



Past and Present Nr. 11 - 2002

Whatever possessed Chris Martin-Jenkins to go all the way to New Zealand to watch the England team score 89 runs when he could have come to Oundle that very same day and watched Robert Cleave score almost as many points 'single-handed' against the Present? But more of that when we come to the Doubles.

There is always a story of logistical breakdown to be told when it comes to the Past v. Present. If it isn't boilers breaking down, or cunningly timed late arrivals, or kittens being born in the courts, it is usually locked doors. This year was no exception: despite the best efforts of the match manager 75 miles away at a Parents' Meeting, the Singles players found the changing rooms locked and two of the four courts likewise denied them. Thus it was that, as in the days of Portugal Place, the matches were double-banked and the players got to the pub for lunch even later than usual.

Media Trivia: Which Sparrow competed on a celebrity edition of 'The Weakest Link', losing in the final round to bonk-buster author Jilly Cooper? Jilly famously patronised our man with the words, "Patrick is such a terrific banker!" Clue: Patrick had recently won the 2001 Whitbread Novel Prize for his second novel, 'Twelve Bar Blues', a somewhat catchier title than that of his first work, 'Musungu Jim and the Great Chief Tuloko'.

The Singles were rather closer this year than often before. Though Rob Cleave (46) couldn't stretch Jez Fabes (rather younger) for too long, James Birch gave James Richardson a decent run for his money (James R. had in fact been for a seven mile run the day before, while James B., last year's Captain, had most likely done nothing more strenuous by way of preparation than watch 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' at the local multiplex). It took our two trusty veterans, Joe Gribble and Andy Pringle, to register victories for the Past. First Joe beat Simon Maskell (who has played Singles in this fixture for the past four years, for the Present in 1999, the Past in 2000, and the Present again in 2001 and 2002 and looks set to take over from Joe when the latter's Singles contract runs out in 2013) and the Andy comfortably defeated the rather inexperienced Matt Burman. A lead for the Present at lunch-time of only 4 points hardly looked enough when one saw the calibre of the doubles players that the Past would throw into action in the afternoon.

Medical Trivia: Which of our many young medics was to be seen in red tracksuit at Murrayfield helping to stretcher off a stricken Jonny Wilkinson? Clue: Simon has moved from his post as club doctor at Fulham Football Club to be Head of Sports Medicine and Senior Team doctor with the RFU.

It's always nice to wheel out a true champion for the Past and they don't come any more impressive than David Hebden, the most successful doubles player that Cambridge has produced, not to mention a former Open Champion. He and Rob Cleave took on the BUSA

champions, Jez Fabes and James Richardson, in a marvellously competitive match that ended 12-15, 16-14, all the more marvellous since Rob Cleave played it all, and two more doubles thereafter, with a broken finger. By the time Rob got to the Dinner and showed it to Martin Robinson for a professional opinion, the blackened finger looked like the ones Arctic explorers have cut off when they get back to terra firma. Joe Gribble and Jonny Armitage, playing at Two, didn't extend themselves quite so drastically as Rob in their defeat of Simon Maskell and Jonathan Lee 15-4, 15-7, but were to come off court looking a bit bruised once Jez and James had swept them aside 15-3, 15-4 after 'the turn'. It was no disgrace: Jez and James were to do the same, and better, to the Oxford second pair the following week!

Coaching Trivia: Which schoolmaster, himself a Cambridge man, seems to be grooming his players in barrow-loads to go to Cambridge? Careful reading of the scorecard overleaf will reveal that he teaches at St. Paul's and follows in the footsteps of that eminent (Oxford) fives player and wine aficionado, Alastair Mackenzie.

It was in the back courts that the Past this year built a big lead. Rod Oscroft had returned to the fold after a break of 15 years and, partnering first the match manager and then Andy Pringle, was a bit too powerful in the fourth pair for the inexperienced Present pairs, Matt Burman & Patrick Driscoll and Jeremy Dickens & Richard Billington. James Birch and Alan Matthews, playing at Three, were also too good for the youngsters, but Matt and Jeremy, two left-handers who were to play such an important part in the Varsity Match a week later, must have gained valuable experience in their matches, one of the reasons why the Past v. Present is more than just a social reunion. The outcome of the match was a win for the Past by 259-183, their first since 1999.

Crossword Trivia: In The Friday Crossword in The Independent on May 18th 2001 clue 6 across read: Game found in very Etonian setting, primarily (5). The answer was of course: FIVES. Can anyone invent a cryptic clue that would involve either Rugby Fives or Winchester Fives or the Cambridge Sparrows?

