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CARDIFF RUGBY CLUB

FULL LENGTH
FEATURE
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PHOTOS

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How is greatness measured? A question that is often asked but seldom when referring to a rugby football club. As this story, necessarily mainly factual because of space limitations, unfolds, it will become obvious why in 1945, the Rt. Hon. Jim Callaghan said in Parliament, "Undoubtedly Cardiff is THE first rugby club".

What are the special qualities then which have merited such praise? Players of high quality, dedicated officials ensuring sound administration, and progressive policy, supporters through thick and thin with the targets always set as high as possible have all contributed to make this club really great and spoken of with the utmost respect throughout the world, synonymous with all that is best in sport generally, and rugby football in particular.

FACTS SPEAK

Let me illustrate with some facts. They can speak for themselves. Nearly 150 international players; sixteen Lions with Barry John, Gareth Edwards and John Bevan writing their names in the history books this year and Gerald Davies, Gareth, Barry, Keri Jones, John O'Shea and Maurice Richards making what was then an all time record representation in 1968 with Billy Raybould, a former Cardiff player also in the party; victories over ALL the Tourists, victories in 'Sevens', some of which may surprise you — Middlesex, at Twickenham in 1939, for the first time of asking, winners of the Snelling's, three times, the W.R.U. National twice, the special Harlequins, Lord Wakefield Tournament in 1968-69, the formidable Gala Competition in 1963-64; plus victory four times in a season over old rivals Newport on fourteen occasions; twenty-four teams have yielded more than forty points in a game, the full list of achievements is long and impressive.

Add to this the galaxy of stars who have worn the Blue and Black shirt and trodden on the Arms Park turf throughout the long years to make their contribution to what is known throughout the world as the 'Cardiff' style of play'. Yes there certainly is something that bit special! Something to be proud of.

THE BEGINNING

Before I get too carried away, let me go back to the beginning, back to 1873 and trace the progress through the years. It was then that a small band of men got together and called themselves the Glamorgan Football Club, for the purpose of playing on Cardiff Arms Park, then enclosed on one side by the River Taff (as indeed it still is) merely fenced around. They played the Cheltenham College Rules, with twenty players a-side and a round ball, never to be picked up, unless 'dapped'. By 1874, sixty-six members had joined and two other clubs in Cardiff, were in existence. The Tredegarville Club and the Wanderers, a founder of which was W. D. Phillips, destined to become a legend in his time. Newport and Swansea were already

established. Supporters did not relish the situation and on Friday, 22nd September, 1876, in the Swiss Hall, Queen Street, Cardiff, members of the Glamorgan and Wanderers clubs were invited to attend a special meeting. It was enthusiastically agreed that they would amalgamate and the new club was called 'The Cardiff Football Club'.

Donaldson Selby was the first captain, E. C. Fry, Secretary, and on committee J. G. Thomas, S. C. Cory, F. F. Thomas and W. G. Jones. The annual subscription was 2/6. Of course they played on the Arms Park and the colours decided upon were Black with a White skull and crossbones. Why? No one really knew. This survived just one season and the following year they changed to Cambridge Blue and Black.

On the 2nd December 1876 they played against Newport on the Marshes. The Usksiders won this first ever encounter

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CARDIFF R.F.C. — WELSH CHAMPIONS 1936/37

(Back Row): J. Thomas, T. Preece, R. A. Cornish, D. E. Davies, G. E. Heslop, H. Johnson, J. Batstone, F. Davies, J. Powell. (Second Row): L. C. Watters (*Hon. Sec.*), Dr. W. G. Williams, H. M. Hughes, W. E. N. Davies, E. Watkins, A. Skym, J. Kelleher, A. Bassett, H. Rees, I. Heatley, W. M. Douglas (*Chairman*). (Seated): E. Jones, G. Williams, H. O. Edwards, W. Wooller, W. T. Morgan (*President*), L. M. Spence (*Captain*), A. H. Jones, J. Regan, R. Bale, G. L. Porter. (In front): L. Williams, G. Morgan.

by two tries and thirteen touchdowns to two touchdowns, the forerunner of what is surely the most famous inter-club rivalry existing. **Even in modern times internationally hardened players have likened the prelude to such games as equal to that before any international match.**

In this first season, three inter-town matches were played, against Newport, Swansea and Merthyr. The first lost, the other two won.

The players then were 15-a-side, with a great variance of positions but always with nine forwards. There was no referee, each side had its own umpire and the rules were simple in the extreme.

They played fourteen matches in the following season with E. C. Fry captain, and R. H. Foa taking over the job of secretary. During 1878, of the twenty matches played, Cardiff won sixteen and lost four. They were well on their winning way. They entered in the South Wales Challenge Cup, inaugurated the previous year and reached the final to be defeated by Newport. Outstanding players then were, R. H. Foa, E. Clark, E. C. Fry, W. G. Jones, W. D. Phillips, W. H. Treatt and Percy Heard, who in one game against Carmarthen scored no less than seven tries. In 1879/80, the weather was severe with skating more practicable than rugby. They did play in the Cup, to lose in the final to Llandovery College. This year saw the introduction of a Second XV, indicative of the strength and interest in the town. The captain was A. R. McDonald and they had a fine team.

CHALLENGE CUP

1880-81 was a notable year, with the club on a sound footing. W. D. Phillips was captain, W. H. Treatt, Secretary, the Second XV was established and they attained the distinction of winning the Challenge Cup, defeating

Llanelli at Neath, by one try after playing for one and three-quarter hours. Percy Heard scored the winning try, the crowd invaded the pitch and the game was over.

In this season Wales played their first international match against England at Blackheath, and Cardiff had four men in the team — W. D. Phillips, B. E. Girling, B. B. Mann and L. Watkins from Llandaff. Under the captaincy of Dan Jones, the Second XV went from strength to strength and were undefeated for two of the three seasons 1884-1887.

