



## Past and Present Nr. 4 - 1995

Beating rain, sweating courts: somehow appropriate for the last Past versus Present match to be held at Portugal Place (but more of that later). The Young Ones gathered as usual some time before noon to contest the Singles. At Number One, last year's captain, Ben Taberner, who has been in fine tournament form this year, got the Past off to a promising start with a 15-6 victory over the current captain, Tim Caroe. In the absence of the match manager, Paddy d'Ancona displayed a customary deft hand in inserting John Taylor at Number Two, where the latter most discreetly lost 6-15 to the secretary, John Townley. To get even six points was a considerable achievement from a man who was about to go down with viral pneumonia and whose participation in the Past versus Present Singles has been fraught with difficulties (see *Past and Present Nr. 3* for details). At Three Paddy d'Ancona showed Ed Hickmet scant respect in clocking up a 15-3 win. Joe Gribble, currently serving a fifteen-year sentence in the Singles (see also *Past and Present Nr. 3* for details of the offence), showed great sensitivity in allowing his match to go to 15-13, so that the lead held by the Past in The Pickerel at lunchtime was a mere 14 points.

***Congratulations** should go to Ben Taberner and Paddy d'Ancona for winning the National Under 25 Doubles Championship for the third year running (Paddy's fourth), and to Tim and Chris Caroe for winning the Plate for the second year in a row.*

In the afternoon, Ben and Paddy, honorary brothers, one might say, confronted the Caroe brothers in the fraternal contest of the year: the result an honorable draw at 15-10, 13-15. Ben and Paddy also managed a one-all with John Townley and Martin Gee, the latter sadly unable to play in the Varsity Match, as he would be representing the University on the fencing mat (piste? catwalk? run?). While our young champions were performing on Court One, Dave Hebden, our Veteran champion, and Rob Cleave, one of our several nationally ranked players!, were powering their way to an undefeated afternoon, doubtless piqued by their insertion at Second Pair only.

***Congratulations** also to David Hebden for defending his National Veterans title in April. Though David was unable to hold on to the Doubles title as well, it was good to see an all-Cambridge Plate Final, Bernard Atkinson and Chris Arnold beating Chris Martin-Jenkins (currently President of the RFA) and Bob Dolby. Next year we hope to see David Barnes (currently President of the RFA Club) fit to resume his successful partnership with John Denison and perhaps regain the title?*

In the Third Pair Martin Wilkinson had elected to partner Joe Gribble in a very fetching little knitted number, which most probably distracted Chris Blunt even more than John Pretlove's balls (stitched) had the previous year. Joe had to retire eventually, unable to compete sartorially and feigning injury, leaving Martin to team up with Ben Taberner (Paddy declined,

on the grounds that his plimsolls weren't smart enough) and gain a whitewash, 60 points to 40.

***No trivial matter:** With the RFA and the RFA Club moving towards amalgamation, would it not be nice to see a Cambridge man elected as the first President of the new body?*

At Four for the Past was a Radleian pairing, starring Andy Olliver, now employed by Brighton University as an inventor, who had also chosen a very dramatic designer jumper to play in, possibly a souvenir of happy days on safari, perhaps even a trophy? The match manager watched by the door post in traditional awe as Andy put on a breath-taking display of left- and right-handed volleying, which was all too much for Paul Shipley and John Wilkinson.

***Congratulations** to Dennis Silk on being awarded the CBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to cricket and education ("At first I thought it was a joke from young Pretlove."). We look forward to seeing the mighty right hand again, once his onerous stint as President of the MCC is over.*

The Past eventually contrived to run out victors by 282-192, the 24th time they had defeated the Present. It is now 7 years since the Present won this match. Members of the Past who think they are sufficiently out of practice to rectify this situation are cordially invited to apply to the match manager, who will otherwise be forced to field his usual side of champions young and old.

***"Blackguard!":** Does anyone remember a certain Jerry Rubin, an American who may have played Fives in the 70s or early 80s? Pat Scally, the RFA archivist, recently sent me a copy of an article Rubin wrote in September 1983 in some American sporting magazine, claiming to have played in the Varsity Match. Virtually every reference in it is suspect (e.g. "British Fives Association", "the University sports center in Portugal Lane"). It includes references to the Sparrows tie ("a silly looking thing, but from time to time I will suffer ridicule from wearing it so that I can relive past glories."), to being selected for the match ("We all piled into miniature, subcompact British cars for the long, cramped trip across country" - did he play in the Sparrows v. Beavers on the Oxford court?), and to "the victory banquet [in] a formal dining hall at St. Catherine's College". I find no trace of this player in our records.*

At the Dinner the President, Barry Trapnell, greeted Sparrows of all vintages, ranging from Dick Knight (first played versus Oxford in 1935) and Norman Reddaway (1938) to last year's captain, Ben Taberner. Grace was said by Richard Thomas. Other non-players attending were: Michael Mills, John Holroyd, John Charlton, Mike Seymour, Mike Skliros, Tony Tiffin, David Barnes, David Hare, George Todd, David Cameron, John Chapman-Andrews, Andrew Lewis, Ian Jackson, Tim Wilson, Richard Kemp, Tony Palmer, Guy Whiting, Tony Dixon, Andrew Cowie and Tony Morley (who gave his former Headmaster some terrible stick during the speech).

