



THE ALLEYN'S

To mark the retirement of Dr Colin Niven as headmaster of Alleyn's School, a Fives Festival was held at Alleyn's on Friday June 21st 2002.

The three small courts which have recently been refurbished were formally opened and named after Sid Batrick, who has given so much back to Alleyn's by coaching at the school for many years. Colin Niven paid tribute to Sid's role in helping to keep fives alive at Alleyn's, and then Sid himself spoke briefly in reply to mention the individual dedications of one court each to E.L.I. 'Bill' Bailey (National Doubles champion in 1937, 1939 and 1952), P.A. 'Pussy' Malt (National Singles champion from 1933-5), and C.L.E. Mitchell (Bailey's partner in 1937 and 1939). The courts were then

declared open, and some young members of the school went on court to show what they could do.

The guests were then invited across to the full-size courts, where Colin Niven spoke about John Pretlove's immense contribution to Alleyn's fives as player, coach, school governor and fund-raiser, and invited John to open the replastered and repainted courts, which are now named in his honour. John spoke of the pleasure and friendship that fives had brought him, describing it as one of the best of all games for enjoyment and sportsmanship, and a great game for cricketers to play in the winter.

John Pretlove was National Singles champion in 1953, 1955, 1956 and 1958, and he was a member of the



FIVES FESTIVAL

winning National Doubles pair in 1952 (with 'Bill' Bailey), 1954 (with Roy Birmingham), from 1956-59 (all with Dennis Silk) and again in 1961 (with Bob Smith). As with the small courts, each individual full-size court has also been dedicated to one of the four other National Singles winners produced by the school: Roy Birmingham (1954), Bob Smith (1957), Dave Hebden (1979) and Hamish Buchanan (1999 and 2001).

There followed a series of exhibition matches, the most notable featuring John Pretlove and Dennis Silk, on court together again after a number of years, playing against ten-times National Doubles winners Ian Fuller and Dave Hebden. Spectators winced in sympathy as Fuller's drop-shots were bravely retrieved, and we were all glad to see the four champions survive unscathed. Others who took

to the courts were Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton - members of the current Alleyn Old Boys Wood Cup winning side - Jeremy Schroeter, Keith Puckle, John Denison, Nick Geere and Ollie Stone-Lee. In the gallery were Bob Smith, Bob Dorey, Micky Stewart, Mrs Stewart, Rick Wilson, Alastair Mackenzie, Mike Bushby, Michael Beaman, Michael Constantinidi, John East, David McGill (master-in-charge), Denise Hall-Wilton and David Barnes.

Alleyns 1st XI were playing the MCC that afternoon, and all the fives guests were kindly invited to tea in the pavilion afterwards.

David Barnes

As we went to press, we heard the sad news of Sid Batrick's death on July 13th. A tribute to Sid will appear in our next edition.