

# ETON RAMBLERS

## NOTICE 1986

The most noteworthy event in the Rambler Calendar for 1986 was the decision of our Hon. Sec., Cedric Gunnery, to retire. He has served a noble stint of 21 years, and has carried out his duties with energy and humour, and occasionally with that touch of acerbity which the Hon. Sec. is called upon to show. As a player he must have reached his Best Before Date, and I know that one factor contributing to his decision was the feeling that the Hon. Sec. should be on the field more than he now cares to be. We owe him a debt of gratitude.

We are, however, not going to lose the benefit of his experience and counsel. Owing to the untimely death of David Macindoe, there is a vacancy for Trustee of the Club, and he was elected to fill that gap at our last Committee meeting.

He is to be succeeded by Peter Lowndes, our Hon. Assistant Secretary. We welcome him, and may he prove as effective off the field as he has been on it.

### RESULTS AND STATISTICS

	Matches	Won	Drawn	Tied	Lost	Abandoned or not played
1986 . . .	66	13	14	—	15	24
1985 . . .	65	15	14	—	17	19
1984 . . .	65	11	24	1	18	11

This year produced yet another Fisherman's Summer, but in spite of that the Ramblers had a reasonable year. To my mind the only disturbing feature about it was the number of matches Abandoned or Not Played: the weather was obviously responsible for a number of them, but, for the first time that I can recall, the matches cancelled because of our inability to raise a side got into double figures (including Border Week and the Devon Week-end). This is something that we must watch.

Bruce Powell headed the batting averages, with Victor Cazalet and Peter Lowndes second and third. As seems to be usual Peter Lowndes scored most runs (602), with William Leschallas (287) a longish way behind. A pleasant feature of the batting was the success of Rory Macleay – still at Eton and the 1987 Captain of the XI. He finished fifth in the averages and collected 207 runs. May we see some more of him this Summer.

Geoffrey Palmer did his best to "do a John Farmer" – to score a century for the Club after reaching the age of fifty – but he got his timing just wrong: he made 87 N.O. for the Ramblers on the last day of the Yorkshire Week (actat. 50 years, 1 week) and followed that with 100 N.O. for the XL Club three days later. Quite a change from Lords 1954 where, batting No. 11, he made 0 and 0 N.O.

Our bowlers produced some interesting statistics. For the first time that I can remember no Rambler Bowler managed to secure 20 wickets, while the highest number of overs bowled by an individual was 104 overs by Anthony de Grey – about half his normal stint. Harry Rawlinson headed the averages with 14 wickets at 11.9 runs a piece – but his figures were more than matched by Hugo Johnsen (bowled in less than 5 innings) with 16 wickets at 11.3 runs each.

There were four centuries made for the Club, seven (including two made by Harrovians in each of the Harrow Wanderers fixtures) against. There were no Spectacles or Hat Tricks for or against.

In 1987 we have 62 matches arranged (including the first round of the Cricketers Cup). This is slightly fewer than 1986. We have cancelled six matches; we only play Horsham and Hampstead every other year and 1987 is not the year: we have only one match against an overseas team. Against that we have four new fixtures against Winterbourne Bassett, Tusmore Park, Castle Ashby and the Milton Hornets respectively.

## CRICKETER CUP

In the last ten years we have on three occasions met Shrewsbury in this competition, and we have yet to defeat them. The third occasion was in the second round in 1986. We batted first on a slowish wicket on Upper Club and were all out for 142 without completing our full complement of overs. Peter Lowndes (39) and Charlie Redmayne 39 (including 2 sixes) were the only scorers of note. This total was just not big enough to put pressure on Shrewsbury, and they won comfortably by 5 wickets with plenty of overs in hand, with Robin Topham (M.I.C. Upper Sixpenny) ending on 34 N.O. Charlie Redmayne caught two excellent catches.

In the first round we had beaten the Old Amplefordians. It was the right result but, owing to the weather, not a very exhilarating game of cricket. We batted first and made 206 for 8 (J. Rawlinson 54, P. Lowndes 45). Our opponents had reached 131 for 6 when the heavens opened: we won on run rate. I like to think that the result would have been the same had the match been completed.

