

# ETON RAMBLERS

## NOTICE 2009

### 2009 SEASON

The results for the 2009 season are the best that the club has achieved for many years. We won over 50% of our matches (22 out of 41) and only lost 10. Results are, of course, not everything. Just as important is that we put out full sides for every match and do not let our opponents down by cancelling matches. 2009 was an excellent year in this respect as well. Only 2 matches did not take place, one was rained off, which, in itself, is fairly remarkable in such a wet summer, and the other, which was to have been played at Eton, had to be cancelled when Eton had a Swine Flu scare.

I have mentioned in this Notice, on more than one occasion, how disappointing it has been that we do not have more members turning out to play on a more regular basis. Yet again 2009 has shown a tremendous improvement with 24 players appearing in the 4 or more innings category and 14 bowling more than 25 overs. The hardest worker was Ted Innes Ker who played 9 innings and bowled 80 overs. 7 batsmen scored over 200 runs with Edmund Inkin topping the batting averages helped by some judicious “not outs” and Rob Innes was the highest run scorer. Our hard working Hon Sec was the leading wicket taker, although the 2008 captain of the XI, Archie Reynolds, headed the bowling averages.

Last year I pleaded with those members who have the benefit of touring with the club in the winter to repay the club by playing as much as possible during the summer. The response by those who went to South Africa and Namibia in early 2009 is most noticeable and I feel sure this contributed greatly to our successful season.

It is never easy to take over the reins at a club like ours and Fergus Boyd had only one year as Rory Macleay’s assistant before jumping in at the deep end. Whilst much of the ground work for our improved results was laid down on Rory’s “watch”, I believe that Fergus with his able new assistant, Andrew Carroll, deserves a great deal of credit.

### CRICKETER CUP

When I looked at the draw for 2009, I felt it was favourable to us even though we were drawn away for the first 2 rounds. While I was proved to be right, the manner of our victories in these first 2 rounds was not quite as planned.

Whitgift School has a fine cricket ground, but for our match the outfield had grass that

was perhaps more the length one might expect of the semi rough in the Open Championship. Their total of 232/4 was, therefore, a formidable score. We had bowled adequately, but without penetration. We were not helped by Ben Thompson being severely hampered by a stomach bug and not being able to complete his allocation of overs.

Our batting line up was strong on paper, but this did not prevent the innings falling into disarray. We lost wickets quickly and regularly and found ourselves 30/6 in no time. There seemed no way back, but Ed Bruce and Ben Thompson set about the task with a great deal of skill and common sense. Ben, now partially recovered, fell soon after completing his 50, but Ed found solid partners in Harry Chetwood and, particularly, Archie Reynolds. Whitgift eventually had to bring back their opening bowler who had done so much of the early damage, but this was of no concern to Ed who hit him a prodigious distance over the sight screen and out of the ground and then into the pavilion. Then he completed his century and won the match with yet another huge 6 over long on.

I have seen most of our memorable cricketer cup innings over many years and Ed's century compares with any of them and reminded me of Peter Morgan's wonderful effort against Shrewsbury some years ago.

The Old Merchant Taylors play their matches at their Old Boys Club ground rather than at the school. The ground had been hit the day before our match by the same storm that brought an early end to the Eton v Harrow at Lord's. As a consequence the pitch was not straight forward for batting and our bowlers made good use of it. The spinners got bounce and spin and were a handful. Archie Reynolds bowled an excellent spell and deserved his 6 wickets.

We were set a target of 147, which was never going to be straight forward and, as in the first round, we made a dreadful start, but only lost 5 quick wickets this time. Once again the lower order rallied round with Harry Chetwood giving his captain particularly good support and we inched our way to victory by 3 wickets.

We have played the Old Wellingtonians a number of times in the recent past and on each occasion it has been a close game. In their previous round they had chased over 300 and won by 9 wickets, which suggested that at least 3 of their top order were in good form. I was not present but I understand that we batted a great deal better than in the previous rounds, but, even so, our total of 249/7 was considered to be only about par. Our bowlers, in particular the spinners, held their nerve well, and although there were several occasions when our supporters were less than confident, we eventually triumphed by 3 runs.

The semi final was away at Repton. The day was miserably wet and, although several starts were made, the match was called off early in the afternoon when we were 120/1 with Simon Hawk and James Fulton both going well. The unfortunate aspect of this was that neither player would be available for the replay the following Sunday at Eton.

The replay was rather a strange game. We bowled well but probably should have

dismissed them for less than their eventual 201. Their attack commenced with a slow medium bowler at one end and a spinner at the other, followed by more spinners. I felt that our early order showed too much respect to what, from the boundary, looked a fairly innocuous attack. While I accept it is an easy game sitting in a deck chair, I think we again batted well below our capabilities and this time there was no lower order recovery to turn things round. We lost relatively easily by 66 runs.

