



Past and Present Nr. 5 - 1996

When Judith Jackson told the match manager that Ian was getting a lift to Oundle for the Singles with Joe Gribble and "a chap called da Sousa", there was wonderment in the air. Was Joe getting himself psyched up for the great contest with military music perhaps? Whatever the recipe, Joe set his usual fine example to the other members of the Past in making his singles last an age, leaving Joe jelly-legged and Ed Hikmet with a finger like a mutant banana, and the Past five points to the good. Joe now has a singles record for the Past of: Played 4 Won 2 Lost 2 Points For 43 Points Against 53, a record that Wayne Enstone will never be able to touch.

Boules Trivia: Which member of the 1949 VIII represented Great Britain in a team of 3 in the World Pétanque Championships in 1979 - and came 8th, a position which no other Great Britain pétanque team has since surpassed. Clue: Emma.

Paddy da Sousa tells me that all eight Singles players were on court at Oundle by 11.08 a.m., which must surely be a record too and one which will one day appear in the Trivia section. Paddy took on the task of playing at Number One and defeated the ever-running Chris Caroe 15-9. Ian Jackson, currently being coached by Peter Commings at Tonbridge, beat last year's captain, Tim Caroe, 15-7, an honourable defeat for a man who has not set foot on court all term as he is currently working a 125 hour day as a Junior Medic in Bury St. Edmund's Hospital. The Hon. Sec., Charlie Scobie, was unlucky enough to play Alan Matthews, an unfortunate piece of selection for the Past, as he had both inside knowledge of the courts and the stamina born of sleepless nights with a recent first child: Alan won 15-2. A member of the Present said that Charlie had been "concentrating on his studies lately" - the Warden of Radley will be glad to hear that. So sporting an unwonted lead of 60-28 the Past retired with the Present to the wrong pub, leaving the arriving Doubles players adrift in 'The Ship', wondering naively how big a lead they would have to claw back in the afternoon.

Hunt Trivia: watching the Singles in the morning was a certain Harold, who played in 1935 and 1936 and could recall both teams' full names, initials and colleges. Who was it, do you think, and how many of you have such a good memory?

As David Cameron, Martin Wilkinson, David Arnold and Bob Dolby knocked up after lunch, some wag who'd read Maths reckoned they totalled 199 years between them and wasn't it time they gave youth a chance? No, it wasn't Andrew Lewis who (a) did read Maths (for a year), (b) brought all his family to watch, and (c) hasn't been seen on a Fives Court since Nobby Stiles lost his front teeth. Age or not, David Cameron put on a withering display of left-hand cross court shots, volleys and impeccable returns that left Ed Hikmet and Charlie Scobie wondering what had hit them at 15-4 and enabled the match manager to adopt his customary pose by the door, admiring David's faultless School-of-David-Barnes technique. Unfortunately sweating floors worked against David and partner in the second game,

enabling the fleetier Ed and Charlie to reverse scores at 15-7. Meanwhile next door, Joe and Paddy had the same experience against the Caroes, winning one and losing one. Paddy, wearing a relatively new pair of plimsolls this year, took much of the pressure off Joe by playing every shot except the serve between twenty past two and three thirty. Joe was so invigorated by the experience that he decided to come to the Dinner after all.

That man Rubin (see last year's Newsletter). It turns out, thanks to information supplied by Paul Reeder (holding a Green Card in Charlottesville, USA - "Hallo to all my friends!") and Tim Wilson (playing on Court Three), that Rubin played for the Sparrows and that the after-match dinner that year, 1981, was at St. Cats. "Unfortunately quite a lot of food was thrown (by the losing Oxford contingent) and the Hon. Sec. was lucky to escape with a caution. Following some 'boat races' in the pub, both teams then adjourned to Graham Spensley's room in Chesterton Road, where he had laid on a barrel. Simon Kemp there re-enacted Gareth Edwards' famous try against the All Blacks, taking all roles himself and providing the commentary! Happy days!" Graham is currently working in Paris, Simon in New Zealand.