***Dramatic Trivia:** Which Captain was the first ever to leave the Dinner early to take part in a MedSoc Review?*

***Last year's Trivia:** Richard Whitehead (St. Paul's and Queens', 1987) was our other Canadian Sparrow; Brian Wilson tells me that he recognises the current Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons to be Michael Morris (St. Catherine's), captain of the Sparrows in*

1960; and in 1960 Mike Edwards (Alleyn's and Christ's), of Surrey cricketing fame, now Director of Cricket at Surrey CCC, was also a Sparrow. Pond-hopping Paul Reeder (currently Charlottesville, Virginia) was surely the last captain to set foot on court with Jock Burnett, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Jesters Club; John Chapman-Andrews is our fluent Arabic speaker (no business connections with Jonathan Aitken, who didn't play Fives - obviously); David Hares is the only Cambridge Fives player to emerge from St. John's, Leatherhead.

**Rank Trivia:** How many Cambridge players are currently in the top 42 nationally ranked singles players? 5, 9, 13 or 17?

**Oundelians**, 34 of whom have represented our University at Rugby Fives, will be delighted to hear that the Oundle courts have now been fully enclosed and re-roofed, that a masters-led revival of Fives is underway there, and that Michael Mills is gathering names for an Oxford and Cambridge Fives Honours Board to embellish them.

**Addresses:** I have given up on finding an address for our pre-war players (see *Past and Present Nr 3*) but I hope still that someone can tell me a current address for the following: **GW Horsley** (1947; Clare and Oundle); **AC Bambridge** (1950; Clare and Bradfield); **RA Parsons** (1951; Jesus and Oundle); **JJ Orchard** (1951; King's and Alleyn's); **PM Whitcombe** (1963; Emmanuel and Merchant Taylors') and **PM Wright** (1984; St. John's and St. Paul's).

The sad part of Barry Trapnell's speech to the Sparrows this year concerned the final closure at the end of this June of Portugal Place by St. John's, for redevelopment. As the situation stands at present, the undergraduates will practise next year on the one court at The Perse School, by kind agreement with the Headmaster, with the Sparrows agreeing to contribute from our funds to small improvements which are necessary to the wall and roof, if the University cannot be persuaded to meet the costs. Matches will be largely played at Bedford Modern School, by kind permission of the Headmaster. The Portugal Place Trust Committee met at the end of April. There, at least, there was some encouraging news: a sum well over £100,000 is held at present by the Trust which can eventually go towards the building of new Rugby Fives courts; there is also some progress on the matter of a united site for a court games centre, but as yet it is too early to be specific about that. Barry is pursuing the options and we will report when we have some firm news.

On another sad note: I have just learned of the death of one of our former champions: **Lionel Alexander Bethune Pilkington** of Sherborne and Trinity, who won the Amateur Doubles with Eric Conradi in 1947. He represented the University at Rugby Fives in 1939 and in 1946 and 1947 (winning Squash and Tennis blues too), and was one of the original Half Blues to be invited by Edward Pease-Watkin and Jock Burnet to become a Sparrow. Sir Alastair (as he was known) Pilkington died on May 5th 1995. His achievements as a scientist, inventor, businessman and manager as outlined in the Obituaries that appeared in all the serious newspapers were considerable. He was variously Chairman of Pilkington plc, a Fellow of the Royal Society, Pro-Chancellor of Lancaster University, Director of the Bank of England and Chairman of the Cambridge Foundation.

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 1995  
Saturday, February 18th at St. Paul's School

<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>Oxford</b>	
<i>Singles</i>		
TD Caroe (Captain) (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	lost to MT Cavanagh (Bedford Modern & Balliol)	3-15
JB Townley (St. Paul's & Trinity)	lost to SJA Lord (Captain) (Bradfield & Christ Church)	3-15
EJ Hikmet (Merchant Taylors' & Emmanuel)	lost to AHS Booth (Sedbergh & Christ Church)	4-15
CW Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	beat OJ Board (Winchester & Brasenose)	16-14
		<b>26-59</b>
<i>Doubles</i>		
Caroe and Caroe	v. Cavanagh and Lord	4-15
		13-15
Townley and CK Scobie (Radley & Magdalene)	v. Booth and Board	14-16
		15-3
	v. Booth and Board	10-15
Hikmet and CJ Blunt (Felsted & Robinson)		10-15
	v. Cavanagh and Lord	2-15
		2-15
JM Wilkinson (Tonbridge & Christ's) and PM Shipley (Eastbourne & St. Catharine's)	v. RG Elliott (St. Paul's & Oriel) and J. McManus (Tonbridge & Merton)	5-15
	v. JTA Martin-Jenkins (Radley & Queen's) and JT Harrison (Merchant Taylors' & Balliol)	11-15
		9-15
JM Wilkinson (Tonbridge & Christ's) and PM Shipley (Eastbourne & St. Catharine's)	v. Martin-Jenkins and Harrison	16-14
		7-15
	v. Elliott and McManus	4-15
		6-15
		8-15
		<b>136-228</b>
		Cambridge lost by 162-287

In the Sparrows versus Beavers match, Cambridge Sparrows, TC Booth (Eastbourne & Magdalene), DPH Batchelor (Christ's Hospital & Downing), DB Hawkins (UCS & Magdalene) and AHS Prabhu (St. Paul's & Magdalene) won by default against the Oxford Beavers, who fielded three players.