



## Past and Present Nr. 7 - 1998

A Past versus Present fixture wouldn't be the same if there weren't some administrative glitch involving changing facilities. After decades of water systems and gas fires breaking down at Portugal Place, it was only to be expected that Ian Jackson should get locked out of the Oundle Sports Hall over lunch. However, schoolmasters are used to dealing with such matters, so by the time the Match Manager arrived from his Parents' Meeting in the East Midlands Ian had knocked on the appropriate doors, occasioned the necessary phone calls and duly summoned 'Peter' (or was it 'Paul') on his bike to give Ian access to his civvies and the rest of us the luxury of hot water.

The morning's fives had gone unusually well. Paddy d'Ancona had dropped out of the match with a tired shoulder, so the Past fielded Joe Gribble at Number One (where else?), Ian Jackson at Two, Jonny Armitage at Three and then borrowed last year's Captain, Charlie Scobie, still at Magdalene, to play at Four. The result was some very decent matches: Joe tactfully (and narrowly) extended his losing streak against Chris Caroe; Ian Jackson demonstrated his evergreen talent in beating Ed Hikmet; Jonny Armitage did a very passable imitation of Mick d'Ancona in almost dying for his fistful of points; and Charlie stretched Bill Townley sufficiently to leave the Past only fifteen points adrift at lunch.

**Lunchtime Trivia:** In what other sport does pub lunch always seem to be brought at 1.45 when you are supposed to be back on court at 2 o'clock?

It was imperative that the Past claw back the points in the first round of doubles before fatigue and failing body sugar took their toll. With no Camerons, no Taberner and d'Ancona, no Hebden, where would the points come from? Gribble and Armitage fancied themselves but only managed 15-12, 12-15 at first pair. David Arnold and Tim Wilson picked up a few with 14-16, 15-7 at third pair. Martin Wilkinson and Bob Dolby relied on decades of accumulated guile to talk their young opponents, Simon Maskell and Olly Twinch, out of most of the available points on Court Number Four. But it was the scratch pairing of Simon Kemp and Ian Jackson that did the damage, twenty points clear over their first two games. The mighty Simon had been carded to play with Alan Matthews until flu struck the latter down on the eve of the match. Next year will finally see that formidable combination re-established, we trust.

**Meteorological Trivia:** In what other sport can you guarantee that the temperature will rise outside while all is calm within?

Sweating courts: no respecter of age. In the second round of slippery doubles Caroe and captain Sam Jones swept aside the wary Jackson and Kemp while Townley and Scobie, now playing for the Present (a future Trivia item this), piled up late points against Wilkinson and

Martin Robinson, making his *début* after many years of absence. Suddenly the Past's lead was vulnerable and it all came down to the final game, with David and Tim playing the youngsters. David Arnold has the inestimable advantage of thirty years of unbroken experience in this fixture and engineered the game to end with a 16-15 victory and a final score of 221-216 in the Past's favour. Simon Langdale, who had come along to watch, said he could sense Jock's benign presence.

**Whatever-the-adjective-from-brewing-is Trivia:** Why is there never enough counter staff on duty at The Pickerel when we arrive at 6.00 pm?

While the majority queued at length for their pint and the Match Manager doled out the ties to the young hawks and the forgetful Sparrows, Dennis Silk sussed out the Minstrels' Gallery in Benson Hall and reckoned it would do fine for next year's mammoth gathering. The Parlour, unavailable in 1998, will be too small for 1999. Even in Benson Hall we shall have to 'stand thin' to all fit in. Incidentally, John Holroyd and Dennis, having had successful hip-replacements recently, are already pencilled in to play fourth pair in next year's Past v. Present.

**The Dinner:** The players were joined for the dinner by Dick Knight, Norman Reddaway, our President Barry Trapnell, Michael Mills, John Holroyd, Dickie Clarke, Dennis Silk, Richard Jefferson, Simon Bevan, David Hares, Andrew Lewis, Don Ellwood, Robin Skinner, Paddy d'Ancona and Martin Gee. Our guest was Alex 'Vic' Aldous, until recently master-in-charge of Fives at Oundle, under whose protective wing we have played the Past v. Present for the past three years. Sam Jones spoke wittily about his players, "a tight outfit", and Barry Trapnell reported, woefully, on the lack of movement on courts but joyfully about the Jesters' keenness on the idea of a Jock Burnet Trophy for the Varsity Match.

