

ETON RAMBLERS

NOTICE 2005

2005 SEASON

2005 will be remembered for England winning the Ashes, but, sadly, there was nothing so momentous about the Rambler season. There were 40 fixtures on the card and two of these were lost to rain. We failed to raise a side on three occasions and our opponents failed to do so for two other matches. The matches that were played resulted in 10 wins, 7 draws and 16 losses.

The majority of our matches are traditional declaration matches, but there is a growing tendency towards limited overs and, indeed, it would be no surprise if a number of our matches became 2.00 pm starts and 40 overs a side. This will sadden many of us, but, rather than let the fixture list dwindle.

The man of the season was undoubtedly Charlie Huntington. No Rambler has previously topped both the batting and bowling averages in the same season. In days gone by, when there were many more matches and individuals turned out on many more occasions, this, perhaps, was less likely. Nonetheless, it is a remarkable performance, as, not only did he top the averages, but also he made the most runs and took the most wickets.

It is sad that there is only a small nucleus of players who turn out on a regular basis, but, on the positive side, those few regulars seem to be getting younger, or is it me getting older?

CRICKETER CUP

We tripped up again in the second round at Bradfield after an exciting win against the Old Cheltonians in the first round.

The Old Cheltonians have a poor record in the competition, but were a decent side on paper with two ex Gloucestershire players in their ranks. We did not bat very convincingly, but with the Captain, Hugo Loudon, setting a good example with 71, we set a target of 214.

The home supporters were dubious as to whether this was enough and even more dubious after the Old Cheltonians made a very good start. However, either side of tea, a combination of events contrived to turn the match our way. Michael Cawdron was closing on what was to be the first ever century in the competition for the Old Cheltonians and became cautious. In addition it was clear that they were unused to being in a winning position, but most important of all Harry Chetwood and Hugo Loudon bowled extremely well in tandem, slowed the scoring rate to a crawl and wickets began to fall at regular intervals. A win by 9 runs was a little flattering, but we had fought hard every time we looked to be in trouble.

The second round at Bradfield was notable for a number of things — not least, it was the first time that we had played a game with only one break. Lunch was taken between the innings as is done at first class level. This is likely to be the new format and reports from the first round match at Tonbridge suggest that this is probably the correct decision. Tonbridge played 5 spinners and no medium pacers. At lunch they had bowled 47 of their 50 overs and came out to field after lunch for just 3 overs.

Our performance in the field was excellent, but sadly Rory MacLeay sustained a horrid cut on his hand and had to go to hospital. We had no 12th man on the ground and the President was prevailed upon to fill the vacancy. It did not take the Waifs too long to work out that now there was a relatively comfortable 2 to long on, when, before, it was just a single. Nonetheless to restrict a powerful batting side to 200 for 8 was a fine effort with Harry Chetwood and Simon Hawk being the pick of the bowlers.

The pitch was not a terribly good one for batting and we were never moving fluently. I felt we went for too many big shots when, on the very large outfield, pushing 2s and 3s may have been more productive. In addition we missed Rory MacLeay's steady influence in the middle order. Despite these factors we needed only 14 from the last 3 overs with 5 wickets in hand. This came down to 3 runs off the last ball, which was reverse swept to third man and a run out occurred on the third run.

Overall we felt rather hard done by, but, as the Waifs went on to defeat the Charterhouse Friars in the final, perhaps we should take some encouragement from the game. The real lesson to learn is to have a 12th man available who is both young and fit.

The draw has been unkind to us in 2006, as we are away to **The Oundle Rovers** in the first round on Sunday, June 11th. No trip to Oundle is easy and supporters would be very much appreciated.

TOUR OF INDIA

In October we embarked on our first tour of India. The Hon Sec took on yet more work for the Club by volunteering to take the lead in the organisation, but he is the first to admit that without the help of the Hon Treasurer and, in particular, Tim Best and his travel business, the tour would not have been possible.

The tour party was made up of several generations. The Dunnington-Jeffersons and Deedes led the elder brigade and were accompanied by one son each, while Claire Bruce capped that by accompanying 3 of her sons. We had a strong squad of players, although slightly weakened when England asked for us to release Alex Loudon to go to Pakistan!

It is a common occurrence, when touring, to find spies checking our strength. Tim Best was of view that our nets were scrutinised by the opposition and, as a result, reinforcements were usually drafted in. Certainly we faced very strong sides on all occasions and the results of won 2, lost 6 were actually rather better than they read.

