



## Past and Present Nr. 3 - 1994

On a splendidly crisp, sunny weekend that brought back memories of Selwyn Gardens, the singles players gathered at Portugal Place for the usual 11.30 start, undergraduate time. Last year's Captain Paddy d'Ancona exercised his prerogative, in the Match Manager's absence at a Parents' Meeting in Long Eaton, to demote himself to Four and insert Joe Gribble at number One. Joe, with a sensitive feel for the nature of the occasion, allowed Ben Taberner to beat him soundly to get the Present off to a promising start; Richard Ground, however, showed that none of his considerable skills had been dulled by the onerous task of eating 18 Dinners to qualify for the Bar this summer and pulled back a hefty chunk of points off John Townley, winning 15-7; Danny Moar, making his debut for the Past, followed Joe's delicate example in taking just 10 points off Secretary Tim Caroe (whereafter he went shopping, never to be seen again); while Paddy d'A, in the McDonalds-sponsored fourth match was too sleek of form and fleet of foot for Chris Blunt, only our third Felsted-bred Sparrow since GC Wilsher in 1957 and HH Bohling in 1980. In the absence of a very fed-up John Taylor, who had broken a finger playing rugby for his firm (in future not only will there be David Arnold-style fitness tests for all would-be players in the Past VIII but a total ban on all physical contact sports for six weeks before the Match), the Past thus contrived to keep within a point of the Present and set the scene for the usual spirited comeback in the Doubles (though, without Cameron and Cameron, the Past pairings had an unaccustomed look about them).

***International Trivia:*** Which Sparrow, previous to John Townley this year, was Canadian by nationality? (Clue: Alastair Mackenzie will know this one.)

After the customary tactical discussions in the Pickerel over lunch, our traditional schoolmaster pairing of Tonbridge and Cranleigh took on the reigning Commercial Union National University (formerly BUSEF) Doubles Champions, Taberner and Caroe (15-6,15-5 over Oxford in the Final); Barry Trapnell and Norman Reddaway looked on appreciatively as Ian Jackson and Richard Knight took 18 points off the young bloods, losing several pints in their considerable exertions. Next door the evergreen President of the RFA Club and Rob Cleave treated Mick d'Ancona and John Townley to a display of mature Fives seldom witnessed on Court Two. David Barnes, who is reputed to have last made an unforced error in 1986 in a knock-up at Bradfield with Mike Tremellen, and Rob, currently number 37 in the Boots National Rankings with 0.3 points (Wayne Enstone has 76.9!), were in dire danger of winning 15-0, 15-0 until, at 0-14 in the second, there with an error from Rob of the board-splintering variety ("Is he on steroids, Bob?"). Rob said he had lost the ball behind the peak of Mick's baseball hat and had considered asking for a let, but tact and delicacy prevailed, and the Past were ahead in the match nevertheless.

***Political Trivia:*** Apart from David Martin, MP for Portsmouth South and Parliamentary Private Secretary to Douglas Hurd, who played in 1967, which former Sparrow, but not Half

*Blue, holds a very distinguished position in the House of Commons? (Clue: Betty Boothroyd can answer this one.)*

Meanwhile Martin Wilkinson was psyching himself in the Changing Room for a unique occasion: father playing son in the Third Pair. Joe Gribble persuaded the distracted Martin that he was actually Paul Reeder and got halfway through the first game before his left hand gave him away and Paul, who still hasn't got used to the English climate and needed a Hawks' Pullover and an ill-matching green coxswain's cap to cope with the temperature in Court Three, took over. Joe's punishment for usurping Paul will be to play Singles for the next 15 years. The issue at stake in this match, apart from paternal pride, was who was to get the bed that night in Jon Wilkinson's undergraduate rooms: Martin very sensibly lost and got the bed. Folk memory suggests that Richard and Dick Knight did not meet on court in the Past versus Present and that the contest of Wilkinson père et fils was a 'first' of the sort that Jock would have delighted in.

