



Past and Present Nr. 9 - 2000

While the cat's away, the mice will play. By the time the match manager got to Oundle on the day of the Past versus Present, Sam Jones, Joe Gribble and Jonny Armitage had convinced Simon Maskell that he, as the previous year's captain, was duty-bound to take the number one spot and be roasted by Jez Fabes, our star freshman. This left Joe Gribble, the most experienced singles player in the history of the PvP (see below), and Sam Jones, Chris Caroe's last-minute replacement, a relative doddle against James Richardson and Mark Tsang. Jonny, though, has got the hang of what is supposed to happen in the morning and did his best to give the Present a large lead in the singles, but even he can't contrive to lose one game of singles by more than 15 points, so the Past went off to an *al fresco* pint and burger at The Ship with a lead of nine points.

Singles Trivia: *Joe Gribble has played singles 10 times in the match either for the Present or the Past and has a record of Won 5 Lost 5. Who beat him 15-13 in his first match in 1990?*

In the afternoon the big guns came out. There was much discussion as to whether David Hebden had last played in the eighties, when Ian Jackson bestrode the Cambridge courts like a colossus, or perhaps even earlier, but in fact David and Rob Cleave had given John Townley & Martin Gee and the elder Caroe brothers a good pasting as recently as 1995. This time David teamed up with Sam Jones as first pair, while Richard Knight and Ian Jackson resumed their pairing of 1994. It has to be said that the boys got the better of the men in this first round of doubles, but luckily the old men in the back courts, Martin Robinson & Martin Wilkinson and Alan Matthews & Alistair Higgins ("Not so old, Bob!") enabled us to retain a lead of just six points at the turn by showing James Birch & Iain de Weymarn and Jonathan Lee & new boy Phil Caroe a thing or too about the noble game of doubles.

Brotherly Trivia: *How many other sets of three brothers have represented CURFC before Tim, Chris and Phil Caroe?*

For the second half of the doubles Richard Knight dropped out with a glowing toe and was replaced by the effervescent Simon Maskell, while David Arnold came in for Martin Wilkinson. Simon certainly atoned for his Singles performance by notching up a big win with over an out-of-practice James Richardson and Mark Tsang. But the writing was on the wall for the Past once Theo Collier dropped out with a bruised hand and Joe Gribble guested for the Present. He had been watching England's televised heroics against France at the *Stade de France* and was all fired up to knock Dave and Sam back on their heels. Phil and Jonathan too had found their form and made big inroads into the Past's slender lead when playing Alan and Alistair. Do what they might, Martin and David Arnold could not do enough to rescue a foundering ship against the much improved pairing of captain James Birch and Hon. Sec. Iain de Weymarn. The jubilant Present ran out ten-point winners by 235-225. This is what happens when the Match Manager doesn't play!

Time Trivia: *What is special about this year's Final of the BUSA Doubles Championship, in which our pairing of James Richardson and Mark Tsang lost 13-15, 15-13, 13-15 to a pair from Durham?*

Simon Maskell, last year's Captain, then issued a challenge to this year's Captain, James Birch, to play a game of singles. Stars of the game like David Hebden and Joe Gribble gathered to see if they could pick up a few tips, and to the delight of a large crowd of *aficionados* of the sublime game of singles, Simon duly won 15-4 and claimed that the Past had now won the Match by one point.

Trivia Latinoamericana: *Which two recent Captains of CURFC came face to face on the dusty road to Lake Titicaca in Bolivia in the course of the previous year? And then met once more by chance a few weeks later at Paddington Station?*

In the course of the match we had two distinguished visits at the courts. One was from Mike Mills, who produced a photograph of the 1946 team for copying onto the website and two pristine Malings balls for the archives; the other was from Dick Knight, our senior player, who first played in 1935 and won the Jesters Cup in 1948. He has very kindly donated us his team photos from 1935, 1936 and 1937. At this point I should like to repeat my request for the loan of past team photos. You will be able to check on the website which ones are missing. Can anyone fill these gaps for me? As the millennium comes to an end - or starts, whichever way you look at it - it is important to consolidate our records. We now have three books of records which cover the years 1925-2000. With the help of Alastair Mackenzie and others I have collected the details of every Varsity Match in that period and filled in the gaps caused by the loss of a record book covering 1981-1999. If anyone has any cuttings, photos or memorabilia to do with CURFC, they will, I promise, find a caring home with me and in due course with the RFA, should you feel willing to part with them for copying or permanent loan.