While the top four were keeping the scores about even, so were the bottom four, watched by President Barry Trapnell. The undergraduate pairs look a good deal stronger than last year, with captain John Townley partnering Mick d'Ancona, a snappy dresser in the Simon Berry mould, and John's young brother Bill partnering another freshman, Sam Jones, from Eastbourne. In the first round of Doubles they all but held Tim Wilson and Ian Williams (did they realise they were playing Radley's first ever National Colts Champion, coached by Chris Hirst, to whom belated congratulations on his appointment as Headmaster of Sedbergh?) and they took Professor Arnold and the sartorially immaculate Martin Wilkinson to 16-15 in the last. At 'the turn' the Past's lead had increased by a mere 20 points.

Record Trivia: Which member of today's Past played six times, always victoriously, for the VIII, and twice for the Sparrows, losing both times?

The final games of Doubles were played on increasingly dangerous floors (so what's new?) and the Present began to peg back the points. Andy Pringle who joined David Cameron on court had had to wait until nearly 5 o'clock for a playable surface but by the end that too was as fast and difficult to control as the supercharged Saab Cabriolet he was testing today. And next door the match between Arnold & Wilkinson and Townley & d'Ancona ended by general agreement at 14 all with Mick nursing his coccyx and a bent earring. The Present had pulled back points, it was gone 5 o'clock, 'The Pickerel' beckoned.

Police Trivia: Andy Olliver, Rustom Irani, Andy Pringle, Steve Platts. Which one is the Nigel Mansell?

The players were joined in 'The Pickerel' and then in the Parlour by Barry Trapnell, Dick Knight, Michael Mills, John Holroyd, John Ingram, Tony Tiffin, Peter Ingram, John Charlton, David Barnes (who had watched every ball at Oundle that day), Peter Commings, Andrew Lewis, Peter Cameron, Chris Hirst, Simon Berry, Robin Skinner, Kelvin van Hasselt, Rob Cleave, Richard Knight, Andy Olliver, Ben Taberner and Martin Gee. Paddy announced with glee that all captains from the 1990s were present - Jock would have liked that. And it'll be in the Trivia in the year 2016. Sparrows ties were awarded, pictures were taken, Peter Commings discovered his 1966 team was the one best represented - only Chris Martin-Jenkins, Chris Bascombe and Mark Lintell were not present. For once there was no cleric to say the Grace, though Mike Skliros had watched some of the play.

Clerical Trivia: Which of our distinguished clerics wrote a letter to *The Independent* in February 1995 about the unangelic nature of rebel leader Marcos and the Zapatistas? Clue: once Denstone, now Repton.

The meal had a familiar look about it: melon and parma ham, whitebait, saddle of lamb, crème brûlée and raspberries. Peter Cameron complained when it got to the canapé Diane that he didn't like all this chopping and changing - he liked to know where he was. David Arnold put in a request for the soufflé to be restored to the menu. Further debate on the nature of the savoury course at the Sparrows Dinner is probably best conducted in the correspondence columns of *The Times*.

Whitebait Trivia: There was a year, when Jock was feeling revolutionary, that whitebait did not appear on the menu. Does anyone have the historic menu from that occasion in the 80s to add to the archives?

Amidst all the tradition there was, however, what the Headmaster of Berkhamsted School was wont to call "a new innovation": we had two invited guests in this time of courts crisis. They were Peter Reynolds of Magdalene, Barry's equivalent in C.U. Eton Fives, and Tony Lemons, the Director of Physical Education at Cambridge University, who had expressed willingness to talk to the Sparrows about the courts situation. Before he did so, Barry rose to express thanks to captain John Townley and his team for keeping Fives at Cambridge going under such difficult circumstances, such as John's sofa eating the Perse court key. Morale among the team was high; two of them had even contrived to share the same birthday as well as the same school.

Birthday Trivia: On whose birthday will the *Past v. Present* fall in 1998?

When John Townley spoke he expressed his regret that under his captaincy CURFC had failed for the first time ever to send players to BUSEF. His other great sadness was that opposition teams had frequently cancelled fixtures, because, he suspected, Bedford did not have the same attraction as Portugal Place had once had. At this point tears welled up in everybody's eyes and David Barnes looked mistily at the piece of court Number One that he had rescued from the demolition site last July. It will eventually be placed in a special cabinet in the new courts or perhaps let into the side wall like the Rugby Fives equivalent of the dedans. When he saw the aforesaid piece of masonry John Ingram said he remembered well striking that particular spot in 1956 and wondered it had survived the impact.

