

THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION.

V. E. A. BOWLEY RETIRES

The Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Rugby Fives Association was held at 41, Welbeck Street (by kind permission of Dr. Cyriax), on Wednesday, October 10th.

The following officers were elected for the coming year: Dr. E. Cyriax, re-elected chairman of the committee, J. Armitage, Hon. Secretary, G. R. Rimmer, Assist. Hon. Sec., H. D. Beevers, Hon. Treasurer, K. W. Millage, Hon. Match Secretary. Additional members of the committee, V. E. A. Bowley, P. A. Malt, W. J. Rees, J. A. C. Robertson, F. A. Vogler, and V. E. Oundjian.

Changes were rather numerous, chief among them being the retirement of V. E. A. Bowley from the position of Hon. Secretary after serving the Association in this capacity for the seven years of the Association's life. Bowley did not seek re-election and since his decision had been made known to the committee beforehand, the opportunity was taken of making him a presentation of a silver cigarette box on behalf of the committee. An appreciation of Mr. Bowley's work appears on another page. The new Hon. Secretary's address is, 1, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 4702.

The meeting was a lively one with many points brought up for discussion. For the first time, the Association announced beforehand that they had chosen the Jefferies Malings "Perfecta" as their "standard" ball for the 1934-35 season, so that this ball which has been used very generally in the past will once again do duty in all four championships.

It was decided to invite all Fives players who have the welfare of the game at heart to become Associate members of the Association at an annual subscription of five shillings. This motion received unanimous support and it is hoped very much that all Fives players will very generously lend their support to the Association in this way. The work of the Association has been hampered in the past by the very slender income provided for their very many activities. Will all Fives players who would like to help the Association in this way, communicate direct with H. D. Beevers at his home address, 11, Fulford Road, Ewell, Surrey. It was also determined to invite the Schools to become full members of the Association.

THE NEW COMMITTEE.

The following were present at the meeting representing their clubs. Dr. E. Cyriax (U.C.S. Old Boys), B. R. Griffiths (Old Merchant Taylors), V. E. A. Bowley (Old Sinjuns), P. A. Malt (Alley Old Boys), E. W. C. Lewis (Old Blues), M. H. Donohoe, G. R. Rimmer (Old Alleynians), J. Armitage (Jesters), J. L. W. Scruby, W. J. Rees (London University), K. W. Millage (Old Blues), H. D. Beevers (Old Sinjuns), K. R. R. Readhead (Old Paulines), H. A. Oundjian (Old Paulines), W. F. Marchant, A. D. May (King's College), A. Jarvis, V. E. Oundjian (Old Paulines) and A. Francis (Westminster Bank).

The dates of the Championships are Amateur Doubles Championship January 7th to 16th; Amateur Singles Championship March 18th to 27th. Public Schools Championships, April 8th to 15th (approx.). The earlier rounds of the County Championship Competition will be played off on Fridays, November 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, December 7th and 14th, with the final on Friday, December 21st.

V. E. A. BOWLEY

After eight years of very solid work, during which the foundations of the Rugby Fives Association have been well and truly made, V. E. A. Bowley has retired from his position of Honorary Secretary, which he has held since the very inception of the Association. He, himself, in our issue of last month, told with characteristic humour, the story of the hazardous path which the Association has had to tread. That it has triumphed over its difficulties and negotiated its journey safely, is due in no small measure to Bowley and it is not a little sad that he should resign his position at a time when the Association seems about to break into the full bloom of authority. In that he is only following precedent for it has generally been the fate of pioneers to sow that others may reap. Bowley, however, is not likely to be forgotten. He remains and will remain a member of the Association Committee.

Bowley was an excellent secretary, a clear thinker and a splendid correspondent. Moreover, he combined efficiency with a very fine sense of humour. Bowley was the originator of all the best jokes on Rugby Fives, one of which will bear repetition very well. At an Association dinner in 1933 he told the assembled company how he and a friend were one day on the way to the barber's when they fell to talking, as good Fives players will, about their game. On arrival at their destination they discovered that every chair was occupied save one, and

Bowley readily assigned this to his friend. On enquiry from the barber on how he would like his hair cut, the friend gave the astonishing reply, "Half-way up and down the wall."