Archival Not-so-Trivia: *The unwritten book on 'Rugby Fives at Cambridge 1939-45' would be slim but intriguing. A scribbled note in our oldest record book suggests that a Captain (JAK Leslie), an Hon. Sec. (LAB Pilkington) and - unusually - an Assistant Hon. Sec. (M Paine) were elected in 1939, but there is no further evidence of what happened in the season 39-40. Except that the annual match was abandoned in 1940 "owing to the war". I had assumed that there was no match in the war years but a further note in the record books suggests that in 1941 there was a contest played at Portugal Place which "resulted in a win for Cambridge by a wide margin of points". The names of the Cambridge VIII are listed, though the member of the side who wrote and signed the entry did not indicate who were the officials in that team. There is no entry of any kind for the season 1941-42. A Captain and an Hon. Sec. are then recorded for each of the war years from 1942 onwards, including Barry Trapnell as Captain in 1944-45. Richard Thomas has kindly lent me a fine photo of the 1943 team, which includes himself and the tall, slim figure of Barry in the back row. I believe it is the habit to discount Varsity Matches played in the war years, however; hence we come to the end of the Millennium with a score of 47 wins to Cambridge, 23 to Oxford.*

From six o'clock onwards the Pickerel filled with familiar faces. The first task was to give a tie to each of the new Sparrows, Jez Fabes and Phil Caroe. Ryder & Amies now no longer supply these but your humble editor has a supply made to last the next twenty years, should anyone feel it is time to replace their shiny specimen for next year's Jock Burnet Dinner. This year everyone turned up at The Pickerel beforehand, including our President, Barry Trapnell,

and our guest, Jock's son David. The broadest smile was that of Mark Cornwall-Jones, for whom the Dinner had finally not coincided with skiing. He entered the pub flourishing, among other things, a cornucopia of fives balls - Malings, Slazengers, early Cliffs, experimental RFA balls of cork and composite - nestling in an original Geoffrey Malings linen bag. These too are now in the tender care of David Barnes on behalf of the RFA. Thence to the Parlour and the Ramsay Hall for a slimmed down meal after last year's *grande bouffe*. The excision of the savoury course met with little comment - Tony Murley wasn't there - and it gave us rather more time than usual after the brief speeches for conversation and an early repair to The Pickerel for last drinks. Those present in addition to the players were: Barry Trapnell, David Burnet, Dick Knight, John Holroyd, Alan Taylor, Mark Cornwall-Jones, Richard Morgan, David Barnes, David Cameron, Bob Dolby, Peter Cameron, Chris Bascombe, Don Ellwood, Richard Kemp, Graeme Denison and Rustom Irani.

***Historical Trivia:** In the first ever Varsity Match in 1925 the maximum possible score was 390 points. Cambridge scored 392. How was this possible? It was not because of victories by 16-15 or 16-14.*

The speeches: Barry welcomed David Burnet and draped a Sparrows tie round his neck with the warning that he would be fined £5 if he ever came without it. David's presence was a moving link with the days of Jock; like Jock he eschewed oratory and engaged all evening in twinkling low-profile discourse with those around him. This year's Captain, James Birch, delivered his witty report with visual aids. A photo of the Caledonian winter tour caused much mirth in some quarters (last year's captain again!), sufficient to earn a mild reproof from Barry at one point. James had clearly done wonders with the aid of his Secretary, Iain de Weymarn, in keeping a court-less Club together and in creating a sense of self-belief in the players. Their performance at the BUSA Championships and their results against senior clubs had given them the knowledge that this year they could beat Oxford at St. Paul's a week later if all went well.

The 70th Varsity Match, 2000: Lack of courts in recent years has been the major factor in limiting our players' practice, particularly in Singles. This was to show once more when the Varsity Match took place. There was very little indeed between the two sides except that element of regular practice in match situations. Our VIII could never quite get on terms, despite heroic efforts from James and Iain, who played their hearts out, and a visibly steep learning curve for our two freshmen, Jez and Phil. The gap of court experience told in the end - a defeat this year by 18 points only, after a series of heavy losses in the late nineties when Oxford were generally too talented for our players to stretch them. As David Barnes noted in his report for the RFA Handbook, both the Varsity Match and the accompanying Sparrows v. Beavers match were played in superb spirit by both sides. Long live a very special game!