***Old Boy Trivia:*** Which former Sparrow, but not Half Blue, was recently appointed Director of Cricket at Surrey County Cricket Club? (Clue: John Pretlove, Dave Hebden, Paul Reeder inter alia should get this one.)

While these three matches went on, the gentlemen players assembled for the delights of the Perse School courts, courtesy of the Headmaster thereof. Andy Pringle roared in in one of his many Heavy Metal, super-turbocharged Continental Citroën racers to partner Andy Olliver, back from a one and a half year trip in space (aka Africa). Andy has now forsaken a leisurely life of spear-fishing on Lake Malawi and selling T-shirts to tourists, to seek employment in the UK; having tested out his arthroscopically challenged knee at the Perse he declared himself fit to take on any challenge, day or night. Unfortunately the two Andys came up against the combined years and skills of David Arnold and John Chapman-Andrews. David, who has shaken off the responsibilities as Dean and now has a cushy little part-time job as Admissions Tutor at UEA, had had time to get super-fit, while John C-A, after years in Algeria and Belgium and other forsaken places, is now Project Manager and Doubles Director at the Wessex Club and has redeveloped shots last seen in 1966. It was, as Mark Cornwall-Jones remarked in a recent letter, "the triumph of experience over hope."

***Historic(al) Trivia:*** Which Captain of Fives was the last player to set foot on court with Jock Burnet? (Clue: all Jesters should know this one.)

Around about 3.30 a small figure in a canary yellow shirt and a flat cap took an egg box out of his hold-all and carefully removed the elastic band from around it. Those nearby gathered around curiously, thinking it was the first example of a car-boot sale at Portugal Place. But no, nestling in the box were four brand new stitched Malings balls, generously given by Michael Mills to John Pretlove, who proceeded to take them onto Court One like one of the Magi bearing gifts to the cattle shed. Chris Blunt and Paddy d'Ancona, who had been surreptitiously inserted into the Present team by Ben Taberner, on the pretext that that Martin Gee was otherwise involved in the Varsity Fencing Match, and who had tried very hard to look like an undergraduate by finding a pair of discarded trainers under the stairs to Court Three and binding them up with masking tape, innocently agreed to play with one of the aforesaid balls ("It's a bit light, isn't it?") only to find themselves assailed by a stream of shots and services barely an inch and a half off the floor at any time, streaking so quickly into the back right-hand corner that you could scarcely tell whether the ball was a 'Gallop' or a 'Perfecta' or even a 'Crown'. At 15-7 John said he didn't mind playing the second game with a

Cliff, which - lo and behold - also ended 15-7. The skipper stood in his customary position by the door jamb and looked on in admiration as John, playing his final game of Fives, demonstrated all the skills with which he has graced the game over six decades of his adult playing life. Something for Chris Blunt to tell his grandchildren.

**Linguistic Trivia:** *Which of those present at this year's Dinner is a fluent Arabic speaker? (Clue: he didn't learn it at Blundell's.)*

After the 'turn' the Past began their usual remorseless accumulation of points to open up a gap, leading to a final score of 248-202 to the Past, their sixth in a row and their 23rd victory in 41 recorded matches (no one entered the competition for the £5 discount on the Dinner last year, by the way). Ben and Tim found worthy opposition in David and Rob, Mick and John at last got into the points against Ian and Richard, Chris and Paddy restored their morale against Martin and Paul, and in the Fourth Pair Jon Wilkinson and James Droop, in particular, began to find the kind of form and touch that augured well for the Varsity Match. The Pickerel beckoned at six.