Philip Remnant has been appointed Captain for 1987. Our first encounter is on Sunday, May 31st against Harrow Wanderers at Harrow. Support from the boundary will be more than usually welcome.

## ETON v. HARROW

Lord's of 1986 was a mixture of boredom and exhilaration. Boredom in that play did not start until 3.00 pm and that only two hours of play (including a short break for rain) were possible; exhilaration because during the 30 overs played Eton put Harrow in and out for the lowest completed innings score ever recorded – 37. The drizzle then started again and that was that. Eton bowled accurately and tightly, caught well and fielded excellently and thoroughly deserved their success. One can only assume that Lord's nerves and the change back, after the only fine fortnight of the Summer, to a slow wicket played a part in Harrow's extraordinary collapse. The four Eton bowlers, York, Pettifer, Norman and Pym all bowled excellently in their different styles, and Teeger, the wicket keeper, was exceptionally good.

The 1987 fixture takes place on July 4th. There will as usual, be a Rambler Box to which all members, plus wife or girlfriend, son or grandson will be welcome. May I remind those who come that their financial contribution should include not only the drink factor, but also some good element for the rest of the box.

## FINANCE

Last year I hinted that it might be necessary to put up the match fee in 1987. However, we have managed to avoid this for one more year at least.

Income showed a surplus of £415 over expenditure: more members were elected than in 1985 and a swap of investments showed a good capital profit. Match fees were well down owing to the large number of matches washed out and cancelled. However, some items of Expenditure were down on a year ago: fewer matches meant fewer balls used, but more important, and perhaps a lasting benefit, we have found a new printer, who, on one year's experience, seems perfectly adequate and is a great deal cheaper than his predecessor.

The Committee decided, therefore, that we could leave match fees where it is without any sense of imprudence.

## OBITUARY

Our obituary list for 1986 – of 39 names – is exceptionally long and more than usually distinguished.

The person who must deserve first mention for services to The Ramblers and to Eton is D. H. Macindoc M.C., – the apparently indestructible David, who died suddenly last March. If anyone could fit Juvenal's ideal of "mens sana in corpore sano", it was David. He was an exceptional athlete – 2 years in the XI, 4 years an Oxford Blue ending as Captain, played for The Gentleman, nearly an Oxford Rugger Blue, an outstanding Centre Half at Soccer, a supreme Short in the Field Game. He was as good off the field as on, with an

an excellent common sense brain, and capable of using his pen or his tongue with equal facility. He was an amusing conversationalist and, on demand, an outstanding Dinner Speaker; writing, whether it be an obituary or an annual record of affairs at Eton for the OEA Report, with skill and charm.

The last of seven generations of his family to serve The College, he was born in Eton, and apart from University and War Service spent all his life there; he knew more about the place than anyone I have ever met. He was, I know, a much loved housemaster, and proved an ideal choice for Lower Master and Vice-Provost. His counsel was much sought and he was a marvellous friend: he could be full of sympathy, if he thought it deserved. His advice was always sound – though sometimes unusual, and occasionally – strained through his pipe – difficult to hear. In his company you could be certain of warmth and humour; he was just the man to go on living actively and usefully for another ten or fifteen years.

Next on our distinguished list comes R. Aird, M.C. – Ronnie. In the XI three years (1919–21), he got Blues for Cricket and Racquets at Cambridge, and played for Hampshire infrequently but effectively up till World War II. His life was at Lord's: he was appointed Assistant Secretary in 1926, and apart from the War years remained there until 1962, when he retired after ten years as Secretary. He was later President of M.C.C. If cricket was his life, then National Hunt racing was his relaxation.

I think people remember with affection those who have been kind to them in their early Rambler matches: Ronnie was very kind to me – and no doubt to others – and I remained his devoted admirer until his death. His charm and courtesy, combined with a good brain, lots of principle and a splendid sense of humour made him a legendary Secretary of the M.C.C. He seemed to have discovered the secret of Eternal Youth, physically and mentally, and it was only in the last couple of years before his death that he began to fade. He was a competent versifier, and I believe that many of his "Thank you" letters for dinner parties and the like, were in verse. Unknown to many he was also an accomplished Magician.

