

RFA Handbook 1977-78

RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION CLUB

At the end of the second World War, through bombing of Fives Courts in the London area, a small number of keen Fives players found themselves without a club providing courts. At the A.G.M. of the Association on the 23rd June, 1947, it was proposed that, if possible, a Rugby Fives Association club should be formed to provide opportunities, for those without club courts, to continue to play Fives. After the A.G.M. twelve players interested in the formation of this club offered to join and appointed G. R. Rimmer (Old Alleynian) Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, and a committee of B. R. Griffiths (Old Merchant Taylor), J. H. White (Old Alleynian) and A. E. Hanna (Old Blues) to explore the possibilities.

The difficulty was finding courts but an offer was made for the use of the old courts at the College of St. Mark and St. John in Chelsea on certain evenings for a court fee of two shillings (10p.) per evening. The committee met on the 5th July, 1947 and worked out a set of rules, and decided on an annual subscription of ten shillings (50p.) payable by Bankers Order and that notification should be sent to any Fives player who might be interested in the formation of this club. Two months later on the 15th September, the first meeting was called and 14 players from nine different clubs met and joined. Twelve schools and clubs had been approached for away fixtures.

In 1948 the club was offered the use on two evenings per week of the old courts at Alleyns School and this most generous offer by the Headmaster was a great encouragement to the club and this happy arrangement has continued to the present day, enabling the club to offer home fixtures. The Hon. Secretary found out that Fives gloves would be appreciated by Alleyns School and the club has presented these since.

In 1950 the R.F.A. suggested that the club might get fixtures further afield and Bloxham, Bristol and Clifton were approached. By 1954 the fixture list was 18 and two years later a West of England section of the club was formed and managed by A. R. Codrington and the fixture list rose to 33.

G. R. Rimmer resigned as Hon. Secretary in 1954 and was elected the first President. H. Pigott took over as Hon. Secretary and remained in office until 1957. In 1957 the President presented a cup to be played for by drawn pairs and also tankards for the winners were provided. The President's Cup has been played for ever since.

C. H. Eckert became Hon. Secretary and unfortunately only remained in office until 1960 when D. H. Beevers took over.

At this time the club suffered some set backs and in 1961 the West of England section severed its connection with the club. Up to this time meetings had been held in private houses, pubs, business premises and even in changing rooms, but things now improved by the opening of the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives club. This club offered all club amenities and became the meeting place for the R.F.A. club. In 1962 N. J. Fitch became Hon. Secretary and worked hard to improve the club and fixture list.

In 1965 J. G. Burton became President and still remains in office, giving invaluable help and advice. In the same year C. R. N. Clark took over from N. J. Fitch with the same efficiency, remaining in office until 1970. T. Sparling was Hon. Secretary in 1970, followed by Tom Wood. The fortunes of the club under Tom Wood are recent history and a fantastic fixture list has grown from 36 in 1971 to 92 in 1977. Also a social side to the club has developed by his great hospitality at the Waxchandlers Hall and the gatherings on the President's Cup finals.

Space has only allowed the mention of a few names, but the club is indebted to many committee members and Hon. Treasurers of whom T. E. Jones and D. Barnes were the longest serving.

G.R.R.