

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 1995

RESULTS

I see no point in trying to disguise the fact that the 1995 results were the worst for at least 60 years, with only 5 wins, against 14 losses, in 45 matches. No easy explanation comes to mind, so let us hope that it turns out just to have been a freak year.

Individual performances did not suffer, and the numbers who batted and bowled in five or more innings increased considerably over 1994. Rory Macleay, who had been abroad the year before, reclaimed his accustomed place as the leading run-scorer and top of the batting averages, followed by Guy Dunning and Tom Fleming, who was also the leading wicket-taker. Tom Prest headed the bowling averages for the second year in succession, well ahead of his nearest rivals, Charlie Magnay and Rupert Gouriet. Ollie Lane, aided by six victims at Hurstpierpoint, was unchallenged at the top of the catching list .

CRICKETER CUP

One day we shall prosper again in this competition, but this year, for the third time running, we failed to survive the first round. It was a miserably cold and cloudy day at Radley, and the outfield was so slow, after rain the previous day which had washed out all cricket, that boundaries were at a premium throughout. But there was nothing wrong with the wicket and the Ramblers, having won the toss, reached 130/2 at lunch, with valuable contributions from Macleay, Jenkins and Brooks.

Unfortunately the middle order did not capitalise on the good start and, despite a useful 25 from Redmayne, we were all out, in the 53rd over, for 199 .

Radley paced their innings well, never got behind the clock and always looked as though they would get there; there was a brief alarm when, with 20 needed, Dean took three wickets in one over, but Radley did not let panic set in and won by four wickets with two overs to spare. One good sign for the future was the bowling of Piers Millar, playing in the competition for the first time.

Among the usual Rambler supporters on a bitterly cold day was a welcome newcomer, John Lake, XIIth man of Robin Rudd's 1946 Eleven.

Michael Brooks has been reappointed Captain for 1996, with Rory Macleay as Vice-captain: we have been drawn at home to the Charterhouse Friars on Sunday 2nd June, and supporters will be most welcome; this is the same first-round draw as in 1992, the year we won the competition: let us hope that it proves a good omen.

SOUTH AFRICA TOUR

Members will find an account of the tour, which sounds, like its predecessors, to have been an outstanding success, with this mailing. Great credit must go to Bruce Powell, William Russell, Michael Brooks and Rory Macleay, the organising committee.

There had been another tour to South Africa, during the three months before the Ramblers' arrival, which had been noticeably less successful. Many critical comments were made, by no means all of them justified, of management, captaincy and motivation. But I did not read one adverse report about the performance of the tour's Administrative Manager, John Barclay.

LORD'S 1995

Harrow having won the toss and put Eton in, the first three quarters of the match became an almost exact mirror-image of 1994. Eton lost three wickets for 55 before an excellent stand of 110 between Dixon and Lea restored respectability; but just when half an hour's acceleration might have brought a declaration which Harrow would not have welcomed, instead 3 wickets went down for 8 runs and the chance was lost. Harrow finally bowled Eton out for 219, Leathes having the remarkable figures of 6 for 19 in 16 overs, leaving themselves 45 overs to score the runs: last year Eton had had 46 overs, and very nearly scored the 237 they needed.

The Eton bowling was too steady for Harrow ever to mount a serious attack on the total, and indeed there was a time, with Harrow 100 for 5, when victory looked possible; but it was not to be, and they ended at 176 for 7.

The Rambler attendance in Q Stand was significantly better than in recent years, despite the groundstaff's attempts to direct people to the wrong floor. The same arrangements have been made for 1996, when the date is Tuesday 25th June.

James Fulton only just missed selection for the England Schools XI; further down the School the younger brothers of two of the XI gave notice of greater deeds to come: James Bruce played for the England under 15 side, while Alex Loudon captained the England under 14 side: it would be splendid if he went on to captain the under 15 side in the 1996 World Cup.

RAMBLER ADDRESS LIST

Until 20 years ago this list was printed, in the form of a small booklet, every fourth year, with three supplements in between. Many Ramblers found it extremely useful as a telephone directory, more easily handled than Who's Who. At about that time printing costs rose sharply, and the Committee reluctantly accepted the then Hon. Treasurer's view that the Club could no longer afford it. From this decision was born the list of Playing Members which has, since then, been sent annually to Match Managers.

As well as giving the addresses and telephone numbers of all members, the booklet contained the Rules of the Club, the names of all Eton XIs since 1862, an obituary list since the last publication and details of that year's Committee. I still keep the 1976 list in my desk, and it may be of interest to some members to be reminded that Buns Cartwright was President then, with Dick Twining and John Hogg as his co-trustees; Brian Stevens and I were respectively Hon. Treas. and Hon. Sec. and the Committee was completed by Denzil How, Bruce Powell, Jeremy Russell, Tom Heywood Lonsdale, Charles Impey and Andrew Martin Smith.

Two or three times since then the production of a new list has been considered, but the cost has always overridden the advantages.

I am delighted to report that, thanks to the considerable generosity of one of those alluded to above, Julian Jenkinson, it is hoped to reprint the list later this year. You will find enclosed with this mailing a change of address slip: may I sincerely exhort all members to complete and return it promptly?

