



Past and Present Nr. 2 - 1993

As Paul Reeder, now back from a sojourn in the States, rightly pointed out at the Dinner, the annual match had not always gone the Past's way. It was encouraging therefore to see an unusually good haul of points in the singles. Jo Gribble generously sacrificed himself to Paddy d'Ancona and his thigh to cramp in picking up a some points; Johnny Armitage tussled with Tim Caroe for a few more, while John Taylor did that rare thing, winning a dramatic contest with Patrick Neate at number 3. Alan Matthews compounded such unwonted success by driving left hand upon left hand into the nick against Ben Munro-Davies, drafted in to fill in for the much bruised Hon. Sec., Ben Taberner. Only 2 points adrift at lunchtime, the Past were further heartened by the visit in the Pickerel of the President of the MCC, with astrakhan hat and a smile that betrayed no hint of the parlous state of England's XI, at that point needing some 140 to avoid the follow-on.

Fives Trivia: Which other cricketing Headmaster played the 1967 Varsity Match with a hand numbed senseless from a secret pain-killing injection administered at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, by an OMT junior houseman? (No drugs-testing in those days!)

Meanwhile, as an obliging gas-fitter was cajoled into restoring hot water to the showers in an increasingly delapidated Portugal Place, Philip Ellis lamented the fact that he was being "terminated" by St. John's. The fresh Past doubles players gathered and set about establishing a lead. Sean Egan and Alastair Higgins, hitting lumps off leather and plaster, were too much for the scratch pairing of Paddy d'Ancona and Tim Caroe, though cracks in the floor and the decidedly un-flush door fittings gave our pair several tricky moments. Next door, against Patrick Neate and Ben Munro-Davies, our second pairing of Ian Jackson and Martin Wilkinson entertained an admiring public, which included Her Britannic Majesty's erstwhile Ambassador to Poland, Ian with a very refined-looking schoolmaster's left hand and Martin, making an emphatic return to the Past team after his debut (and sole appearance) in 1971, with a mighty right hand that had been honed by two decades of dedicated practice at the Perse.

Sports Trivia: Which distinguished Amateur Champion's idea of training for the Varsity Match was to go to the cinema on the Friday night?

The highlight of the third pair's match against Martin Gee and Mark Vyvyan-Robinson was not so much Tony Morris's twinkling footwork as a drop shot played by the Profesor of Computing at the University of East Anglia in an attempt to get back on level terms after dropping a game to 8. In the process a foot slipped and an ageing muscle protested vigorously. Medical practitioners of 40 years' experience melted tactfully into the background as David trussed his own leg in tubigrip amidst much ribaldry ("It's not funny, Bob!"), then hobbled on to victory with a partner whose own right leg was encased in a robocop-style velcro splint. Future Past teams should note- they may well be asked to undergo preliminary

fitness testing. In the fourth pair the skipper looked on admiringly as Robert Rigg hared around the court, driving balls relentlessly into the back wall nick against Fin Spicer and Mark Latham. At the turn the Past had opened up a lead of some 50 points, which they subsequently increased in traditional fashion, finally running out victors by some 276 points to 135 against a Present much weakened by the absence of the two Paulines, Jon Fisher and Ben Taberner.

Old Boy Trivia: Which school has produced the most Cambridge players?

Off then to the Pickerel where past and present players assembled, some with new wives (congratulations Peter C.! - your best partner since Andrew Lewis in 1966-), others with teetotal chauffeurs, most with Sparrows ties. The now ex-Dean of UEA this time sported his Caius Quadruple Sculls mug and a natty trilby, Johnny Armitage sprayed coinage around like volleys into the butress, and Jo Gribble ruefully admitted that, however impressive the quality of Fives played at the Perse that afternoon had been, it was not as impressive as the Formula One car in which Andy Pringle had arrived to make his debut. Jonathan Horrocks maintained the now hallowed tradition of Kelvin van Hasselt (see last year's Total Trivia) and Tony Murley in wearing a DJ (but what would Jock have said to that green bowtie?!). Robin Skinner, who has done much sterling work in collecting addresses in the carpark at Twickenham, told heart-warming tales of flourishing fives at Christ's Hospital, while toasts of condolence and commiseration were drunk to David Barnes (back injury) and John Pretlove (bronchitis), both sadly prevented from playing in the match and attending the dinner. Patrick Cogan too could not finally make it to the dinner, nor after their exertions in the match could Alastair Higgins (hot and cold flushes) and Patrick Neate (finalist's fatigue).