Meanwhile at The Perse in Cambridge a master class was being conducted. Ian Jackson, Martin Wilkinson, Martin Robinson and David Arnold were imparting the skills of two centuries to three young players, who were then to put the lesson to good use a week later in giving the Beavers a pasting. Martin R. also gave his new digital camera a good run out, and I can report that there is for the first time a record of the Past v. Present 2002 available on CD - with music!

Navigational Trivia: Which previous captain, who this year played for the Present but has previously represented the Past (see earlier), failed to turn up at St. Paul's in 1996 to represent the Sparrows because he had inadvertently gone to – St. Paul's Primary School in Cambridge?!

Players and other Sparrows duly gathered in The Pickerel from 6 pm, relieved that Magdalene had managed not to burn itself down and condemn us to another year of exotic food in alien surroundings. The turn-out for the Dinner in Ramsay Hall was good: joining those who had played in the match (bar Andy Pringle, who had triple-booked himself and had to hot-foot it back to London in his 'Car of the Year' - emblazoned with the Union Jack but made by those very 'British' car-makers in Burnaston) were Barry Trapnell, Michael Mills, Richard Thomas, Dickie Clarke, John Holroyd, Dennis Silk, John Pretlove, Alan Taylor, John Ingram, David Barnes, David Cameron, Andrew Lewis and Tim Wilson. For John Holroyd it

was his 50th consecutive Dinner as a member of the Past, to add to the three which he attended as an undergraduate. This is a unique record to hold, especially as he was at the very first Dinner in 1949.

***Missing Sparrows:** I always hope that one day I may track them all down, perhaps with the help of the internet. But, first, if any of my readers can help, I would be grateful. No trace can be found through school or college of the following: GW Horsley (1946,47; Oundle and Clare), ARH Welford (1977; Blundells and St. Catharine's), Paul Wright (1984,85,86; St. Paul's and St. John's), Simon Pratt (1989, 90, 91; Cheltenham and Fitzwilliam; now known as Huntley and perhaps a West Country vet).?*

The 72nd Varsity Match, 2002: The match was a real nail-biter. It began with unusual success for Cambridge in Singles (15 points up), then a swing back to Oxford in the first round of Doubles (three points down), then some crushing light blue victories in the second round of Doubles. Everyone played their part, but it has to be said that captain Jez Fabes played as well in Singles and Doubles as any undergraduate can ever have played, and he and his partner James Richardson lived up to their status as BUSA Champions. The spirit that Jez and his Hon. Sec., Matt Bell, have engendered in the Club this year is exceptional, and it showed in the fact that Cambridge offered eight players for the Sparrows versus Beavers match, settling in the end for six-a-side, which Cambridge won handsomely. It certainly helped having two Sparrows who had previously played for the VIII. It also helped having five Paulines in the Cambridge squad, playing on familiar courts.

***Presidential Trivia:** What is doubly unique about David Hebden and Iain de Weymarn's victory in this year's President's Cup at Merchant Taylors'?*

The Present: Their season has been a curious one, in that losses littered the way but the big successes came where it mattered: at BUSA and at St. Paul's. As far as other fixtures are concerned, the various losses were, probably, a source of valuable experience gained. The boys have lost to Alleyn Old Boys (but Hamish Buchanan was playing, so no discredit there!), the RFA (twice - Cleave and Dolby were playing), the Jesters (twice - Gribble and Birch were playing; no chance!), the Bank of England (Iain de Weymarn was playing), St. Paul's and, of course the Past, but they won the Varsity Match and they had great success at BUSA. There Jez Fabes got to the Final of the Singles, but lost to Under 25 champion Ed Brooke. Jez and James Richardson won the Doubles, however, beating the Oxford and Durham first pairs on the way. Jez subsequently got revenge on Ed Brooke by beating him in the Varsity Match, but then lost once more to him in the final of the National Under 25 tournament, played on the Oxford courts. Again, though, Jez and James won the Doubles.

Successes for the The Past: Cambridge players continue to fill the record books. Paddy d'Ancona ("King of the West Country") won the Singles at both the West of England and the South West tournaments in 2001. David Hebden ("The Legend") won the Winchester Fives Doubles Tournament at Bradfield with his regular partner Ian Fuller for the seventh consecutive time. He also won three other doubles tournaments playing with Hamish Buchanan in addition to the President's Cup (see above) and, to prove that he is still a formidable singles player, won the Singles title at the Veterans' tournament at Horsham. John Denison lost the final of the Vintage Singles (over 55) at Manchester to John East but won the Doubles with John, beating Bernard Atkinson and Bob Dolby.