OBITUARY

Lord Home of the Hirsel KT (XI 1921/2). As the Provost said in his excellent address to a packed congregation in Westminster Abbey, few men changed their names so often during one lifetime, but as Sir Alec he became known, and as Sir Alec he was universally respected and loved. This is not the place to compete with the dozens of splendid obituaries which have appeared all round the world. Let it just be said that not every club

can boast a first-class cricketer who became Prime Minister; not every man in public life found the time to start, and run, a cricket week for that club; and not every Foreign Secretary would have been willing to shuffle the affairs of state so that he could honour his promise to speak at a Rambler Dinner. The country is very lucky to have had Sir Alec at the centre of its affairs, and the Ramblers are very proud to have had him as a member.

From 1957 until 1976 the two-day match against the Gentlemen of Herefordshire, played on Hereford Racecourse, was one of the most enjoyable on the Rambler fixture card. That this was so was due in great measure to their Secretary, Peter Clay. Peter had been President of Pop (two years after Sir Alec) and played for Strawberry. Although he never aspired to the cricketing skills of his brother JC (Captain of Glamorgan but not a Rambler) his enthusiasm for the game never diminished. He arranged suitable billets for the Ramblers and made sure that there was a party on the Tuesday night, more often than not at his house at Brockhampton – when the final pre-prandial, known as Brew Three, became legendary.

The traffic in Hereford, particularly on market day, could be a nightmare, but Peter devised a system which ensured that the correct hours of play were observed: when the first ball was bowled he turned the hands of the pavilion clock to 11.30, and should the luncheon interval over-run its appointed time, play would recommence on the dot of 2.10. Although it is a simple and very effective method I have never heard of its adoption elsewhere; perhaps the key lies with Peter's excellent and long suffering housekeeper Laura, who never became flustered if the guests arrived an hour or more late for the splendid dinner she always prepared.

Peter Lowndes and I were the only two match managers during that period, and it was a great sadness to both of us that Peter Clay's memorial service was arranged, deep in Herefordshire, on the day of the IZ Dinner. David Gibson-Watt, who had often played in the match, represented the Ramblers.

David Nickerson's time at Eton was foreshortened by health problems, and his name appears in this column at far too young an age. His son William's time in the XI provided his proud father with a great deal of pleasure and perhaps a nostalgic moment of wondering what, in other circumstances, might have been. David took the field for the Ramblers all too seldom, but often enough to show that he was no mean batsman, particularly during the years of the match against the Free Foresters at Hoveton, where, as part of the home team, he was also a very generous host. To a number of young Ramblers this was the first experience of a two-day match where both the cricket and the entertainment were of a high standard. There was no better tutor than David on how best to combine the two.

FINANCE

The Hon. Treasurer's confidence which I reported a year ago proved entirely justified, and members will notice that last year's small deficit has been turned into a decent surplus. Michael Brooks has quickly taken to the job, from which he took a well-earned rest to captain the recent Rambler tour of South Africa, and has already shown himself to be a worthy heir to his distinguished predecessors in that largely unsung but most important office.

The number of new members elected each year is the biggest single factor in the Club's revenue, and members are asked to keep an eye open for suitable candidates. The more expert cricketers are usually picked up by the system when they leave Eton, but there have always been others whose prowess and interest in cricket have increased after they have

left – many of whom have become valuable and enthusiastic Ramblers – and these may be lost to the Club unless their friends tell us about them.

CLUB COLOURS

As playing members will know, we have, for a year or two, been offering Rambler sweaters for sale at prices well below those available from other sources. The Hon. Sec. has now, with the help of my opposite number in the OE Tennis & Racquets Club, Richard Greenwood, done a deal with a manufacturer of Rambler ties. Details are enclosed in this mailing, and I commend them to members at a price substantially below anything likely to be found elsewhere.

The possibility is being explored of adding Rambler blazers to this list; the problems are the cost of an initial supply, some £4,000, and the doubt about how many younger members would want them. Details will be found in the same enclosure.

While on the subject of Rambler colours, if any member whose playing days are over is wondering what to do with his old blazer, sweaters or cap, there is always a demand for them from new members, even if they are not in close-to-new condition, and the Hon. Sec. will be pleased to hear.

I was talking the other day to Rosie Lomax, who used to train for Buns Cartwright; she had recently been having a clear-out, and had found Buns's old racing colours, which evidently bear a striking resemblance to the Rambler colours. If any member might have an interest in them would he please let me know as Rosie would be glad to dispose of them.

UMPIRES

Advancing years have persuaded AED Smith that the time has come when he must give up the umpiring service which he has provided for the Ramblers and many other clubs. He took this on in 1980, and we are most grateful for the efficient service which he provided. Brian Wilson, who has for some years been involved with providing umpires for the School and IZ, often standing himself, has kindly agreed to look after the Ramblers' requirements also: we bid him a warm welcome.

The Hon. Sec., to whom as always our thanks are due for the amount of time he so ably devotes to the Club's affairs, to the great benefit of us all, has asked me to apologise to members for the unusually large amount of paper we are circulating this year; not every member will be interested in it all – although I do hope that every member will complete and return the slip for the address book – but I hope that most members will find most of it to be of some interest.

FLOREAT ETONA

Cedric Gunnery
President

January 1996.