

## RFA CELEBRATION DINNER

'It ended too soon!' was the only murmur of complaint heard after the Celebration Dinner. But the little group that made this comment had travelled far and were staying locally. Being fives players, they were not short of initiative, so before the bar finally closed, they had taken jugs of beer to tables outdoors and continued celebrating into the fine September night.

The evening had gone well. The Bank of England Sports Club was, as it always is, a friendly venue providing a fine meal, the wines had been expertly selected, and the informality of round tables enhanced the welcoming atmosphere. Over 100 people, including Hon. Life Members Joan Wood and Geoffrey Rimmer, were present, and superb speeches were made by Rugby Fives's answer to the Three Tenors, Alastair Mackenzie, Jerry Cooper and Wayne Enstone, each in his own inimitable style.

Alastair Mackenzie, proposing the toast to the new RFA, started with a reference to Hazlitt's famous piece on John Cavanagh, 'the Wayne Enstone of his day'. The present dinner was an opportunity to celebrate the RFA's 70th and the RFA Club's 50th anniversaries, as well as their union. Alastair then paid tribute to Geoffrey Rimmer, a founder member of both bodies, for his lifelong support of Rugby Fives. The similar names of the Association and Club had meant that Fives players, being notoriously absent-minded, occasionally had difficulty remembering who they were playing for, as Alastair illustrated with some classic examples. He then referred to the great players he had been lucky enough to see on court during 50 years as player and coach. Moving on to the subject of 'après-fives', he reminded us that this was an equally important feature of the game, as he proved with some personal recollections. To end his typically stylish speech, Alastair evoked the names of some who had 'particularly helped to perpetuate the game we love', ending with a tribute to Wayne Enstone, the Bradman of fives, 'such a splendid ambassador for our game as well as its supreme exponent'.

Jerry Cooper, replying on behalf of the Association, thanked Alastair for his speech and for his memorable company on and off court over the years. He also paid warm tribute to Geoffrey Rimmer, who had played for the RFA Club against Bedford Modern School exactly 50 years ago this season. He spoke of the problems associated with running fives at a school, which had largely to do with the indifference of adults, particularly bursars and headmasters! He thanked all who had supported the dinner, and particularly Denise Hall-Wilton and Paddy d'Ancona for all their work in setting it up.

Lastly, Jerry briefly evoked the playing career of Wayne Enstone from his earliest days on court, reminding us that Wayne had 'set the standard in Rugby Fives for 25 years' and had remained 'always a sportsman, always a gentleman'. On behalf of the RFA, he then presented Wayne with an antique claret jug in recognition of his contribution to the playing of Rugby Fives, and proposed a toast to him.

Wayne rose to reply with a sheaf of notes, but he bravely discarded them and made a moving impromptu speech, refocussing the praise that had been heaped on him onto the wider company of Fives players, who had given him so much support and inspiration over the years.

In addition to the speeches, there was a very successful raffle (won by Keith Love) and a wide-ranging display of photos recording moments in Fives over the years, which evoked nostalgia and mirth. The photo quiz was won jointly by Joan Wood and Neil Roberts - but both failed inexcusably to solve the 'name the legs' question.

### Denise Hall-Wilton

Guest list: Harry Akerman, Will Akerman, Vic Aldous, Mu Ali, Chris and Sally Arnold, John and Trisha Atkins, Jonathon and Hattie Bartle, John and Joan Battersby, Richard and Catherine Black, Hamish Buchanan, Nail Butterfield, Rick Carr, Jerry and Grace Cooper, Robert Dalman, Paddy d'Ancona, Peter de Winton, John and Eleanor Denison, Bob Dolby, Peter Dunscombe, Paulo Durán, John and Dizzie East, Wayne and Lesley Enstone, Ian and Jane Fuller, David Gardner, Martin Gee, Nigel and Joanna Gordon, Bill Gunyon, John and Faith Guthrie, Denise Hall-Wilton, Bruce and Janet Hanton, David and Sandie Hebblethwaite, Dave and Kate Hebden, Chris and Joy Heron, Chris and Jo Horrocks, Sue Horsley, Tony Hughes, Trevor and Sue Ingle, Peter and Brenda Ingram, Lionel Lawson, Roger and Eleanor Layton, Tim Lewis, Sandra Love, Keith and Mary Love, Emily Macdonald, Alastair and Pauline Mackenzie, Bruce Mackenzie, Alan Maltby, Eric Marsh, Karen Milliner, Colin Niven, Keith and Suzanne Puckle, Douglas and Alison Rice, Geoffrey Rimmer, Neil and Gillian Roberts, Sam Roberts, Guy and Anne Sagar, Nic Shugar, Jack and Anne Slater, Terry and Linda Smeeton, Nick and Patricia Smith, Paul Smith, Tom and Margaret Steele, Rick Stubbing, Simon and Rochelle Swales, Ron Swash, Ben Taberner, George and Sue Todd, Ian Torkington, Michael and Sarah Tremellen, Dick Warner, Stuart Watson, John Webber, Simon and Jackie Werkshagen, Adrian Williams, Rick and Beryl Wilson, Joan Wood.