Detectives Trivia: Amongst all our many Dr.'s, is Simon Huntley our first veterinary fives player?

At 7.30 we were joined in the Parlour by Michael Keall, who looks after us so handsomely at Magdalene each year. As ever there were unexpected faces and warm reunions. In Dick Knight, our senior member on the evening, and Richard we had a welcome father-son pairing, while once more the Camerons provided the fraternal faction; but sadly no Cates or Boultons (Chris and Ben respectively are the answers to last year's More Trivia about brothers gaining Half Blues for both universities) and only one Jackson. 'A' Level results inter alia permitting we might have another father-son pairing in imminent years, though. It was a particular pleasure to welcome Norman Reddaway, who had not played since he left for war service in 1939, and Chris Metcalfe, of whom the President said in his brief address that they eyed each other up after so many years like men buying a horse.

Marital Trivia: Which young player from Christ's introduced the current President to his wife-to-be, Joan - at a christening?

The menu was of traditional format, the seating plan fuller than usual. Clerics compared curacies, bankers compared balances, Headmasters compared rolls, lawyers compared cases, medics compared cuts, schoolmasters compared charges, Executioners analysed angles, publishers advanced authors, computer men exchanged cards, and cricketers consoled themselves with the kind words so recently written of them in the 'Telegraph' by Christopher Martin-Jenkins. The benign spirit of Jock Burnet hovered above the company, doubtless doubly pleased that the Captain was a Magdalene man and that he was not only runner-up in

the National Under 25 Singles Tournament but that he and a Pauline, Ben Taberner, were the current National Under 25 Doubles Champions.

***Numerical Trivia:** When Mike Skliros beat Tony Tiffin to win the 1955 Cambridge Open Singles, how many entrants for the competition were there, at 2/6d an entry? 13, 33 or 63?*

Finally then, some retired to the Pickerel where there was much loquacity and flirtatiousness (or should that be flirtacity and loquaciousness?). Like the Good Soldier Schweik, Andrew Cowie promised to return to the Pickerel at 6 o'clock after the war. Perhaps in 1995 it could be 2 o'clock to Portugal Place?

***Sartorial Trivia:** Which former Captain "resplendent in long white flannels, succeeded, either adversus or propter hoc, in holding RG Freebairn to 12-15" (BWJG Wilson) in the 1959 Varsity Match, and was he the last to play thus appavelled?*

A Gold Star for the GPO! In an attempt to contact 'Dick' Foster, Captain in 1931, I wrote to an address in Perthshire found in Jock's notes, to receive a prompt reply from Kincardineshire saying, "We were flooded out by Hydro Board and been at above since after war." HFB Foster was incidentally a very active proponent of the award of a Half Blue for Rugby Fives, finally agreed in 1934 by the Blues Committee.

An old black ledger and a red volume, covering the years 1926-1969 and 1969-1980 respectively, have passed into my hands via Pauline Burnet and Barry Trapnell. They contain the nearly entire history of the Club and the Sparrows. I shall be reproducing much that may be of interest in subsequent newsletters, but let us start with the Past v. Present. The answer to my question about the initiation of the fixture was provided by Ted Pease-Watkin. It began in 1949 but, interestingly, an entry from the ES Isaacs's Notes on the Season in 1948 reads "It was hoped to arrange a match between Past and Present on the Saturday before the Varsity match, the teams to consist of 8 players if possible, so that the whole Cambridge team might play, and a dinner was to have been held afterwards in the Dorothy. The idea had to be abandoned, as J. Burnet of the Jesters, who was organising the Past, was unable to raise a team." (Where and what was the Dorothy?) The first match and dinner were held on February 26th 1949 and the Present won the closest game ever. Though there have been a number of results where the difference in scores was single figures, the Past, represented by Trapnell, Isaacs, Bailey, Armitage, Burnet, Jasper, Metcalfe (guest?) and Brandon, contrived to lose 243-245. Now, if our current President had not been so kind as to let John Hanscomb get 9 in the singles, ...