It is quite clear from all the reports that I have had, that this was a tour of the highest calibre and one of the main social highlights was the OE dinner held at Mehrangarh Fort, hosted by the Maharajah of Jodphur.

The party suffered the inevitable injuries and illnesses, but all returned to the UK safely.

I am sure that all those who went on the tour appreciate the work that was put in to set it up and I would urge all those concerned to repay the club, by turning out as much as possible during the coming season.

LORDS

This is the first time since becoming President that I have to report on an Eton loss. There could be no complaints (and there were none) from the Eton side. Harrow bowled and fielded extremely well throughout the Eton innings and, once Alex Ball was bowled around his legs for 51, the writing was on the wall. The final total of 176 was nowhere near enough to make an exciting game and Harrow won easily by 7 wickets.

The previous night there had been a dinner in the Nursery School at Lord s to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the match and the two Schools had managed to persuade John Major to speak. This was a very well attended and most enjoyable function at which a lot of old friendships were renewed.

The date for the 2006 fixture is Sunday 2nd July. I would encourage members to attend, not just to support Eton, but it is surprising how many familiar faces you might find.

FINANCES

The Club finances are in a satisfactory state. The previous year had been a short year, as the year end was brought forward one month, but, even allowing for that, there was an increase in income. This was, in part, due to a higher number of new members being elected, but, more importantly, we received a bequest of £2,500 under the terms of Richard Mountgarret s Will. A further £2,000 was recieved from Patrick Croker, who most generously wants to assist young school leavers to be able to pay for the Club. This donation will enable subsidies to be available for this purpose.

The Club continues to hold stocks of ties and sweaters. These are available to Members at very advantageous prices through the Hon Treasurer.

CLUB HISTORY

I reported last year that it was hoped that the book would be ready during the summer. There has been a great deal more work involved than anticipated and the membership will be informed when it becomes available.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Last year we elected Patrick Croker as an Honorary Member and I was delighted how many favourable comments I received about that election.

We do not propose to make a regular habit of such elections, but the Committee felt that Peter Thackeray had contributed hugely to the success of Eton cricket for many years, not just as a very successful Master in Charge. I am very pleased to report that he has accepted the invitation.

OBITUARIES

Unlike last year, I am pleased to be able to report that we have not had a large number of losses. However I have to start by admitting a major omission from last year. Nick Pretzlik was undoubtedly one of the most talented games players to have been at Eton since the war. He excelled at all sports and certainly cricket was one of his best. Not many Ramblers have batted with Gary Sobers, apparently losing nothing in comparison. It was a great loss to the game when, after having all his equipment stolen from his car after a Hampshire 2nd XI game, he decided not to replace it and never played again.

Whilst we may not have lost large numbers, it could never be described as a good year when we lose someone of the ilk of Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie. Rather remarkably he never captained the XI despite playing for 3 years (1949 to 1951). I will not even attempt to do Colin justice in this notice, as others will do so more ably elsewhere. Suffice it say that all who played with or against him found him to be an irresistibly charismatic character. He captained our Cricketer Cup side for 5 years and, even when losing on a cold day at Malvern, he made it fun. As a Hampshire supporter myself, how could one ever forget 1961 and the famous first ever Championship for the County. The name ACD Ingleby-Mackenzie stood out clearly in the score cards of the daily papers and, during that season, there were often good scores accompanying the name.

Tom Denne was another very talented all round games player. Keeper of the Field, Captain of the Rugby XV and Keeper of College Wall is not a bad CV. Cricket was not his strongest game, but in the year he left, 1947, he was part of a strong XXII. He became a very keen and loyal Rambler serving as Treasurer from 1959 to 1968. He was also President of Kent in the 1980s.

Geoffrey Keighley was in the XI for 3 years, captaining the side in 1943. He went to live permanently in Australia and was an avid supporter of our 2 tours there. I particularly recall his hospitality at Randwick Racecourse, where he was a member and enthusiastic punter. He also acted as a guide to some of us to the New South Wales vineyards. Those who went with him appeared back with the main party in particularly boisterous mood and accompanied by several cases of wine.

Lord Wardington was in the 1941 and 1942 sides with Geoffrey Keighley, as The Hon CHB Pease. He was better known in the City as a Stockbroker with Hoare Govett and an Alderman, than on the Rambler cricket field. He was also a keen golfer.

Floreat Etona

PG Lowndes
President