Crowds now averaged between 3 and 4,000 and were critical even then, as they have been ever since. W. D. Harding then added his name to the list of caps and the next year was noteworthy for the fact that Cardiff journeyed to London for the first time to meet the Harlequins, and

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the Old Leysians, winning both games. **The players paid all their own expenses.**

In the National side that year, W. B. Norton, J. Clare and J. A. Jones added their names to the Cardiff list.

HANCOCK'S ERA

Then came a memorable year in these foundation years. Into the side, from Wiviliscombe came a young man named F. E. Hancock, destined to become one of the all time greats. He came in at the last minute, against the strong Cheltenham College XV. He played so well that he could not be left out again. This created a problem; the other three three-quarters were established. The decision was made to include him in the backs as well. **Thus history was made. The first time for the accepted four three-quarter formation to be used.** The others in this historic position were, W. B. Norton, T. Williams and A. J. Stuart. Two other names to conjure with that year were W. M. Douglas and C. C. 'Charlie' Arthur. The committee responsible — J. A. Jones, S. Bennett, W. B. Norton, A. Duncan with H. J. Simpson as captain and W. H. Treatt and J. S. Smith as joint Secretaries.

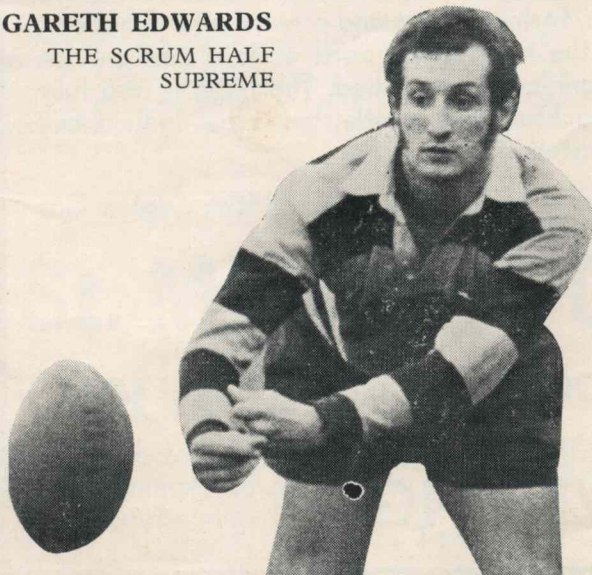
Wales played three internationals that year, against England, Scotland and Ireland — for the first time. The Irish game was played at Cardiff and eight Cardiff men were in the team — T. M. Barlow, W. B. Norton, F. E. Hancock, W. Stadden, H. J. Simpson, J. S. Smith, T. J. Hinton, and W. D. Phillips. This record was to last right up until 1948.

The club was now proving itself as a force to be reckoned with, with sound administration and players of the highest quality. The pattern which has been maintained right throughout the long years.

1885-86 will always be known as 'Hancock's year'. It was a season to reflect upon. Twenty-seven matches played, twenty-six won. The only game lost was the very last and against Moseley. 131 tries were scored, to four against. Hancock was opposed to drop goals, otherwise the total tally would have been much higher. He insisted upon running with the ball and the skill was remarkable, Six Internationals in F. E. Hancock, G. A. Young, W. Stadden, A. F. Hill, D. H. Lewis, and W. H. Douglas, and against Scotland, at the Arms Park, Wales used the four three-quarter system.

So thrilled were all by the displays of 'Hancock's team', that subscriptions were raised, special medals presented and for the first time, caps awarded. Worth noting is that the

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No History of Cardiff R.F.C. would be complete without a photograph of the first Arms Park Stand with the crowd watching Cardiff v Liverpool.

stand was paid for out of takings that year. The Seconds were again unbeaten and a third team was formed but not maintained.

1888 was another year to remember with the visit of the Maoris to our shores. Cardiff beat them comfortably.

Charlie Arthur was elected captain in 1889 and enjoyed a good season. Another name to conjure with came into the side — Selwyn Biggs. Wales beat England for the first time and in the team were W. Stadden, A. F. Bland, W. W. Williams and D. W. Evans. A. F. Hill and H. Ingle-dew also played against Ireland.

The following year was a poor one by comparison, but must be remembered as the year the Barbarians were formed. They played Cardiff on the Easter Saturday, as they do today, and Cardiff won. T. W. Pearson was the only cap that year.

GREAT YEARS

Then came what will always be referred to as the first 'Golden Era'. T. W. Pearson was the captain and the side, and the country enjoyed great success. He himself scored forty tries, a record which was to last right up until 1947-48 when beaten by Bleddyn Williams, with 41. Norman Biggs scored 20.

There were fine players in the Cardiff team with Biggs, Pearson, Hill, Sweet-Escot, S. Cravos, Gus Lewis and A. F. Bland outstanding. Three Biggs actually; N. and E. P. in the three-quarters and S. a fine half back. One memorable match was against Newport, unbeaten the previous year.

In 1893-94, Norman Biggs was captain, Sweet-Escot his vice-captain and with the team almost unchanged they had another fine season although their fixture list was becoming increasingly heavy. Biggs and Pearson scored twenty-five tries and in the January, on the team sheet appeared the name of E. G. Nicholls, to become known throughout the world as the 'Prince of Three-quarters'. Hill, Biggs, Pearson, Fitzgerald, Elliot and Sweet-Escot all represented Wales.

Good years continued with the partnership of Nicholls and N. Biggs providing wonderful moments and many scores. A. F. Hill, Sweet-Escot, J. Elliot, Selwyn Biggs, then Gwyn Nicholls successive captains with exceptional ability and qualities. Vivian Huzzey was a prolific scorer with Nicholls and Biggs not far behind.

YET ANOTHER

Then, in 1896, came another 'immortal' — H. B. Winfield whose name was destined to be linked with that of Gwyn Nicholls for ever. Great players and friends on the field, business partners off it. The names are still to be seen as the vans travel around.