I remember him telling me a delightful story about an M.C.C. side he took to Denmark. He could not make out why, when he entered a room, everybody started to laugh. It was only half way through the week that he discovered he was a complete look-alike to a Danish national hero – Victor Borge.

Rev. J. C. V. Wilkes – "Piggy" to my generation (for reasons of appearance rather than habits or manners, I hasten to add) will be well remembered by older-Ramblers. He was a master from 1925–37, spending the last seven years as Master-in-College, before moving on to become Warden of Radley, where he stayed until 1954. However, he had clearly left his heart in Eton, because in 1940 he married Joan Alington, daughter of C.A.A. He was not ordained until 1945 and, after Radley spent his remaining active years as Vicar of various parishes. No mean golfer he played for Oxford 1924–5 (only a half-blue in those days).

Sir Geoffrey Agnew – though not a notable cricketer, was a good servant of Eton. He spent his working life (and ended as Chairman) in his family firm of Thos Agnew & Sons Ltd, the Fine Art Dealers. Unfit for Active Service he spent the War years as a History Master at Eton. Later he gave his time without stint as Adviser and Consultant on the College pictures. For these much valued services he was made an Honorary Fellow of The College in 1976.

Lt. Col. G. S. Incedon-Webber – "Sam" – was in the XI (1922–23) as an all rounder; he was also a good Racquets player and subsequently no mean performer in the Real Tennis Court. For a number of years he ran the Leamington week-end, where the massed Pugh family appeared on the other side. Sam was basically a very kindly man, but had a mercurial temper, and could easily be upset by things that didn't really matter. He had the distinction of being uncle to James Leonard.

Major Cyril Wilson (XI of 1916 and 1917) was an unorthodox but successful bat in the way that Racquets players often are and also a leg spinner who could be effective on an "on" day. A regular soldier between the wars he played a lot of cricket.

cricket. He was for many years a popular and hard working Hon. Sec. of the Greenjackets C.C. He started going deaf quite early in his life, but in spite of that managed somehow to maintain contact with his fellow humans.

Space forbids more than a passing mention of only some of the other names on our list. Sir James Pitman K.B.E. was a great educationalist, and must in his day, have rivalled David Macindoc as an athlete. He won the Public Schools middle weight boxing, later played Rugby, ran and skied for Oxford. Major H. St. L. Grenfell, M.C. lost both legs in the War, but in spite of that disability led a very active business life as "King" of Northern Rhodesia in the days of the Charter Company. R. A. McNeile, M.B.E., son of A. M. McN, was Managing Director of Guinness – in its more peaceful days. Capt. The Hon. J. Ashley-Cooper was almost certainly the best salmon-fisher of his generation and, I am told by those who know, the most delightful man to fish with. Sir Anthony Rawlinson, K.C.B. was a distinguished Civil Servant, a dedicated mountaineer and father of John and Harry. T. R. C. Blofeld C.B.E. was for many years Chairman of the Country Gentlemans Association and father of Henry – one of our Broadcasting Ramblers. Lord Aldeham, the fast bowler in the XI of 1939 was subsequently Director of his family firm of Antony Gibbs. Finally W. P. B. Gunnery – "Will" – who has died distressingly young; the brother of Cedric, he and his wife Verity, were enthusiastic members of the Rambler Catering Corporation, which deals so marvellously with lunches and teas at Eton based Cricketer Cup matches.

### *RAMBLER DINNER*

This happy function took place on October 21st last. The numbers attending (154) were a little down on 1982 (182) but, to use the traditional phrase, I think a good time was had by all. Our two speakers, The Headmaster and Robin Leigh-Pemberton did us proud. Our thanks are due to Peter Lowndes and Simon Leschallas for organising it, and to the Savoy for their food and service.

### *SUNDRY*

1. Congratulations to Field Marshall Sir Edwin Bramall (Life Peer) and Robin Leigh-Pemberton (Privy Councillor) on their New Years Honours.

*FLOREAT ETONA*

January 1987

J. N. HOGG, *President*