Valete: Finally, we bid our farewells. The Jesters among us may have read in the Annual Report of the activities of the very oldest members of that Club, founded by Jock Burnet. Among them was **the Reverend John Brooks** (Tonbridge and St. John's), still preaching every Sunday at the age of 92. His longevity he put down to playing Fives in his youth! I wrote to him to congratulate him on being our oldest pre-Sparrow, having played in 1931 with Jack Davies. Sadly he received my letter in hospital where he was diagnosed with liver cancer. The Church Times published a lengthy obituary, from which I gleaned the following: He was Head Boy at Tonbridge, then went up to read Classics and English at Cambridge, whereafter followed ten years' schoolmastering at Wycliffe College and Sedbergh. Not only captain of his college cricket team, he was later captain of Gloucester rugby club. He served in the war as a naval gunnery officer in Channel, Atlantic and Arctic convoys. After the war he trained for ordination, going on to become, in turn, curate in Northolt Park, Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon College, Rector of Ndola on the Zambian copperbelt, Chaplain at Dover College, Rector of Northbourne, and finally to lead a very active "retirement" in Kent, where one of his tasks was to minister to the victims of the Zeebrugge ferry disaster. Two other great stalwarts of club Fives departed this year, **Clive Eckert** (Merchant Taylors' and Pembroke) and **Colin Hindson** (Durham and St. John's). Clive Eckert was a Sparrow in 1956 and went on to become Hon. Sec. of the RFA Club and subsequently Vice-President of the RFA. David Evans spoke in tribute at the Memorial Service last summer. Colin Hindson, a Sparrow of the same vintage, was an extraordinarily assiduous member of the RFA and the Jesters, despite 10 years service with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was absolutely delighted to be invited to the 50th Past v. Present in 1999 where he sat with his school friend of 40 years before, Tony Tiffin. In long letters to your editor Colin told tales of matches, tournaments and tours in the 50s and 60s, and he asked to be introduced at the Dinner to Chris Martin-Jenkins so that he could "have fun telling him about Frank Tyson's antics on the fives courts in March 1953 when he came to play for Durham University against us at Durham School." In a touching twist of events, so David Evans tells me, Colin Hindson's Sparrows crest now resides in the study of Clive's son, Neil Eckert.

Finally, those who receive, and read, their copy of CAM will have seen an artist's impression of the sports development at west Cambridge (see also www.sport.cam.ac.uk/westcambridgedevelopment) which incorporates three Rugby Fives courts. This month, since the Dinner, detailed planning permission has been granted for the development of the site. Sir Geoffrey Cass, of CUP, RSC and LTA fame, has been appointed to chair the Appeal Committee. His first task is to seek large benefactors, before launching the general Appeal to which those of us who wish to will eventually contribute. I shall post any further news here on the website.

Correspondence gratefully received and enthusiastically answered!
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Last year's trivia: Answers freely given to those who send a sae to the above address!

Next year's Past versus Present and Jock Burnet Dinner
Saturday, February 15th 2003.

This will be a Champions' Dinner – More details in due course.

CAMBRIDGE v. OXFORD 2002
Saturday, February 23rd at St. Paul's School

Cambridge	Oxford	
<i>Singles</i>		
JFabes(<i>Captain</i>) (Clifton & Magdalene)	beatEWBrooke (Eastbourne & Magdalen)	15-7
JATRichardson (Eastbourne & Gonville and Caius)	losttoMSBate (Eastbourne & Brasenose)	4-15
EGRCorner (St. Paul's & Trinity)	beatSMudd (Whitgift & Hertford)	15-7
SRMaskell (Malvern & Corpus Christi)	beatRMEvans (Whitgift & St Anne's)	15-5
		49-34
<i>Doubles</i>		
Fabes and Richardson	v. Brooke and Bate	15-11 9-15
	v. Mudd and Evans	15-1 15-1
Maskell and Corner	v. Mudd and Evans	15-7 15-9
	v. Brooke and Bate	8-15 16-14
JCD Paul (St Paul's & St John's)	andv. BA Brookes (Tonbridge & New College)	14-16
MG Burman (Christ's Hospital & Downing)	and EWG Hatton (Christ's Hospital and Balliol)	6-15
	v. NJ Hillier (Whitgift & Mansfield) (<i>Captain</i>) and N Millar (Fettes and Christ Church)	10-15 4-15
JLC Lee (St. Paul's & Clare)	andv. Hillier and Millar	8-15
JM Dickens (Bedford & Emmanuel)		3-15
	v. Brookes and Hatton	15-3 15-2
		183-169
		Cambridge won by 232-203

Cambridge now boast 48 wins against 24 wins to Oxford.

In a six-aside **Sparrows versus Beavers match** on the adjoining courts, Cambridge won 210-128. Cambridge were represented by MPL Tsang (St Paul's & Emmanuel), TAJ Collier (St Paul's & Trinity), PM Driscoll (Whitgift & Christ's), RA Billington (Winchester & Clare Hall), MA Pinna (Oundle & Gonville and Caius) and MBV Bell (Hon. Sec.) (Oundle & Magdelene).