These were great years by the highest of standards and lasted right up until 1910. The names are part of the legend, names which were to become truly immortal. Let me recall but a few: Percy Bush, J. L. Williams, Cecil Biggs, Jack Brown, W. Neill, Nicholls and Winfield and of course, R. T. 'Rhys' Gabe who was with us until quite recently and will go down in history for his part in the 1905 Wales victory over the All Blacks. »

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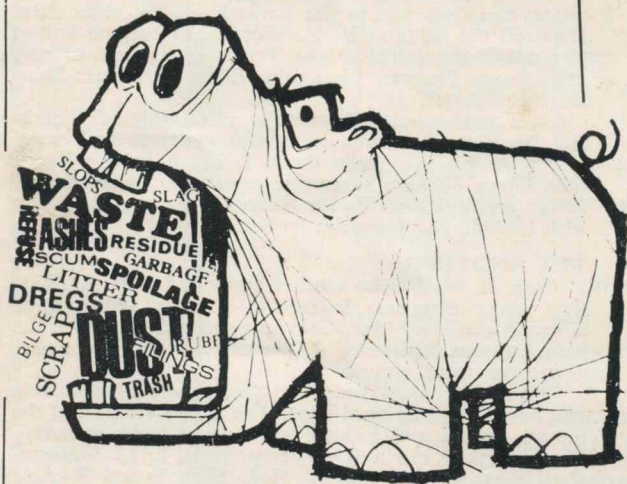
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TOURISTS MET

These were great years by the highest of standards, with Canada, although admittedly not very strong then, defeated by 29—3; but the Australians were really trounced by 24—8 in 1908 and South Africa in 1907 by 17—0. The peak year in this wonderful era was 1905-06 with but one defeat and that at the hands of the might All Blacks who scraped home on Boxing Day on a most memorable occasion by 10—8, and it was one fatal lapse which brought it about. Both Newport and Swansea were beaten four times and Johnny Williams himself scored thirty-five tries. A representative French XV was also played in Paris and beaten by 27—5. Percy Bush who had toured New Zealand and Australia with the 1904 Lions was the captain. Cardiff's representation in the internationals was Winfield, Nicholls, Gabe and Percy Bush in the historic Wales over All Blacks victory; and R. A. Gibbs, D. Westcott and J. Powell joined them against the other countries.

That great Cardiff team was: J. L. Williams, J. Brown, E. Rumbelow, W. Neill, L. George, F. Smith, Gwyn Nicholls, G. Northmore, Percy Bush, Rhys Gabe, R. A. Gibbs, R. C. Thomas, H. B. Winfield, R. David and J. Powell.

Percy Bush was re-elected captain for the following season and again there was much success with only three matches lost. The highlight of course the win over South Africa who had beaten every club, county and country except Scotland, and this was their last game. What a game it was with every Cardiff player determined to avenge Wales' defeat earlier. Gwyn Nicholls played the best game of his life, and there could be no higher comment than that. The team: Winfield, C. Biggs, Gabe, Nicholls, Williams, R. David, Bush, Northmore, Brown, Neill, Casey, Smith, Brice and Powell.

Rhys Gabe who had been such an inspiration, although a 'Llanelli-ite' was the next captain. Of the thirty-one games played, only four were lost. J. L. Williams and R. A. Gibbs were selected for the Anglo-Welsh team



BARRY JOHN
WORLD ACCLAIMED

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DAVIES**
Captain 1926
Chairman twice
W.R.U. Presi-
dent 1961
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to tour New Zealand that summer. Willy Llewellyn and Billy Spiller were among the notables.

THE GREAT GWYN

Thus ended what will always be referred to as the 'Golden Age'. An era when Cardiff reigned supreme with remarkable players of world class. During this period Wales won twenty-one consecutive home matches and six Triple Crowns, and no one disputes the part that the Cardiff men played. Of all these probably Gwyn Nicholls must rank the highest.

When Rhys Gabe, his close friend and contemporary, performed the ceremony to open the Memorial Gates at the Quay Street entrance to the Arms Park in 1949, he said, "Gwyn was the Prince of Three-quarters, the greatest and most colourful figure ever associated with Welsh football. A complete artist in every department of the game; never selfish and everything he did bore the hallmark of the highest class.

Up to this stage in their history Cardiff had supplied Wales with fifty-six international players. The administrators had also been men of quality; the Secretaries, E. C. Fry, R. H. Foa, J. A. Jones, E. D. Thomas, W. H. Treatt, J. S. Smith, A. F. Bland and Charlie Arthur, who continued right up until 1925-26; with H. J. Simpson, A. Duncan, W. H. Treatt, W. D. Phillips and W. T. Morgan, Presidents.

Those original pioneers, A. Duncan, W. D. Phillips, Campbell Cory, D. Selby, F. S. Thomas, T. Thomas, W. G. Jones, J. G. Thomas, Cuthbert Riches, W. H. Treatt, and E. C. Fry had certainly started something. Started also during this period was the Cardiff Schools' R.U., with the Club providing ALL the kit for some 600 boys. Right up until now there remains close liaison with the Schools and Youth of the city.

STILL GLORY

Although the following period prior to the first world war was not quite so illustrious, there was still moments of glory. Good leadership was there with R. A. Gibbs, Louis Dyke, Billy Spiller and Billy Jenkins to the fore, with Dicky David putting in some tremendous performances, before he went North.

In December 1910, the Barbarians were beaten by ten tries to nil, then a loss was sustained when Percy Bush left teaching at Wood Street School to take up a post in Nantes, to raise the club there to new dimensions and establish a close link which continues today.

Yet another 'name' came into the backs, then. It was Clem Lewis, who was to gain eleven caps, before and after the war, representing Cardiff and Cambridge. Others of

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CARDIFF R.F.C.