**Multiple Choice Trivia:** *When Ben Taberner revealed to us that the UAU Doubles Final was delayed till 5.30 while the contestants watched the England-New Zealand match, did Simon Bevan say drily a) "That Will Carling's a nice chap!" b) "Fives always was an amateur game." c) "That Jamie Joseph's a nice chap!"*

Slightly short this year on Headmasters, Wardens and Clerics but getting longer on lawyers, the Sparrows gathered in the appropriate tie. Richard Kemp had found a window in his skiing diary; Chris Cates was restored to partnership with Ian Jackson (though brother Andrew didn't feel that Shell would finance him a trip to Magdalene from West Africa); John Ingram came to tell fellow schoolmasters how good retirement feels. The menu miraculously spoke of whitebait and crème brûlée. The Past entertained the Present. On an occasion where there are no speeches the President rose in stygian gloom and a Hawks' tie (!) to indulge in a Yorkshire joke, to speak with cryptic bullishness of the courts situation and to salute our past champion, John Pretlove, and our present champions, Ben and Tim. When Ben too spoke (Jock wouldn't have minded a second speech as long as it was from a Pauline, would he?), he modestly omitted to mention that he and Paddy had defended their National Under 25 Doubles title recently (indeed Paddy has now won it 3 years in succession) but spoke optimistically of his 16-strong squad, including 5 ladies (Tony Murley became quite animated at this piece of news).

**Last year's Trivia:** *when Mike Skliros won the 1955 Cambridge Open singles there were 63 entrants at 2/6d an entry. 63? Yes, 63. And it was Simon Langdale who played Roger Freebairn in flannels. And it was Jock who introduced Barry to Joan. And Chris Hirst played in 1967 with a wooden hand. And Simon Huntley must be our only vet. And Oundle have, of course, given us 34 of our 248 players. And the Amateur Champion whose idea of training was to go to the pictures? That would be telling.*

In the Pickerel after the Dinner the absence was noted of Andrew Lewis. Informed by the Match Manager that he had been prevented from coming because his preacher at Mowden Hall had cried off and Andrew himself was going to have to preach on Sunday morning, a carload of chirping Sparrows set off for Northumberland determined to hear his sermon. It is not known whether they arrived in time.

*Numerical Trivia:* JR Sherborne, who played in 1926, went to Leighton Park School; GKV Clarke (1947) went to Fettes; DA Norman (1953) went to Epsom; Mark Cornwall-Jones (1955) went to Glenalmond; David Storey (1970) went to Merchiston Castle; JA Cooper (1971) went to Giggleswick; JT Uwins (1976) went to Colston's; Robert Rigg (1989) went to Loretto. What does David Hares (1961) have in common with these players?

*A la recherche des moineaux perdus:* In an unremitting attempt to trace all living Sparrows your scribe has had much fun. Firstly I have found **Frank Youngman**, Secretary in 1926, the first official Varsity Match, and Captain in 1927, who is living in Corbridge. **Tony Tiffin**, Captain in 1958, was in his House at Durham in the 1950s. Though he is unable to recall much about the first matches he remembers well many of the players including **Carl Aarvold** and the legendary AOB, **Lloyd 'Bill' Bailey**. After Durham he was a parish vicar and even had a Magdalene living. Secondly, in my quest to trace **Stuart Tovey** who played in 1960 I was much encouraged to read in 'The Independent' on October 15th 1993 the headline 'Condoms 'too small for 20% of UK men', for it was Dr Stuart Tovey, consultant physician in charge of the Lloyd Clinic, the department of genito-urinary medicine at Guy's Hospital, who had established this dramatic fact in a survey of 300 patients. I duly wrote with great enthusiasm to Dr Tovey at the Clinic inviting him to the Past v. Present, only to receive a postcard saying "Sorry; there are two of us! The other worked for a time at University College Hospital but I don't know his present whereabouts." The search goes on. [He was found in 2000, living in Australia. - Ed.] So, can anyone give me any help with the remaining few for whom I can find no current address?

**GF Godfrey** (Queens' and school unknown) first played 1925, last known in Australia; **AM Russell** (1926; Clare and school unknown), last known in Sussex; **JKP Hadland** (1928; St John's and Cheltenham); **DC Fleming-Williams** (1932; St Catharine's and Christ's Hospital); **JDG Craib** (1937; Clare and Eastbourne); **JG Selwyn** (1942; Queens' and school unknown); **GW Horsley** (1947; Clare and Oundle); **AC Bambridge** (1950; Clare and Bradfield); **RA Parsons** (1951; Jesus and Oundle); **PM Whitcombe** (1963; Emmanuel and Merchant Taylors'); **PM Wright** (1984; St John's and St Paul's). Schools and Colleges have been approached, but no luck so far.