So what is the situation with the courts? Very much more encouraging, I am glad to say. A firm of Cambridge Architects, Arup Associates, has been commissioned to produce a development plan for the West Cambridge site. The Director of Physical Education at Cambridge, Tony Lemons, expects the second stage of this to be completed by the end of the summer. He is confident that the plan will find space for three or even, ideally, four courts for Rugby Fives, as the space required is not huge by comparison with some of the bidders. It may be that the courts are bolted on to the Sports Centre or to a Tennis Court complex, for example. Mr Lemons is also hoping that it will be possible, once planning and building approval is obtained, that certain elements such as the fives courts will be able to go ahead on a semi-independent basis. We are therefore beginning to approach the time when we will

need to look seriously at how we raise whatever money is needed on top of what was raised by Jock and has been held since that time by the Portugal Place Trust. There will be a fundraiser working for the West Cambridge project and we will doubtless be able to come under his umbrella. Our first task is to produce a strong letter of support for Tony Lemons in his dealings with the University, who will certainly not fund sports such as ours generously, if at all. I shall discuss that with the RFA over the next few days and see how we might approach the job of convincing the University that there is a need for a set of four courts, that there is an urgent need to build at least two in the initial stages of the West Cambridge project and that there is a real possibility of the money being raised to complete such a set of courts within years rather than decades.

Finally, this year we bade farewell to another very distinguished player. **Norman Reddaway** played in 1938. After Oundle and King's College, Cambridge, where he obtained a double first in Modern Languages, he joined the Army as a private and left it six years later as a colonel. During most of those years he worked in intelligence and counter-propaganda, for which work he was awarded the MBE in 1946. After the war he worked for closer relations between Britain and its European neighbours, served as a diplomat in North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East, receiving the CBE in 1965, before ending his career as Ambassador to Poland from 1974-78. After retirement he became a vigorous Chairman of International House and a trustee of the Thomson Foundation. It was in 1993 that he returned to Portugal Place for the first time in over fifty years and took obvious delight in the annual Match and Dinner. He died in November 1999 soon after penning a lengthy letter lamenting his absence due to illness from the 50th dinner at Magdalene.

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!
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Scorecard for the Varsity Match 2000 on the next page

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 2000
Saturday, February 26th at St. Paul's School

Cambridge	Oxford	
<i>Singles</i>		
JFabes (Clifton & Magdalene)	beat MSBate(<i>Captain</i>) (Eastbourne & Brasenose)	15-12
JATRichardson (Eastbourne and & Caius)	losttoJPToop (St. Olave's & Jesus)	4-15
MPLTsang (St. Paul's & Emmanuel)	beatDJCMonck (Radley & Wycliffe)	15-11
TAJCollier (St. Paul's & Trinity)	losttoWATownley (St. Paul's & Trinity)	5-15
		39-53
<i>Doubles</i>		
Fabes and Collier	v. Bate and Toop	5-15 12-15
	v. Monck and Townley	13-15 16-14
Richardson and Tsang	v. Monck and Townley	6-15 15-10
	v. Bate and Toop	9-15 5-15
JS Birch (<i>Capt.</i>) (K.E.S., Birmingham & Corpus) and IA de Weymarn (Bloxham & St. John's)	v.PTO'G Roche (Oundle & Worcester) and BA Brookes (Tonbridge & New College)	15-8 15-10
	v. Evans and Mudd	15-5 15-10
JLC Lee (St. Paul's & Clare) and PJ Caroe (Eastbourne & Christ's)	v. RM Evans (Whitgift & Somerville) and S Mudd (Whitgift & Hertford)	5-15 11-15
	v. Roche and Brookes	15-11 15-3
		187-191
		Cambridge lost by 226-244

In the **Sparrows versus Beavers match** on the adjoining courts, Oxford won 180-74. Cambridge were represented by JP Cooper (Edinburgh Academy & Homerton), MA Pinna (Oundle & Caius), RJC Lewis (Bloxham & Girton) and MBV Bell (Oundle & Magdalene).

Thus the millennium ends - or begins, depending on the way you define it - with 47 wins to Cambridge and 23 to Oxford, excluding a recently discovered match in 1941 which Cambridge won "by a wide margin of points".