The team that beat New Zealand in November, 1953

(Standing): G. Griffiths, J. E. Llewellyn, E. Thomas, M. Collins, J. D. Nelson, J. D. Evans. (Seated): C. D. Williams, A. D. S. Bowes, R. Willis, S. Judd (Vice-Captain), B. L. Williams (Captain), C. Morgan, A. Thomas, G. Rowlands, G. Beckingham.

equal quality were, Bob Pugsley, a great forward, and Louis Dyke, one of the most fearless players to don the Blue and Black shirt. He was a fine captain and during his year on committee were, Rhys Gabe, Gwyn Nicholls, who also went on the W.R.U. and Billy Spiller although he was still playing.

The next season, the Barbarians were played on Boxing Day and Easter and beaten both times, the captain was Billy Spiller.

In 1911-12, Stade Francais came over again and were well beaten, but there was indication of the improvement in French rugby where Percy Bush's influence was beginning to tell.

The Springboks came in 1912 and after a tremendous match they scraped home by 7 — 6. The Barbarians were again beaten twice. The following season was dimmed by the shadow of the war about to break out, and during those grim years, although there was no official play a number of charity matches and so on were arranged with Jim Batstone, a grand servant to the club for very many years, playing a leading part.

RE-BUILDING

It was a case of rebuilding when the war ultimately came to its close. Not just for Cardiff but for all other clubs in the game. As always, the right men were to be found and it became the era of Clem Lewis, an outstanding captain Dr. Tom Wallace, what a great character he was for so many years, Arthur Cornish who did so much right up until modern times as a player, committeem an, Secretary and W.R.U. representative; Tom 'Codger' Johnson, thought by many to be the best wing ever; Idris Richards, John Powell and Danny Davies, to name just some.

It was in 1919-20 that Newport, enjoying great post war success, scored seventy-five points against Cardiff, and came breathtakingly near to winning the four games — which they are still striving to do. They won three and drew one.

Arthur Cornish took over as captain with Idris Richards as his deputy. One trip to remember was to Paris where they won at Stades Colomnes.

Tom Wallace succeeded Arthur as captain and they were beginning to get back to the happy days. They were undefeated until January and 541 points were scored. Idris then took over the leadership and had a good year.

The next skipper was 'Codger' Johnson, often called 'Johnson the Lionheart' for his fearless tackling, and this was amply demonstrated in the 'battle' against George Nepia's touring New Zealand side. Although the Cardiff XV lost it was a game in keeping with all the glorious heritage.

During the previous year, in 1923, Codger and Arthur Cornish had been honoured with selection in the famous Centenary match at Rugby to commemorate William Webb Ellis's action in picking up the ball and running with it.

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REGRETS

Both Arthur and Danny Davies then received invitations to tour South Africa with Cove-Smith's Lions. With regret both had to refuse. Arthur because of school duties: whilst due to work, Danny had to wait until 1955 to visit that sunny land when he was then appointed as Secretary to the Lions. He was the elected skipper of the Cardiff team and with his own deceptive, skillful running brought a new phase to the centre play. Never demonstrative, on the field or off, those who played with him were happy to pay tribute to the pleasure it was to be in his side. A Welsh Trialist, alas, a cap never came.

What a servant to the game Danny has been. This would probably be the stage at which to pay our own tribute to him. A fine player and leader, the committee man and selector, then Chairman for twenty years, on the W.R.U. for sixteen years after Arthur Cornish; W.R.U. President — the first Cardiff man so honoured — in 1961; liaison officer to three touring teams here, awarded the gold 'medaille de l'education physique' by France for his services there, and for many years keeper of the records for his club. Records which are meticulously kept to a remarkable degree, every single aspect of every Cardiff player, teams, officials, results, personal and team scores, etc., right from the beginning and he still does it. I, we, are indebted to him for all the information in this brief history. **When his book does get published it will be a veritable 'Wisden' of rugby and surely a world best seller.** It should be. And 'Massa' Dan hasn't changed a bit. He takes everything in his stride, even the physical eye troubles which would daunt lesser men.

In his year of captaincy the club suffered a loss with the death of Charlie Arthur who had been Secretary since 1892. He had devoted his life to the club and had been responsible for so much of the success.

He was succeeded by L. C. 'Jack' Watters who carried on in that capacity up to the outbreak of World War 2. He was destined to play a leading role in much of the build up to modern day status.

At this critical between the wars period, when the country was going through such difficult times, Cardiff were fortunate to be re-inforced by some brilliant youngsters from the Universities with the Turnbull family conspicuous.

The versatile halfback, Bobbie Delahay was skipper in 1926-27 and so much first class talent was available that it was decided to run two first XV's. This continued up until 1931-32 when the committee resolved that the difficulties of records, fixtures and so forth would be lessened by reverting to the First's and Second's as they are today.

'PEERLESS' LINK

Great characters there were, including, Jim Spillane, who later looked after the 'Rags' for years and years; Sid Cravos, whose family had always been with the club — Sid later became Chairman; the Turnbells I have mentioned; John and Bill Roberts, Jim Burns, who recently passed away. Jim was the uncle of 'Peerless' Jim Driscoll and was the custodian of his precious Lonsdale Belt; Arthur Cornish himself, Ossie Male, Frank Williams and many others, the list is long.

During this period, two matches were played against the Maoris in 1926; the Waratahs in 1927; the club played a French 'B' XV in Toulouse in 1930 and the South Africans came in 1931.

The year 1932 was a notable one. Although the depression hit the Cardiff Club hard, especially regarding the Arms Park and the Athletic Club of which the rugby club is a part, work started on the great North Stand, which was to withstand all that Hitler could send and become such a feature until just a couple of years ago, when it was demolished in the cause of present progress.

Names, there must be names, they must never be forgotten. Men of the calibre of Ronnie Boon, back in Wales now with a son playing; Harry Bowcott, prouder than ever

today with the London Welsh and Lions success; T. Isaacs, Arthur Jones, Archie Skym who died a short while ago; Maurice Turnbull, Roly Barrell, Graham Jones, Len Rees and Frankie Williams were all capped then, but the inimitable Tommy Stone, that diminutive fullback who was the idol of the crowd never gained that honour. Howard Poole then Tom Lewis were captains in 1931 and 1932 and they were to start soon upon another wonderful era.