***Competition Trivia:** There are 40 recorded results out of the 44 matches played so far (no match 1991), with no ties. A £5 reduction on the cost of the next Dinner to the reader who can guess the correct number of matches won so far by each side!*

And then John Charlton's question, what are the Sparrows? Founded on June 2nd 1949, the new Club, The Cambridge University Sparrows Rugby Fives Club "shall be confined to not more than 14 players elected by the Captain of C.U.R.F.C." who "shall pay a life subscription of £1.10 to Mr S. Tabor" (who he?). 14 Honorary Sparrows were elected, 12 of whom accepted in November 1949. By 1959 a membership card (bearing Simon Langdale's name) redefined membership: "Ordinary membership shall be limited to those who play against O.U. and the O.U. Beavers Club, and not more than 4 others in any given season. Ordinary membership shall be confined to resident members of not more than 4 years' standing, but

members so excluded may continue to wear the colours." So, gentlemen, you are all encouraged to wear your tie at the next dinner which will be on Saturday February 12th, 1994.

Your Archivist writes: Since Jock Burnet's death in August 1989 we have lost a number of other distinguished old Cambridge fives players.

Dr John Lionel Parker, an Old Oundelian, died in March 1992, having taken an avid interest in the fives results despite his considerable years; he played in 1928. - In April 1992 the Right Reverend **Cecil Patterson**, former Archbishop of West Africa and Bishop on the Niger, a Pauline, died. In a detailed obituary in The Independent the Bishop of Coventry chronicled a long life of missionary christianity but with no mention of his sporting talents. He played Fives for Cambridge in 1929 and 1930. Basil Greenup, Captain in 1930, who now lives in Devon, has written to me at length of Pat's prowess as a cricketer (nearly Cambridge wicket-keeper, except the captain elected to keep himself), as a boxer (nearly a bantam boxing blue) and as a rugby player ("but no chance of a rugger blue because Caths was, as always, stiff with Welsh International backs!")

Sir Carl Douglas Aarvold, OBE, TD, DL, Recorder of London 1964-75, died in March 1992. The Times obituary, which Lady Aarvold preferred, not least because The Telegraph had the wrong picture, deemed him "a top class sportsman" who "played rugby for England at wing threequarter, winning 16 caps in all and captaining the national side. He also played other games to a very high standard." He was educated at Durham School and played in the 1926 Varsity Match, at Roehampton, the first full fixture (won by Cambridge by 334-241), also in 1927, and captained the VIII in 1928 (when Oxford won by 2 points!).

And then **Jack Davies**, Tonbridge and St. John's, who died in November 1992, familiar to us all from so many matches, so many dinners, and so many other connections. He played four times for Cambridge between 1931 and 1934, captaining in 1933. Your editor first met him when seeking help from the Appointments Board, blithely unaware of his prodigious achievements. The recent RFA Club newsletter reproduced the obituary from The Telegraph; all obituaries mention that he was Amateur Champion in 1936, '37 and '39. We shall long remember him and his sardonic laugh with particular affection.

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!
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Scorecard for the Varsity Match 1993 on the next page

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 1993
Saturday, February 20th at St. Paul's School

Cambridge	Oxford	
<i>Singles</i>		
PD d'Ancona (Captain) (St. Dunstan's and Magdalene)	lost to MT Cavanagh (Captain) (Bedford Modern & Balliol)	10-15
BR Taberner (Captain) (St. Paul's & Magdalene)	lost to JTA Martin-Jenkins (Radley and Queen's)	2-15
TD Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	beat MJS Booth (Sedbergh and Christ Church)	15-11
JM Fisher (St. Paul's and Robinson)	lost to RW Baty (Durham and Pembroke)	6-15
		33-56
<i>Doubles</i>		
d'Ancona and Taberner	v. Cavanagh and IC Colak-Antic (St. Paul's & Keble)	15-7
	v. Martin-Jenkins and Booth	15-5
Caroe and Fisher	v. Martin-Jenkins and Booth	16-14
	v. Cavanagh and IC Colak-Antic	11-15
PWT Neate (St. Paul's & Corpus) and MD Latham (Sedbergh & Corpus)	v. Martin-Jenkins and Booth	4-15
	v. Cavanagh and IC Colak-Antic	10-15
MW Vyvyan-Robinson (Blundells & Sidney Sussex) and MS Gee (Whitgift & St. John's)	v. OJ Board (Winchester & Brasenose) and WTG Pedrick (Winchester & Merton)	2-15
	v. Baty and SJA Lord (Bradfield & Christ Church)	15-13
	v. Baty and Lord	1-15
	v. Baty and Lord	3-15
	v. Baty and Lord	2-15
	v. Baty and Lord	5-15
	v. Board and Pedrick	5-15
		1-15
		113-219
		Cambridge lost by 146-275

BPA Monro-Davies (St. Paul's and Magdalene) was invited to play for Cambridge but was injured three days before the match.

There was no Sparrows versus Beavers match.