Fantasy Fives: The editor is looking for a sub-editor to write the *Fantasy Fives* column of the *Newsletter*. Suggested topics might be: What would have been the score in a match between Pretlove & Silk and Cowie & Dixon?; or Would Kenneth Cecil Gandar Dower (11 Blues, his own aeroplane, an open-topped Lagonda and an atrocious tenor voice) have beaten Hubert Doggart (5 Blues, captain in four of them)?; or Will Joe Gribble win the Number One Singles match against his third son in the year 2027? Serious offers gratefully received.

When Tony Lemons spoke at the end of the meal, he told of his dream of a Fives, Squash and Racquets Centre on the vacant site in Grange Road, perhaps even a regional or national centre of excellence. The stumbling block to all our dreams is the lack of a piece of ground and the University Library's parking requirements which might encroach upon that site. While all those with a vested interest in the preservation of Rugby Fives at Cambridge were looking at the alternative sites, Mr Lemons felt the Grange Road plan might appeal to the Heritage

Commission. Mr Lemons could hold out no firm hopes or immediate offers to the frustrated audience, but by the end of the evening he could have been in no doubt of the depth of feeling which exists amongst us.

***Last Year's Trivia:** Tim Caroe was the first captain to leave a Dinner early to take part in a MedSoc Review. Nine CURFC players were last year ranked in the national top 40: David Hebden, Jonathan Boulton, Tony Morris, Paddy d'Ancona, Ben Taberner, Mike Tremellen, Rob Cleave, Danny Moar and Matthew Boulton.*

The match in 1999 will be the 50th contest and will mark the founding of the Sparrows by Jock Burnet in 1949. A mammoth gathering of Sparrows, their wives and their loved ones should surely take place that year. More news in due course.

***Holiday Trivia:** If any Sparrow fancies a holiday in France, Theo Lawson (1974; Bristol Grammar and Fitzwilliam) and his wife are running three attractive farm house properties in the Tarn area of southern France. Theo tells me that in addition to a floodlit 12m x 6m swimming pool, a children's pool, a boule pitch, a tennis practice wall, a badminton court, table tennis, a croquet pitch, a golf practice area and a full size billiard table, he too has a dream of a fives court there one day!*

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!
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See next page for scorecard from the Varsity Match 1996

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 1996
Saturday, February 17th at St. Paul's School

Cambridge	Oxford	
<i>Singles</i>		
CW Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	lost to MT Cavanagh (Bedford Modern & Balliol)	4-15
EJ Hikmet (Merchant Taylors' & Emmanuel)	lost to T Stock (St. Dunstan's & St. Peter's)	5-15
TD Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	lost to DS Mackinnon (Captain) (Oundle & Queen's)	6-15
CK Scobie (Radley & Magdalene)	lost to AHS Booth (Sedbergh & Christ Church)	2-15
		17-60
<i>Doubles</i>		
Caroe and Caroe	v. Cavanagh and Booth	5-15 15-11
	v. Stock and Mackinnon	11-15 6-15
Hikmet and Scobie	v. Stock and Mackinnon	5-15 10-15
	v. Cavanagh and Booth	10-15 1-15
JB Townley (Captain) (St. Paul's & Trinity) and MP d'Ancona (St. Dunstan's & Magdalene)	v. OJ Board (Winchester & Brasenose) and BR Elfick (Bradfield & Exeter)	3-15 8-15
	v. JT Harrison (Merchant Taylors' & Balliol) and EW Brooke (Eastbourne & Magdalen)	16-14 11-15
WA Townley (St. Paul's & Clare) and ES Jones (Eastbourne & Emmanuel)	v. Harrison and Brooke	15-12 12-15
	v. Board and Elfick	4-15 3-15
		135-232
		Cambridge lost by 152-292

In the Sparrows versus Beavers match, Cambridge Sparrows produced only three players: OR Twinch (Winchester & Clare), JM Wilkinson (Tonbridge & Christ's) and DB Hawkins (UCS & Magdalene). Oxford Beavers therefore won the match by default, reversing the situation of the previous year.