It is rumoured, with how much truth we do not know, that the new secretary has already requested Bowley to continue to write the Annual Reports. These were, perhaps, Bowley's greatest triumphs, for it must be a very small proportion of secretaries who try and succeed in making their reports not only to the point but entertaining.

Mr. H. D. Beevers, who has been associated with Mr. Bowley during the lifetime of the Association, writes:—

"This issue records elsewhere that Mr. V. E. A. Bowley has decided not to stand for re-election as the honorary secretary of the Rugby Fives Association for the coming year. It is not that he has been finding the work too arduous, although it is arduous enough for an already busy man; it is simply and solely because, having been secretary since the Association was founded, he feels that it may be as well to make a change. My best wishes to Mr. John Armitage, his successor in office; but I am sorry that Bowley has resigned.



V. E. A. BOWLEY

I have so long associated the post of honorary secretary with Bowley that it comes as a shock to me when I realise that I must now re-arrange my ideas. This gives the impression that I have a lamentably conservative mind; but I must confess that when I think of Fives my thoughts lead me to Bowley, and when I think of Bowley my thoughts very often lead me back to Fives. Not a vicious circle; an important one.

The fact is that Bowley has been playing Fives for a long time. I think I am right in saying that he began an Old Sinjuns Fives Club as far back as 1921. Certainly in 1923-1924 we played a number of matches, and in 1924-1925 over 20 matches; and in all of these I had the feelings of a small boy being taken round London by an avuncular Bowley. Even then he seemed to know all about the game, as though he had been playing for years and years. He cannot, of course, vie with Dr. Cyriax in a forty years' experience, but he has been in close personal contact with Fives for the last twelve or thirteen years.

I have spent holidays with Bowley and much of our talk has been about Fives—he talks refreshingly about the game not only in speeches at our dinners. He would say, 'I've been thinking—,' and then would come a discourse. These discourses have their results. A little time ago he was experimenting with a new type of composition Fives ball which would last for ever, at least he hoped it would. More recently he has been experimenting with a new kind of glove the advent of which, he hopes, may see the end of all bruised and broken hands. It will be on the market, I understand, very soon. Yes, Bowley thinks about the game.

In an article in this magazine last month he briefly described the work of the Association since its inception: the formation of a constitution, the making of rules, the standardisation of this that and the other, the running of competitions, and so on. With all these Bowley has been closely connected, and towards their development he has worked. I am sorry, now that all these schemes have been brought to their present state, that he is not, as Secretary of the Association, to continue to help in their control for, at any rate, a little longer.

It was important that the Secretary of the Rugby Fives Association, in its early days, should be a man with ideas and initiative. I have known Bowley as a friend for a long time; and he is a man, if he will allow me to say so, with ideas, imagination and initiative. These he has intelligently brought to bear upon the work of the Association. If he has sometimes found detail irksome he has never suffered from a paucity of ideas, and in that the Association has been fortunate.

One thing I shall particularly miss, I am sure Dr. Cyriax as the invariable chairman of the meetings will miss, and all who have attended annual general meetings at Welbeck Street will miss, it is those cheerful virile reports of 'that chap Bowley' as the Doctor calls him. It is not easy to combine a little fun and humour with a lucid and sensible report of a year's work. This Bowley succeeded in doing year after year. As a suggestion perhaps he might incorporate his reports together with other details of the work of the Association in a volume to be kept as a permanent record.

And now Bowley has generously resigned. One might say that he is well rid of a thankless job—most honorary secretaries have a thankless job—but his work has meant more to him than to many secretaries because it has been something that he himself has helped to begin. He has helped the Association to grow and to prosper; he has had the satisfaction of the pioneer in creating something out of what was virtually nothing. I hope the good, solid foundations that he has helped to build will continue to grow.

But Bowley has not nearly finished yet. It is to be hoped that he will long remain a member of the Association's Committee so that it may still have his ideas and also his sense of humour to serve it. A sense of humour provides a useful form of criticism. Perhaps with some of the weight of the work off his shoulders his ideas will sprout even more."