### **The 68th Varsity Match, 1998**

With the demise of Portugal Place it isn't an easy time for our undergraduates to make a contest of the Varsity Match. Limited practice is possible at the Perse, while matches have to be played at Bedford. It was to be expected that Sam Jones' side would lose this year's match, the sixth defeat in a row. But the manner of their losing was a credit to them. 38 points down after the Singles, where Sam played a particularly brave match at Four, the doubles pairs excelled themselves against the vastly better prepared Oxford players and kept the final margin of victory to 53 points, the closest in all those years. Charlie Scobie, in his fourth Varsity Match, had the pleasure of finally winning games and Bill Townley got the unofficial 'Man of the Match' award from the seasoned watchers in the balcony. Under referee David Barnes' gentle touch the match was played in a thoroughly sporting and enthusiastic manner, with both teams bearing the colours of their university. Even if both sides may be a little short of talented players next year, there is still reason to believe that the fixture has a future. It is our hope that the Jesters will take up our suggestion of a trophy, named after Jock Burnet, for this oldest of fixtures and that next year's teams will vie for that trophy with customary vigour.

**The Past:** Sadly we have lost more links with the past this year. I learnt of the death of **Frank Youngman** (Durham and Magdalene), Housemaster (Tony Tiffin's) and Chaplain at Durham School, later Rural Dean of Bradford on Avon. Frank played in the very first official Varsity Match in 1926 - Cambridge won 334-241! That year he was Secretary; the following

year he was Captain and partnered **Lloyd 'Bill' Bailey** who taught so many young Allyn's players how to play the game. Bill, as John Pretlove, who partnered him so successfully many years later, will remember, was the last player to ask the receiver (the 'server') to throw the ball up for him to strike the service. **Basil Greenup** (Merchant Taylors' and St. John's), who played doubles in 1928, singles at number one in 1929 (as Secretary), 1930 (as Captain) and 1931 (in those days they played two games of singles up to 15!), died at home at Devon last year. He wrote copious, fascinating letters to Jock and to your current editor relating the details of his playing career at Cambridge. **HFB (Dick) Foster** (Radley and Peterhouse), Secretary in 1930 and Captain in 1931, died last year. He wrote recently of his disappointment to be Captain in the last year before a Half Blue was awarded. After Cambridge and war service in the Scottish Horse, he lived in Scotland, where his life was devoted to the Salmon Rod Fishing Industry. He was one of the world's greatest authorities on Atlantic salmon and fished from a boat until shortly before his death. Cricketers will be sad to hear of the death of that very fine all-round sportsman **'Bruno' Elgood** (Bradfield and Pembroke), who returned to Cambridge in 1947 after a distinguished period of service in the Second World War, in which he had built bridges in Europe and jungle roads in Burma, gaining the MBE and being mentioned in despatches in the process. And several of our regular attenders at the Dinner will be saddened to hear of the death of **Mike Leslie** (Haileybury and Corpus), for 34 years a teacher of Classics and games at Fettes and a Housemaster. I gather too that **Tony Parker** (Blundells and Selwyn), who played at number one in 1967, has died at a sadly young age of a brain tumour.

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!  
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**Scorecard for the Varsity Match 1998 on the next page**

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 1998  
Saturday, February 21st at St. Paul's School

**Cambridge**

**Oxford**

*Singles*

CW Caroe (Eastbourne & Pembroke)	lost to BR Elfick (Captain) (Bradfield & Exeter)	3-15
BJ Thomas (St. Paul's & Fitzwilliam)	lost to PM Lord (Bradfield & LMH)	4-15
EJ Hikmet (Merchant Taylors' & Emmanuel)	lost to EW Brooke (Eastbourne & Magdalen)	2-15
ES Jones (Captain) (Eastbourne & Emmanuel)	lost to JT Harrison (Merchant Taylors' & Balliol)	14-16

**23-61**

*Doubles*

Hikmet and Thomas	v. Lord and Elfick	7-15
		1-15
Caroe and Jones	v. Brooke and J McManus (Tonbridge & Merton)	15-7
	v. Brooke and McManus	15-13
WA Townley (St. Paul's & Clare) and CK Scobie (Radley & Magdalene)		8-15
	v. Lord and Elfick	5-15
OR Twinch (Winchester & Clare) and SR Maskell (Malvern & Corpus)		4-15
	v. Harrison and TJ Ambrose (Sherborne & Worcester)	7-15
	v. RK East (St. Paul's & Brasenose) and CC Warren (Sherborne & Worcester)	15-9
	v. East and Warren	15-7
	v. Harrison and Ambrose	15-1
		15-2
		11-15
		15-8
		8-15
		11-15

**167-182**

Cambridge lost by 190-243

There was no Sparrows versus Beavers match.