SERVICE RECOGNISED

Representatives for Wales, in addition to those mentioned, now included Lew Rees, and excellent form was shown. The next year, 1934, saw fifty consecutive years of service to the club from W. M. Douglas, as player, captain, committeeman and Chairman, a tremendous record which was suitably recognised. That year, A. H. Jones was elected captain, he had to resign through pressures of business and Roy Gabe Jones took over. He was injured and the role fell upon the shoulders of Tommy Stone

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CARDIFF R.F.C. v SOUTH AFRICA in 1960

(Standing): Tom Holley, D. Hayward, H. Norris, G. Davey, G. Davies, E. Williams, R. Glastonbury, G. Porter. (Seated): W. Thomas, M. Roberts, C. Howe, K. Jones, Ll. Williams (Captain), G. Wells, T. McCarthy, A. Priday, C. Davies.

with Archie Skym looking after the pack. They were a good team and the high standard of play was maintained. Hubert Johnson was the skipper of the 'Rags' for the next three years and they had a really fine record.

In the sides that year were also the names of A. T. 'Akka' Thomas, still there serving on committee; Harry Rees who served club and country so well and so long and Les Spence who became such an outstanding captain and surely so worthy of the cap that eluded him. Les succeeded Danny on the W.R.U., has been a committeeman since he finished playing, served in the chair and is another wonderful servant. It was only when delving through Danny's records that I found a hitherto unknown facet to his play. He had kicked seven goals in his year of captaincy. That was in 1936, the captains before him had been Archie Skym and the popular Tommy Stone.

Tommy's year was the year of the All Blacks — 1935. Cardiff lost, Wales won with Eddie Watkins in the side. The Barbarians were beaten when they had enjoyed a sequence of twenty-two matches without loss. This was a tremendous game and the crowd carried Tommy Stone shoulder high at the end. In his year, Arthur Bassett scored twenty-six tries, Gwyn Williams, the first of the fabulous Williams clan; Duncan Brown, Jackie Bowcott, Gwyn Porter, still on committee and serving valuably; Dr. Noel Rees and C. W. 'Cliff' Jones played conspicuous parts. Just incidentally they had a good baseball side in the summer of that year.

SKIPPERS EXAMPLE

Les's year 1936-37, proved the most successful since the first war. Play was exceptional even by the Cardiff standards, with a fine pack tirelessly led by example of the skipper. In that pack there were new names in Selby Davies and W. E. N. Davies whilst in the backs, for the first time appears the name of W. Wooller. This was the beginning of the partnership with Cliff Jones which was to earn world wide acclaim. Both Cambridge Blues, they had an instinctive understanding the play was a joy to behold.

Outstanding accomplishments were beating the Baa Baas 16 — 3 . . . four wins against Swansea . . . three over Pontypool . . . three out of the four against Newport . . . doubles over Neath, Coventry and Plymouth with all five games of the Midland and Cornish tours won.

Wilf Wooller, Eddie Watkins and Harry Rees were capped but, alas, the honour so deserved eluded skipper Les. Tommy Stone, robbed of his cap when the Ireland match at Belfast was postponed turned professional late in the season. Out of the forty-four games played that session, one was drawn, seven lost and 553 points scored.

SUCCESSFUL 'RAGS'

Skipper of the 'Rags' was G. V. Wynne Jones 'Geevers', and they enjoyed a most successful season.

During the close season all the amenities under the great North Stand were added, the stands around the ground were altered and improved. All at enormous expense incurring liability which was to extend over the next twelve years.

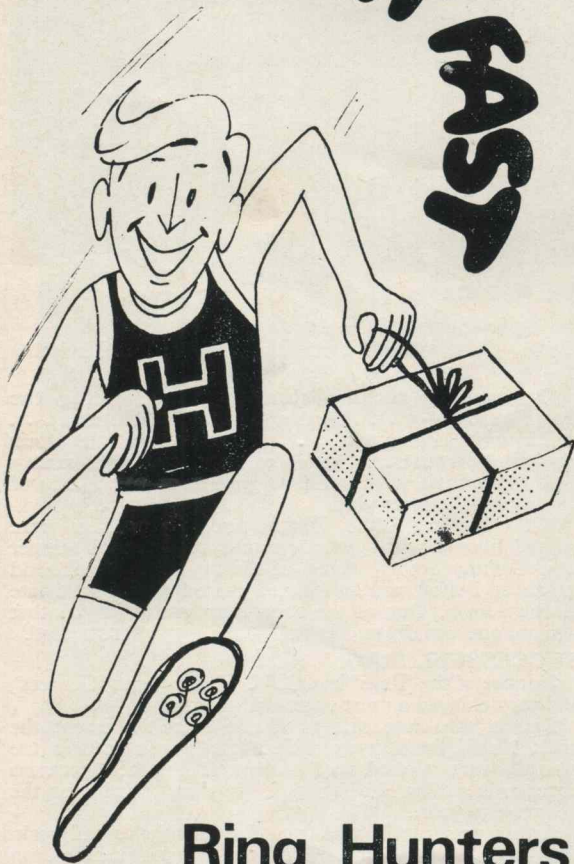
Arthur Jones took over from Les as skipper and again they had a grand record. Wilf Wooller put over nine drop goals, Arthur Bassett got twenty-eight tries. He was capped together with Cliff, Harry Rees, Eddie Watkins and Wilf Wooller whilst 'Wendy' Davies, H. Edwards, W. G. Morgan and Jim Regan were reserves. Arthur Cornish went on the W.R.U.

