

Ian Roberts (1956-2011)

Ian Roberts was at Giggleswick School from 1969-74 and was engaged in writing the official history of the School at the time of his premature death. Thus it was entirely appropriate that his funeral should be held in the School Chapel, where the congregation heard two fine tributes and witnessed his coffin borne out by members of the White Rose Rugby Fives Club.

Ian's article on Fives at Giggleswick, written for the RFA Handbook in 1999, was typical of the man: scholarly, enthusiastic, humorous. He was passionate about Fives and rejoiced in its eccentricities. He enjoyed discovering that 'Gig' had first built Eton, then Winchester, and lastly Rugby Fives courts, and that these last had been deliberately designed with a floor sloping from front to back for better drainage, despite the fact that they were also provided with roofs.

Ian had a highly successful school career, before winning an Exhibition to Queen's College, Oxford, to read History, graduating with First Class Honours. No doubt just as important in his eyes, he also played Fives at Oxford and got into the Beavers team to play the Cambridge Sparrows.



Ian (second left) won the Love Mug for the first time in 1987, partnered by Cliff Dare (left)

After Oxford, Ian chose to go into the law. After qualifying, he worked in Leeds for Simpson, Curtis and Booth & Co, and then as a partner for Irwin Mitchell in Sheffield and London. He specialised in corporate work, at which he showed both brilliance and his own inimitable tenacity, from which the RFA was later to benefit.

In the five short years that Ian was on the Board, he was one of the most effective directors, co-editing the joint RFA/EFA Annual Review, attending almost every meeting, providing a venue for some of them, advising on any matter requiring legal expertise and, in what turned out to be his final

legacy, working tirelessly in order to win Charitable Status. In addition, he was for years the organiser of the Heath Old Boys Open Doubles in Halifax (later named the Yorkshire Open with a move to Giggleswick). And then there was the White Rose Club, whose affairs Ian organised, undertaking a typically meticulous correspondence with Calderdale Council to ensure that the courts were kept open and maintained.

Ian derived huge pleasure from the White Rose Club's wins in the Wood Cup in 1991 and 1994. Then there were various triumphs in the plate competitions at the President's Cup, an event of which Ian was a great supporter: the Love Mug in 1987 and 2006, and the Mate's Plate in 1999. And lastly there was the Scottish Open Doubles win with John Minta in 2007, his first Open Doubles title.

Everyone who knew him will miss Ian: his family, his school and university friends, his law colleagues, the many people he came across in his historical researches, and, in a very special way, all those involved in the administration and playing of the game he loved.