

RFA Handbook 1998-99

PETER McDONALD INGRAM (1935-1999)

The 1995/6 RFA Handbook featured an article by Owen Toller to mark Peter Ingram's retirement from teaching at Merchant Taylors' School. Sadly, Peter was only to enjoy a few months of retirement before he fell ill with cancer. He fought the disease with typical courage and continued to involve himself as much as he could with Fives almost right up to his death in February. Bhaswar Baral, one of his former pupils who now organises the Old Merchant Taylors' Fives Club, has contributed the following article in memory of Peter.

In February this year, Peter Ingram passed away. For nearly thirty years at Merchant Taylors' he encouraged many of us to take up Rugby Fives, producing a number of outstanding teams, lifelong friendships and memorable tournament excursions. Despite illness, Peter had hoped to organise this season's National Under 13 Championships, but sadly he died as he was about to carry out the task.

Peter was Captain of Fives at Bedford School, where his enthusiasm for the game led him to compile an archive of the game played at the school dating back to 1898. He went on to obtain a Fives half-blue at Cambridge, again captaining the team. Peter taught Chemistry at Taylors', and during the first term of each year his lessons would double as a recruitment drive for new fives players. Within a few weeks, the courts would be teeming. He never became annoyed or flustered on appearing at the courts to be presented with four, five or six-a-side fives. The more people who experienced the game, the better, in his opinion. Without that initial plug, I suspect fives would have been overlooked by many of us.

A high-point in Peter's fives coaching came in 1986, when he took a team on tour to Boston, Massachusetts; John Hampel returned the winner of that competition. Manchester and Sherborne were tournaments regularly attended closer to home. He organised travel and accommodation for us, such was his dedication. Peter was full of encouragement and practical hints. During one training session prior to the National Schools, he kept volleying the ball from mid-court - a whole string of inch-above-line volleys. When asked how he'd developed such consistency, he replied, "An unwillingness to run seems to help, but that doesn't apply to you ... yet!"

Outside fives, Peter was well-liked and much respected by everybody. He conceived and developed the careers service at Taylors', an increasingly vital asset in any educational institution currently, and involved himself in the welfare not only of pupils but also of new masters at the school. Not one for standing and watching, Peter, along with other members of staff, set up a sideline in interior decoration! His approachability, sense of fun and cool-headedness endeared him to all who met him. This was never better attested than by the occasion of his retirement dinner in 1996, attended by so many of his friends and of course his loving family. Peter was a sportsman and a gentleman through and through and will be missed greatly.

Bhaswar Baral