WILF WOOLLER LEADS

Wilf was to take over as skipper and what a year it proved to be. Tinged with sadness with the death of Gwyn Nicholls. His Memorial Gates will always be a testimony to his greatness. But the record on the field was a compensation. Wilf himself scored 163 points, including twelve drop goals, only five games of the forty-two played were lost. He captained Wales and the Baa Baas, 'Wendy' Davies was capped at last with Eddie Watkins still in the National XV.

Probably the highlight was the winning of the Middlesex 'Sevens' at the first time of entering. They had been invited but unable to enter previously and after a wonderful tournament

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a glorious victory meant a great day for Cardiff and Wales. The seven who made history were: W. Wooller (capt), Gwyn Porter, Graham Hale, W. R. Davies, Selby Davies, Ianto Jones and Les Spence.

The success of Wilf's second year was extraordinary inasmuch as five star players went North — Gwyn Williams, Alban Davies, Arthur Bassett, Eddie Watkins and Jim Regan. Much of this was due to the 'Rags' under Ken Street. In his side were the inimitable Stan Bowes, E. R. Knapp, L. Arnold, Bryn Williams and E. Jones, plus Tom Holley, still serving the club.

HITLER INTERVENES — 'RECORD' MADE

For season 1939-40, Wilf was re-elected skipper and there was natural confidence that yet another great year was ahead. Alas, Hitler intervened and we all know the result of that. By a freak, though it did provide a record and give both teams invincibility for the first time. The First XV played two games and won both, against Cardiff and District and Bridgend; the 'Rags' played and defeated Llanharan.

Most of the players, when war seemed bound to come, had joined the T.A. Ack Ack earlier in the year, and were called up immediately. For a while they were stationed locally, then went overseas where Les and Wilf were captured by the Japanese to suffer most grievously before returning home over six years later.

The club did carry on. Arthur Cornish, Norman Riches, Brice Jenkins, Danny Davies (a Sergeant in the Home Guard) and Hubert Johnson (in the R.A.F. but stationed nearby for some while) were the mainstays and a regular fixture list against whatever opposition could be found was maintained.

Gates went to charity and players came along. Billy Cleaver and A. Taylor were in University, Bleddyn Williams was one youngster who started then before serving in the Air Force; Hubert proved his usual inspiring example as skipper and another who turned out was Fred Croster, in the A.P.T.C. locally for a while. He turned to refereeing when the war ended, served on committee for a number of years and was the first ever Cardiff club man to be on the international panel of referees. But the honour of being the first Cardiffian to referee an international went to his friend Jack Evans.

INVALUABLE EFFORT

The effort during these difficult years was to then prove invaluable. In May 1945 the 'continuing' committee met, official fixtures commenced in 1945-46 and a team was ready. Mind you, the Arms Park looked somewhat different. The land mine which had dropped immediately behind the river goal in January 1941 rendered the North Stand out of commission for a long time.

Dr. Jack Matthews, in his Army uniform as Captain in the R.A.M.C. was the first post war skipper and the first five games in that September brought 121 points.

The Second Golden Era in the story of this great club had dawned.

The team went from success to success, the New Zealand Services XV were beaten 14 — 3 in November, the 'Kiwis' scraped home to win by one try on Boxing Day to bring the first defeat and the fame of the Cardiff team is listed in 'Hansard' for ever.

Of the outstandingly brilliant players, in the pack were Bill Tamplin, Les Mansfield, Cliff Davies, Maldwyn James, W. G. Jones, Ray Bale, Ianto Jones; with Billy Darch, Billy Cleaver, Dr. Jack, Bleddyn Williams, St. J. Rees, Colin Jones just some of the inspiration behind.

Nantes and Cognac were played for the first time and what a time that was. Still talked about. In the season 661 points were scored, thirteen players were in Welsh representative matches and the Finale was a Past v. Present game which raised more than £1,000 for the Royal Infirmary. A bed was dedicated in the William Diamond Ward.

At the first post war A.G.M. a new President, Mr. Bernard Morgan, was elected to succeed Mr. W. T. Morgan, who had held office since the formation of the Cardiff Athletic Club, of which the Rugby Club has always been a section, although a club also in its own right. W. T. had played with distinction, was the first President of the Rugby Club in 1907, then of the Athletic Club and held office until his death in 1939.

THE WORLD SET ALIGHT

1946-47, with Dr. Jack again as captain was another grand campaign, Bill Tamplin one of the greatest pack leaders ever kicked thirty-two goals, a successful tour to Ireland was made, a special Armistice Day match, in conjunction with Henri Picheret, at Nantes, whilst the 'Rags' under the leadership of Lyn Williams had a great year. They only lost one game and that was at Maesteg. In fact they were the equal of many First XVs. His side included, Graham Hale, Ian McJennett, coaching Newport for a number of years now; Dennis Prater, Gwyn Martin, Gwyn Davies, W. E. Jones, Ross Johnson, and the present Secretary Hadyn Wilkins, all top class players.

Dr. Jack's First XV included Stan Bowes, the great Hadyn Tanner (that 'Prince of Scrum-halves'), Roy Roberts, the uncle of the Williams family; Frank Trott, Howell Loveluck, Gwyn Evans, Don Rees, Cliff Davies, Bill Tamplin, Maldwyn James, Les Manfield, Bleddyn Williams, Gwyn Porter, Ray Bale, Billy Cleaver and Billy Darch. Ten internationals in that line-up.

With such a line-up it might have been expected the following year would be a good one. It did transpire to be one of the most prolific scoring seasons enjoyed by any club side. Records were smashed and 1947-48 must rank with the memorable Hancock's year of 1885 and 1905 under Percy Bush.

Under the leadership of Haydn Tanner, his superb attacking machine won thirty-nine of the forty-one games played, scoring 803 points with 161 against.

There were 182 tries, eighty-four conversions, twenty-three penalty goals and five drop goals.

THE BEST EVER

Bleddyn Williams scored forty-one tries to beat W. T. Pearson's record which had lasted since 1892. Next to Bleddyn came Les Williams with thirty-four tries, Doug Jones with twenty-two, whilst Bill Tamplin's boot gained 127 points.

