us to victory in the last over.

In the 3rd round on another dull day, when drizzle was never far away, Old Alleynians put the Ramblers in to bat. Against accurate bowling Loudon and Lightfoot put on 50 for the first wicket. Fulton, MacLeay and Brooks all made useful runs but there was little acceleration until the last two overs, and the total of 193 for 6 gave no great cause for confidence. Good Rambler bowling particularly by Millar reduced Dulwich to 47 for 4 after 22 overs, but Hulston, their No. 3 was beginning to look ominously secure and he shared in partnerships of about 50 with each of the next three batsmen to bring the Old Alleynians victory in the final over.

After two years of reaching the last 8 Rory MacLeay, who has been reappointed Captain, is quietly confident of going a bit further in 2000, when we are drawn to play St. Edwards Martyrs at Oxford on 18th June. I do not believe that the Ramblers have ever had a match there, but I played there a lot in my university days, usually in the company of the (then) Times Cricket Correspondent, and it has a particular place in my affections as the ground where I received the only ball I ever faced in England when my score was in the 90's. It is a delightful ground, with a swimming pool behind the pavilion, and I hope that we shall get a better day than any of last year's three, and plenty of support.

LORD'S 1999

For the second time in three years - and only the second time in 164 years - rain prevented any play. The XI had won 10 matches (and tied one) under the outstanding captaincy of Alex Loudon who is already on Kent's books and who is, while these notes are being written, captaining the England under 19 team in Sri Lanka.

More than half the fixtures are now limited overs matches, and it had been agreed that the match at Lord's should join that number; 55 overs a side. I have mentioned this subject once or twice in recent years, but it seems that my generation has now lost the battle. Let us hope that the decision proves right.

Next summer there will be two tour matches at Lord's and other fixtures have had to be reshuffled; as a result the match will be on Thursday 25th May, which will hardly give the schools time to select their strongest sides with much confidence, but it was that or nothing. It is by far the earliest that the match will ever have taken place, but I hope that there will be plenty of Rambler support.

RAMBLER DINNER

From the unprecedented number of compliments which Peter Lowndes and I received afterwards it seems that most of the 140 members present thought that the 1999 Dinner was the best of recent years, and that the Inner Temple Hall was far better than the Savoy. We are most grateful to Peter for having arranged the dinner for the 7th time, and to the two recent Rambler Treasurers of the Inner Temple, Sir Christopher Staughton and Lord Lloyd of Berwick, for having made the venue possible.

Sir Mervyn Dunnington - Jefferson opened the batting with the same light touch that he used to display on the field and Matthew Fleming followed with some stimulating and worrying thoughts on the state of the English first-class game. (Many of the same thoughts were later reproduced by Michael Atherton in an article in a Sunday Paper)

Among many familiar faces it was good to see one or two from the past in particular my predecessor as Hon. Sec., Guy Pease, who had timed his visit from Australia to coincide with the Dinner.

Word reached me afterwards that the Inner Temple would welcome us back for two reasons; that the Ramblers did not smash the Hall up and that they spent a lot of money at the bar. So far as I know the only damage done was by the President who swept a glass to the floor late in the evening.

OBITUARY

Sir John Hogg (XI 30/31), distinguished in the City, the Green Jackets, and many other fields, was most devoted to Eton, serving as a Fellow for 20 years, as Chairman of the OEA for 12 and as a member of the Rambler Committee for no less than 62 years. To follow Buns Cartwright as President was thought to be rather like receiving a "hospital pass" on the Rugby field, and a number of possible names were considered. The then Hon. Treas. and Hon. Sec. were so convinced that John Hogg was the right choice that they could almost have been held to have "steamrolled" his appointment though the committee - having ensured that John himself would not be present at the meeting. As self-effacing as Buns had been extrovert, he quickly and quietly had us all working with him for the good of the Club. He became a friend of many match managers 50 years his junior (to get to know John was to become his friend) and took immense trouble to ensure that any problem was resolved as soon as it arose. His charm was unequalled, and his Presidency, sadly cut short by his awful illness, marked a very happy period in the history of the Ramblers.

Lord Charteris of Amisfield, a courtier par excellence, was a rather unlikely appointment as Provost, but became one of the most popular holders of that office and the first to act in the School Play. He was a friend and contemporary of John Hogg and joined the Ramblers shortly after becoming Provost.

Sir Alick Rankin (XI 1952/3) played all too little Rambler cricket, spending a few years in Canada after his short time at Oxford and getting more and more involved in the affairs of Scottish and Newcastle after his return. His death at far too young an age came as a great shock to those of us who had known him on and off the field long ago. Alick and I played a lot of cricket together in Egypt in 1954; many Ramblers were doing their National Service in the Canal Zone at that time and we managed to play a few Rambler matches strengthened by one or two distinguished older members such as Major Dwin Bramall and Alick's and my Commanding Officer Colonel Tommy Bulkeley.

FINANCE

As members will see, the Accounts show a loss for the year. On the proposal of the Hon. Treasurer, to whom as always our thanks are due for his quiet and expert work behind the scenes, the Committee took certain steps to correct this for the future. We also elected more members than usual, and I hope that we shall reverse the result next year.

COMMITTEE

Ralph Oliphant-Callum has played himself in well as the new Master in Charge and the names he put forward helped to swell the number of candidates we elected in December. I discovered at the dinner following the Committee Meeting that he had played against the Ramblers for the Old Brightonians, in the year that we had won the Cricketer Cup. Let us hope that the XIs he produces will lead to another such success in the near future.

Rory MacLeay is finding his feet as Hon. Sec. and seems to be enjoying the job, ably assisted by Piers Inkin. Our thanks to them both for all that they do on our behalf.

FLOREAT ETONA

Cedric Gunnery
President

January 2000.