

S.R.F.T.R. October 1935

Early Days of Fives.

B. R. Griffiths, of the Old Merchant Taylors Fives Club, has very kindly lent us a most interesting number of the "Taylorian," dated February, 1926, which contains a most valuable reference to the early days of Fives. The word "Fives" is extremely old, and has been used in the past to denote many different games and pastimes in which the ball was propelled either across a net or against a wall with the hand. It has also meant boxing, the "Fives Court" for a period being the "ring" of the modern day. Accordingly it is not possible to be certain of the game to which the following patent refers but it is an extremely interesting allusion. It was found in 1925 by Major E. W. H. Fyers among the State Papers, and appears here as it was printed in the "Times" in October of that year.

Warrant

Marie R.

"Thomas Samborne new Invention.

"Whereas Thomas Samborne hath by his humble Petition represented unto Us, that by his long study and Paynes, & at his great charge & Expence hath invented contrived and perfected a certain Exercise called Fives, which is moderately Expensive, and in itselfe innocent & harmless, and very much conducing to the health & refreshmt of such as practise it the same being heretofore publickly practised in England, and has prayed Us to grant him Our Letters Patents for the Sole use thereof, We are graciously pleased to condescend thereunto. Our Will and Pleasure therefore is, that you prepare a Bill for Our Royall Signature to passe our Great Seale containing Our Grant unto him the said Tho: Samborne his Executors Administrators & Assignes of License & Priviledge for the sole use, Exercise & benefit of the said new Invention within Our Kingdom of England Dominion of Wales and Towne of Berwick upon Tweed for & during the terme of 14 yeares, according to the Statute in that behalfe made and provided; and you are to insert therein all such Clauses Provisoos & Prohibitions as are usuall & requisite in Grants of this Nature. And for so doing this shall be your Warrant.

"Given at Our Court at Whitehall the 23rd day of June 1692 in the 4 yeare of Our Reigne By her Majtys Command

"Nottingham.

"To Our Attorney or Sollicitor Generall."