The Australians were beaten by eleven points to three, Leicester beaten by fifty points and it was a truly tremendous year.

The team was possibly the best ever. Forty-eight individual caps were gained; eleven Cardiff players in Maldwyn James, Jack Matthews, Bleddyn Williams, Hadyn Tanner, Billy Cleaver, Les Williams, Cliff Davies, Les Manfield and Gwyn Evans were in the Welsh team; the club supplied the captain for all five internationals; Hadyn, Frank, Billy, Bleddyn and Bill Tamplin played for the Barbarians against Australia, in what was a great rugby spectacle. Also in the side were Doug Jones, Roy Roberts, W. G. Jones, Elvet Jones and Stan Bowes.

RAGS ALSO

Meanwhile the 'Rags' again under Lyn Williams only lost three matches, scoring 453 points.

Hadyn Tanner was re-elected captain the following year which followed the same glorious pattern. Only three of the forty-four games were lost, Bleddyn again chief try scorer and his partnership with Dr. Jack reached superb heights.

There were changes in the pack, with John Nelson, Les Hayward, John Phillips and Sid Judd coming in. Sid destined to be a great loose forward, captained the side and played ten times for Wales, was being considered for captaincy of the Lions when his tragic illness occurred. Another sad note in this great season was the sudden death of Arthur Cornish who had devoted his life to the club and rugby football.

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Again this season, there were nine players representing Wales, with Terry Cook adding his name to the honours role.

Names which came into the 'Rags' included Geoff Beckingham, Peter Goodfellow, Rex Willis.

Newport were beaten four times, always a welcome achievement and the Gwyn Nicholls Memorial Gates opened formally by Rhys Gabe on Boxing Day. This was a Triple Crown year with four Cardiff players in the team.

The great Hadyn Tanner retired at the end of the season, Bleddyn Williams took over as leader with Brice Jenkins as the new Secretary. The successor to Hadyn was Rex Willis, destined to become a great player and wonderful club man. Cliff Morgan had his first game for the firsts — a new and memorable half back partnership had begun.

The Lions toured Australia and New Zealand that summer with five Cardiff players then a record in the party. They were, Bleddyn Williams, Jack Matthews, Rex Willis, Billy Cleaver and Cliff Davies.

The season saw the formation of the Youth section under Hubert Johnson, Duncan Brown and 'Akka' Thomas. In that first team were Lloyd Williams, Alun Priday and Terry Donovan.

Billy Cleaver had been elected as 50-51 captain but on returning from the Lions tour, retired from the game to concentrate on his N.C.B. career. He went on committee and was Chairman of the Welsh Youth R.U. Bill Tamplin took over as skipper, and Hadyn Morris, Derek Murphy, Gareth Griffiths, Alun Thomas, Malcolm Collins, Rex and Cliff really came into their own, whilst Des O'Brien, Ireland's captain was a popular new recruit.

WORLD RECORD

On 17th February 1951, the Cardiff — Newport game was all ticket and the attendance of 48,500 a world record. Stan Bowes was skipper of the 'Rags'. It was his XV which held Newport to a draw when they had already won the first three games. Stan was a proud man. The Old Players Reunion started then, continued ever since, owes its success to Stan who organises it all. The club museum now one of the finest in the world was also founded that year under its present benefactor, Hubert Johnson.

MILESTONE REACHED

On September 22nd, 1951, the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary was celebrated with a game against the 1950 Lions and over 400 representatives of world rugby attended the after match function. Dannie Craven's Springboks were met in October. Newport were beaten four times and Cliff Morgan had his best season ever. Into the side came Peter Goodfellow and C. D. Williams whilst the 'Rags' included John Llewellyn and Brian Mark with Stan Bowes again their popular skipper.

Dr. Jack after three years as captain, seventeen caps for Wales and six Lions Tests, retired and went on to committee to become a forthright Chairman later.

Cliff Davies was the next to retire, Rex Willis was captain, Cliff as brilliant as ever with vice-captain Sid Judd setting a great example. Into the line-up came Colin Bosley, Gordon Wells and Gwyn Rowlands; Geoff Beckingham was capped at last, Bleddyn captained Wales with Stan Bowes leading the 'Rags' for the third successive year.

ALL BLACKS BEATEN

The next season will always be remembered for the victory over the mighty All Blacks in November. 55,000 people saw Cardiff's victory by 8 — 3, thus achieving victory over all three touring countries — South Africa in 1906, Australia in 1908 and 1947 and now New Zealand in 1953. Wales repeated the feat with Bleddyn the triumphant leader on both occasions. The full Cardiff team was, John Llewellyn, Gwyn Rowlands, Alun Thomas, Bleddyn Williams (capt.), Gareth Griffiths, Rex Willis, Cliff Morgan, Stan Bowes, Geoff Beckingham, John Evans, Malcolm Collins, Eddie Thomas, Derek Williams, Sidd Judd and John Nelson.

**CARDIFF R.F.C. v AUSTRALIA, 1966**

(Standing): R. Lewis (Referee), P. Morgan, T. Holley, M. Richards, J. Hickey, L. Baxter, A. R. Pender, J. O'Shea, W. C. Evans, O. P. Bevan and K. Morgans (Touch Judges). (Seated): D. K. Jones, W. Hullin, K. A. Rowlands (Captain), C. H. Norris, W. J. Thomas. (In front): W. K. Jones, R. Cheney, T. G. R. Davies.

Rex, Gareth, Sid, Cliff, Gwyn and Alun Thomas were all in Bleddyn's victorious Welsh team.

The inimitable Stan Bowes again skippered the 'Rags', but played more for the Firsts with Peter Goodfellow an excellent deputy then. Present Chairman Colin Howe, gained his Athletic cap that year. A sad note was the accident, then death, of John Maunder.