We should congratulate all concerned, particularly our excellent captain, Hugo Loudon, for getting to the semi finals, but I am sure that I speak for all our supporters when I plead for a rather more convincing performance from the very talented top order. We are drawn to play the Bradfield Waifs at Eton on Sunday, June 13th in the first round in 2010. The Waifs are one of the best supported teams in the competition and I do hope that we can match their enthusiasm with a good turn out of our own.

## LORD'S

For the last five years Harrow has arrived at Lord's fairly firm favourites, but such was not the case this year.

Eton won the toss and batted. There were very solid contributions all the way down the order with Cox leading the way with a stylish 67. Hobson, Sangha and Fitzroy also played well with the latter hitting his first ball at Lord's for 6.

In many parts of the Home Counties, not least at Eton itself, the weather was wonderful all day, but not so at Lord's. After 40 overs Harrow were 157/5 when the whole ground became white after a hail storm and no further play was possible.

It seems strange that when the two schools agreed to play the match as a limited overs game, they failed to agree on a method of calculating a result in the event of weather interference. I understand that if the Duckworth/Lewis method had been in operation Eton would have been the winners. It certainly seemed to most people present that Harrow were unlikely to get the remaining 115 runs in 15 overs.

I can not omit a mention of John Rice at this stage. This was the 25th time that he has been with the Eton side at Lord's. There have been some bad times, but the vast majority have been good and some very talented players have passed through his hands. I suspect that John gets most pleasure when one or more of the less trumpeted members of the side performs above themselves and one of his major strengths is getting the best out of everyone. A small dinner was held at Eton to celebrate his 25 years and his 60th birthday, at which he was made an Honorary Member of the Ramblers.

Next year the match will be played on Saturday, June 26th. It is the 100th anniversary of Fowler's match and it is hoped that we will be able to celebrate this in some way. Details of any events will be circulated to members through the OEA database.

## FINANCES

The Club's accounts do not vary by a great deal year on year. However a paradox is that the better we do in the Cricketer Cup, the worse the finances are at the year end. In reality we need to strike a balance. Our run to the semi finals this year is the main contributor to the loss of £584. I hasten to add that I would very much like to have this problem every year.

We also benefit from legacies from time to time, but we should not rely on these occurring regularly.

I mentioned in the Notice in 2007 that our Life Membership fee of £150 was low in comparison to equivalent clubs and seemed very good value. This year the Committee decided to raise this to £200, which should bring at least an extra £1,000 per annum.

Our Treasurer, Rob Bruce, and Piers Inkin, who oversees the investments, work extremely hard on our behalf and we owe them a considerable debt of gratitude.

## RAMBLER HISTORY

I have run out of reasons for apologising for the delays attached to this project. Suffice to say that Christopher Horne assures me that he has a new base from which to work and that he has no intention of letting me be in this position again next year. He will get all the assistance that he needs from Cedric Gunnery, John Farmer and myself.

## ETON LECTURE

It is hoped that this will become an annual event and the first lecture was delivered in the Long Room at Lord's by Johnny Barclay. This was a splendid evening with Johnny at his best. He pointed out in his usual modest way that he is hardly the first Rambler to be President of MCC, but how nice it is to have another one in charge, and let us very much hope that he will not be the last.

## OBITUARIES

There is nowhere else to start other than with Col David Farquharson who reached his 100th birthday in March 2008 and died in 2009. There must be very few Ramblers alive who, as a first job, worked for the Hudson Bay Company, particularly working on ice breakers off the Labrador coast. He was not in the XI, but was a keen cricketer. He spent over half his life in America.

Lord Cornwallis died in early March. Again he was not in the XI, but played cricket for many years in and around his home county of Kent. He is succeeded by Jeremy that indefatigable Rambler of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Sir Alastair Aird GCVO was in the powerful XIs of 1948 and 1949. He joined the Royal Household on retiring from the army in 1964 and was best known as being Private Secretary to the Queen Mother during the last decade of her life, following in the footsteps of another Rambler, Sir Martin Gilliat.

Col VG Wallace was in the 1939 XI joined the Welsh Guards early in the war and retired as a Colonel, returning to live in his native Gloucestershire.

BJB Rudd was not as good a cricketer as his brother Robin, but no slouch either. He was in the 1944 XI and returned to Rhodesia, before moving to South Africa.

Noel Fisher was considerably better known on the golf course than cricket field, being a prominent member of the Halford Hewitt side for many years. He was, nonetheless, an enthusiastic Rambler supporter and hardly ever missed our dinners. His match management of our game against the Wine Trade was always of a most generous nature.

Robin Newman just failed to get the redoubtable 1955 side captained by Clem Gibson. He was a keen cricket supporter and always interested in the Ramblers and their fortunes. The 1955 side did include Duncan Pearson who also played in 1956 as well as in 1958. This is an unusual case and I understand that he was an off spinner who "lost it" in 1957 when Robert Fellowes took over the main spinner's role.

Col Oliver Lindsay CBE left in 1956 and had a distinguished career in the Grenadier Guards. He was awarded a CBE for services to Historical Studies.

*Floreat Etona*

PG Lowndes  
President