As for your archivist's query about the Dorothy and S. Tabor, I was greatly helped by letters from Simon Langdale, Brian Wilson, Mike Allen, John Burton and Robin Jasper. John tells me the "Dot" was a café-type place on the Sidney Sussex side of the Market Place where they held "unrewarding" Saturday evening dances; or, as another put it, "an upscale Joe Lyons.". And that "Mr T." was the Portugal Place pro. One of my correspondents deemed him "curmudgeonly", another "a great character, gruff, dour"; no one seems to know what the S. stood for as they all called him "Tabor", "as one would a professional in those days!" ['Sid', it turns out. - Ed.]

In a season when Wayne Enstone has won his twentieth Singles title it is a comfort to remember that the only other players since Wayne left school to hold the Jesters' Cup aloft are our own David Hebden (1979) and Andrew Cowie (1971 and 1972).

Your archivist writes of those we have lost this year:

**HJH (John) Lamb**, a contemporary of Jock Burnet and Jack Davies, died on February 5th

1993. He was at school at Winchester, where he won the Public Schools Doubles with R de WK Winlaw, the only Wykehamist pair to do so, then played for Cambridge in 1932, 1933 and 1934, when he continued to partner Roger Winlaw, after which he left King's to eventually become Senior Partner in the family law firm in Kettering. A keen sportsman, he was best known as a cricketer, playing for Northamptonshire County Cricket Club from 1934-37 as wicket-keeper/batsman, captaining the side in 1936. In a busy and distinguished professional life his principal sporting commitment was to Kettering Town Cricket Club, where he was Captain and later President for 27 years. He averaged 275 for the Southern Command HQ cricket side in 1944!

Also in November 1993 **Sir (Joseph) Raymond (Lynden) Potter**, who learned his Fives at Haileybury, thence went to Clare, which then boasted such players as messrs Darewski, Craib, Douglass and Childs, where he played in the Varsity Match in 1937 and, as Captain, in 1938. After distinguished war service and a period as Secretary of the Institute for International Affairs he joined the Halifax Building Society, where he rose to be Chairman 1974-83.

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!  
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**See next page for the Scorecard of the Varsity Match 1994**

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 1994  
Saturday, February 18th at St. Paul's School

<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>Oxford</b>	
<i>Singles</i>		
BR Taberner (Captain) (St. Paul's & Magdalene)	lost to MT Cavanagh (Bedford Modern & Balliol)	6-15
TD Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	lost to MJS Booth (Captain) (Sedbergh & Christ Church)	12-15
JB Townley (St. Paul's & Trinity)	lost to DS Mackinnon (Oundle & Queen's)	6-15
CJS Blunt (Felsted & Robinson)	lost to SJA Lord (Bradfield & Christ Church)	5-15
		<b>29-60</b>
<i>Doubles</i>		
Taberner and Caroe	v. Booth and Cavanagh	15-7
		10-15
	v. Lord and Mackinnon	15-2
		15-6
Townley and MP d'Ancona (St. Dunstan's & Magdalene)	v. Lord and Mackinnon	9-15
		3-15
	v. Booth and Cavanagh	6-15
		5-15
JM Droop (St. Paul's & Trinity) and JM Wilkinson (Tonbridge & Christ's)	v. OJ Board (Winchester & Brasenose)	6-15
	and	9-15
	RG Elliott (St. Paul's & Oriel)	
	v. CG Kelly (Bloxham & St. Anne's)	8-15
	and	15-7
	RGK Newby (Bradfield & Lincoln)	
Blunt and MS Gee (Whitgift & St. John's)	v. Kelly and Newby	8-15
		15-10
	v. Board and Elliott	6-15
		2-15
		<b>147-197</b>
		Cambridge lost by 176-257

There was no Sparrows versus Beavers match.