

## Cheers! - An Unusual Rugby School Hand Fives Trophy

An interesting early Fives trophy has been presented to the RFA's archives by a descendent of the family of its original winner. It is inscribed "FH Bowden Smith 1st in Double Hand Fives Rugby 1875."



FH Bowden Smith's Trophy Hipflask, now in the RFA's Archives.

Frederick Herbert Bowden Smith was one of a large family born to Rev Philip Bowden Smith who had become an assistant master at Rugby School after being a pupil there. At least six of his sons followed their father to Rugby, where they enjoyed considerable sporting success. Herbert played in the Cricket XI, the Rugby XV, the Rackets team and the Tennis VI. His success at Hand Fives came early, as he had only entered the School in 1874 at the age of 13. The distinction was from Bat Fives which was also played at Rugby at this date, as was Eton Fives.

After leaving Rugby, Herbert matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford. He took his MA in 1886 and began a teaching career at Shrewsbury School, leaving in 1891 to become the Principal of the Bengoe College preparatory school, near Hertford, apparently retiring in 1906. He appears in the 1911 Census living with his wife Maud Marguerite in South Raynham, near Fakenham in Norfolk. Their circumstances appear to have been comfortable. As well as their two daughters, his unmarried younger brother Francis (also an old Rugbeian) was living with them, all attended by a cook and three maids. FH Bowden died on 12 December 1938.

The unanswered question is why Rugby School thought that hip flasks were an appropriate trophy for a 14 year old boy! See also page 96 of the FIVES Annual Review 2006-07 for a similar item presented the following year for the Eton Hand Fives Doubles competition.

*David Barnes, RFA Hon Archivist, together with Kerry Wilson and Rusty Maclean of Rugby School have assisted in providing the information for this item.*

*Ian Roberts*