

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 2006

You will notice the new format of this annual report that has been agreed between our excellent secretary and our printers. I am not one for change for changes sake, but I hope that you will agree that this is a welcome improvement.

2006 SEASON

The 2006 season should be considered rather satisfying as our wins to losses ratio was better than for some years and there was an increase in the number of players playing 5 or more matches. It would also seem that we have a fresh intake of younger players, who are regularly turning in useful performances. Nobody epitomised this better than Ted Innes-Ker who made his first Rambler hundred, while also heading the batting averages, bowling more than 100 overs and taking 20 wickets. I can sense his father's pride and I trust it did not prevent him from catching the odd salmon on the Tweed.

There were 45 matches on our Fixture Card. Two of these were cancelled by our opponents, and 2 were cancelled by us. I mentioned last year that there is a move to play more afternoon, limited overs matches. This year 6 of our matches (excluding the Cricketer Cup) fell into this category. Overall we won 18, lost 12 and 9 were drawn. In addition to the 4 cancelled matches, 2 fell victim to the weather.

I have already mentioned Ted Innes-Ker's performance and, in addition, James Redmayne and Charlie Matheson were very consistent with the bat; Rob Wallace performed nobly as an all rounder; while Lochie Rankin and Sam Collins were usually amongst the wickets.

CRICKETER CUP

We had an excellent run to the semi final, where we lost to Malvern with perhaps the strongest side that we have ever put into the field.

The first round sometimes can be something of a lottery for all schools, because of the unavailability of players, and we did not relish a trip to Oundle, who, for many years, have been one of the competitions top performers. However, we do now have a nucleus of high calibre reserve players, who seldom let the Club down.

We lost the toss and batted first. All the top order contributed 20s and 30s and the final total of 183 was felt to be reasonable on a slow pitch and large outfield. We bowled well with Hugo Loudon and Fergus Boyd being the main wicket takers, and fielded superbly, but it was a team effort that enabled us to win by 13 runs.

The second round saw us play Cheltenham at Eton for the second year running, having never played them before in the previous 38 years of the competition. We won the toss and batted and again the top order was consistent with James Redmayne (82) and Hugo Loudon (53) leading the way. Our total of 262 was felt by those watching to be easily

sufficient, particularly as Cheltenham were one short due to the non-appearance of Viv Richards' son. In addition they lost a further player with a horrid injury while fielding. However those of their players who were present and fit nearly caused a shock and, after an opening stand of 117, it took a very controlled spell from Hugo Loudon to regain control. Eventually we won by 5 runs.

We then moved on to Bradfield where we have been regular visitors in recent years. We batted first again and as at Oundle were faced with a slow, low pitch and a huge outfield. As in the previous two rounds the early batting was very sound with Ed Bruce (42) and Jim Fulton (61) playing exceptionally well. The large band of Waifs supporters felt that our total of 219 was about par. What they had not bargained for was one of the best all round Rambler performances in the field that I can remember. The opening bowlers were tight and took a wicket apiece and then the spinners, Loudon (2 for 27) and Chetwood (4 for 23) dismantled the middle order. They were aided by some superb catching at slip by James Redmayne, the one to dismiss the ex Hampshire player, Will Kendall, being particularly memorable. The Waifs managed only 117 and we gained our revenge for 3 recent defeats at their hands.

The semi final was against Old Malvernians at Eton. We won our third toss in a row and as we had been successful batting first all season, it was not unreasonable to do so again. With hindsight Hugo would admit that the pitch conditions were sufficiently difficult to have considered putting Malvern in, as water had got under the covers during an overnight thunderstorm. Nonetheless, we had a very strong batting side, but, unlike the earlier rounds, the first 4 batsmen out all made 0. These were Tom Simpson, Jim Fulton, Alex Loudon and Hugo Loudon. I don't mention their names to embarrass them, but to illustrate the potential strength of the batting. A further disaster followed with James Redmayne also being out for a low score. Simon Hawk and Ed Bruce then put on 70 and sensible batting from the very competent lower order enabled us to make 173, which seemed a long way off at 33 for 6. The mainstay had been Simon Hawk whose 87 was an innings of very high calibre and he deserved 100.

The damp patches on the pitch had partially dried out by the time Malvern came to bat, but, even so, we made 2 early breakthroughs with Sam Collins bowling his best spell in the competition. Our spinners once again bowled splendidly with Harry Chetwood (4 for 46) to the fore. We took wickets steadily and never let the scoring rate rise too high, but, ultimately, our poor start was too big a handicap and we lost by 3 wickets with 2 overs left. A valiant effort.

Throughout the competition our two main spinners were wonderfully consistent. Collectively they bowled 75 overs taking 18 for 251. Hugo Loudon's almost unbelievable figures were 38-10-93-11. I wonder how many bowlers in the 39 years of the competition have had a better return in one season.

The first round in 2007 is against the Sherborne Pilgrims at Sherborne on Sunday, June 10th.

LORD'S

I have to report a second consecutive loss, but the overall Eton performance was very creditable and a vast improvement on the previous year. There is no doubt that the Harrow side was very strong and they arrived at Lord's with their reputation very high indeed. However Eton matched them for much of the day which included a rather unusual run out of Northeast, who, after taking a run, went to retrieve his bat, but his partner thought he was coming back for a second run and set off himself. In my view, perfectly reasonably, the fielders felt a second run was being taken and completed the run out.

A score of 236 was reasonable, but not over daunting. Yet another Redmayne (Tom) held the Eton innings together and, whilst we never quite looked like winning, we made a good effort to get the target, eventually losing by 23 runs.

The date for the 2007 fixture is Saturday 23rd June.

For those interested, Jocelyn Galsworthy has just produced a limited edition print of her oil painting of the 200th Anniversary, Eton v Harrow at Lord's 2005. For further details, please contact the artist direct by e-mail: theartist@jocelyngalsworthy.co.uk

CLUB HISTORY

There have been some unavoidable delays in the completion of our History, but work has now been resumed. As soon as more information is available members will be informed.

FINANCES

The Club made a loss of £2,894 in the year, but our hard working Treasurer is confident that we do not need to take remedial action at this stage. An unusually large number of members elected have been tardy in the payment of their dues and it is intended to tighten up on this aspect. Our Life Subscription is set at £150, which compares favourably with similar clubs, but it is hoped that we can keep it at this level for the time being.

OBITUARIES

Sir Edward Ford was a familiar figure in many circles. He was XIIth man at Lord's in 1929, but it was as a Courtier that he became best known. He remained an upright figure to the last and it was a remarkable feat to read the lesson at the memorial service of Lord Charteris at the age of 90.

Maj Gen Sir John Acland left Eton in 1946 and was commissioned into the Scots Guards in 1948. He retired back to Devon and rather interestingly described one of his hobbies in Who's Who as "destroying vermin".

A L Lutyens and Simon Sainsbury were both members of the '47 and '48 XIs. The former spent much of his life in East Africa, later retiring to Mull; the latter was a great patron of the Arts, and in cricketing terms was best known for making a century at Lord's as night watchman.

Lord Strathcarron would have been well known to Field readers as the motoring correspondent and he was a motor bike fanatic. Ronnie Capel Cure was a useful cricketer who made the XXII and, perhaps, was unlucky to be competing for a place in the strong '54 XI.

I am not aware that Sir John Ruggles-Brise was an active cricketer, but he was Lord Lieutenant of Essex. At the time he was in good company, there being 9 other Rambler Lord Lieutenants.

Sir Kerry St Johnston who left in 1949 was a great deal better known in the shipping world than on the cricket field.

Floreat Etona

PG Lowndes
President