

If I remember the Gentlemen made about seven, all extras. John Biddle took six wickets for 0 runs, and I took four for 0.

Strangely, we did not lose the fixture. I remember a year or two later making 38 at Reading against "Berks Gents" in a desperate last wicket stand which saved the match. My partner was a genial character, one Atkinson (he of the Didactic Verse.) I recall a fine old character - the groundsman at Berkshire County Ground at Reading - a Mr Croome, the father of Warwickshire's opening batsman Arthur Croome, which is why a Birmingham Lad whose vain dream was one day to play for Warwickshire, remembers him.

How proud my father would have been to have such a man as a Church warden!

It was I think in my last Summer Term (1938) that I happened to stroll through Worcester's lovely grounds while the Buskins were rehearsing under the guidance of their famous producer, Nevill Coghill.

I had always envied the Buskin actors, but one cannot do everything and it was my last term, but as I watched the rehearsal an idea came that might give me a tiny part in the history of the Buskins, without necessitating any learning of lines or more than one or two rehearsals. My wonder, now, is how I found the courage to suggest what I did in that august company.

The play that year was 'Les Romantiques' by Edmond Rostand. It is a charming and witty comedy. Strangely I have never known it mentioned since; I should have thought it a 'natural' for TV.

To win the heart of his Lady-love, played by a most charming guest of the Buskins, the hero (Paul Dehn) hires a gang of thugs to kidnap her when he happens to be passing. He draws his sword and effects a gallant rescue. The thugs turn out to be highly incompetent, and no match for the hero's swordmanship. They are soon scattered and in flight, the lady rescued and her heart conquered. This within a few yards of the lake. I knew the Buskins loved to bring the lake into their plays (as witness their celebrated 'Tempest') and such was my suggestion.

"Suppose one of the thugs has a pistol with which he confronts the ^{hero,} ~~lead~~ But the pistol fails to fire, while being chased three times round a tree, the thug tries in vain to make the weapon shoot, then tries to reload it, by which time the ^{hero} ~~lead~~ has nearly caught him, sword raised for a death - stroke. With a scream the thug hurls down his pistol and throws himself into the lake."

I was allowed to try this, making the most tremendous splash I could. It fitted really well into the scene.

On each of the three or four evenings of the play I made my splash; the audience roared with delight.

Luckily, they were fairly warm evenings, but even so I developed a foul cold. In my brief moment of glory as a Buskin, my biggest fear was the swans, who seemed determined to cruise round to the part of the lake into which I jumped. Eventually I persuaded my friend Hodgkinson to feed the swans at the opposite side of the lake during that scene.

One memory is of my good friend Tom Cookes. Tom was a descendent of that Sir Thomas Cookes who re-founded Worcester College, previously