Two new caps the following season with Sid Judd as skipper were Gordon Wells and C. D. Williams. Cliff went to work in Ireland, Ken Richards took his place and for the last match, Bleddyn in his last game for the club led the side against Llanelli. His superb play, and courtesy on and off the field made Bleddyn one of the all time 'greats'. In his career he scored 185 tries for Cardiff and set an example always to be remembered.

The Snelling Sevens were won on the club's first appearance with John Crothers, J. H. Thomas, Ken Richards, Lloyd Williams, Gareth Griffiths, Gordon Wells and Terry Donovan gaining that honour.

The 'Rags' under Peter Goodfellow had their best season since the war with Alun Priday scoring 137 points for the 'Rags' and forty-two for the Firsts.

A HARD YEAR

As must be inevitable after the tremendous post war successes, key players had to retire, the ranks thinned, and Malcolm Collins's 1955-56 year was a hard and important one. Within a week of the start, Rumania were met and beaten and the team began to settle down. New-comers were Glyn John, Howard Nicholls, Mal Gough, John Dodd and C. L. Davies. France was visited successfully and the season ended on a high note.

In the close season, Danny Davies was assistant manager to the Lions in South Africa with Cliff Morgan — what a great tour he had — Hadyn Morris and Gareth Griffiths in the party with Rex Willis also invited but unable to accept.

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COME WHILE STOCKS LAST

The German National XV opened the 1956-57 season. Cardiff won twenty-five points to nil, with popular Peter Goodfellow leading them. The Italian National XV were met and beaten in October. Cliff Morgan, back home again, Gareth Griffiths, Gordon Wells and Lloyd Williams capped, with Lloyd becoming an international and a Baa Baa in his first full season. Cliff, Gordon, and Gareth also toured Canada with the Baa Baas. Others who had a fine season included Colin Howe and Roddy Evans.

At the end of the season, the club were guests of the Rumanian Rugby Federation and what an experience that proved to be — behind the Iron Curtain.

CHAMPIONS AGAIN

1957-58 brought the Championship of the unofficial Welsh Table, with Eddie Thomas an outstanding captain. Australia were beaten 13 — 11, Alun Priday, Howard Nicholls and J. D. Evans gained their caps with Cliff Morgan and Roddy Evans also in the Welsh side. The latter two together with Gordon Wells toured South Africa with the Baa Baas.

ERA ENDS

The end of the season saw the end of that great half back combination Cliff and Rex. They set a pattern and standard in the highest traditions in the club. Fine forwards Eddie Thomas and Geoff Beckingham also retired. Peter Nyhan took over the 'Rags' with Cenydd Williams being promoted to the Firsts. The Youth captain was Elwyn Williams of the same remarkable family.

With the departure of more stalwarts, next captain C. D. Williams had a difficult season, but there came a welcome revival of fortunes with the 'Rags' under Peter having a wonderful season. New names in the First XV were Dai Hayward, Howard Norris and Meirion Roberts, all to become internationals. Into Peter Nyhan's 'Rags' came Elwyn Williams, W. J. Thomas, Steve Hughes and Tommy McCarthy.

On a different note the club won the B.B.C. National Sports Quiz. The team C. D. Williams, John Nelson, Fred Croster, Walter Brinkworth and Alun Priday. This was repeated the following year.

Then, sadly, after a terrific fight, Sid Judd passed away; a Memorial Fund was set up and the Past v. Present match arranged was memorable.

The next captain was Gordon Wells and with a mixture of old and young he blended the team into a good side. Danny Harris was capped, Tommy McCarthy settled in the outside half position and Dai Hayward played in forty-three of the forty-four games.

Under Peter Goodfellow, who during his twelve years with the club had captained the First and Athletic XV and played more than 400 games, The 'Rags' had a remarkable season, losing only two matches and scoring 853 points. The Youth did even better.

A shock during the season was the sudden deaths of Sid Cravos and Brice Jenkins. Both had been great servants. Frank Trott had succeeded Brice as Club Secretary in 1957.

LLOYD'S TWO AIMS

Lloyd Williams, following Bleddyn's illustrious example was captain in 1960-61. He had two important aims: to bring back the former glory; and to defeat the South Africans. He succeeded in the first but failed in the second, but what a game that was. Dai Hayward, crocked after five minutes. Tommy McCarthy off the field after thirty-five minutes, and Alun Priday laid low. The team gave their all to such effect that Colin Howe, always more than the life and soul of any party, vanished after the game. We thought he had crawled into a corner and died.

Lloyd was an inspiring skipper and two outstanding events were the beating of Newport three times and drawing once and winning the three Cornish Tour matches with a tally of sixty-nine points to six. Cyril Davies, Danny

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Harris, Kingsley Jones, Meirion Roberts, Alun Priday, Billy Thomas and Lloyd, who led the Welsh team against France, were capped, with Howard Norris and Martin Rees as reserves.

Four Williams brothers in the team in Lloyd, Elwyn, Cenydd and Tony. In case there may be some who do not remember, they had been preceded by Gwyn, Bryn, Vaughan and Bleddyn himself.

MOMENTOUS DECISION

It was in the following year that what has proved to be a momentous decision in the history of Cardiff, Welsh and World rugby was made. The Welsh Union, ever conscious of only having limited use of what was a club ground, made it known that they were in negotiation for a ground at Bridgend. Hubert Johnson then put forward the proposal which has resulted in the wonderful Cardiff Arms Park complex, now in use. Rugby-wise, it was Dai Hayward's year as captain. A real character, Dai; as a coach since he has proved first class whilst at the present time his eruditions in the match programmes make reading exceptional.

His season started badly, improved gradually and ended on a high note. **Alun Priday's 176 points meant a new record, beating that of Wilfred Wooller which had stood since 1936.** Into his side came Tony Williams, what a wonderful club man; John Price from Penarth, Cliff Howe, who scored against South Africa the next year, Richie Wills, from Newport, and 'Big Harry' Morgan also from the Black and Ambers.

Captain of the 'Rags' was Colin Howe, and in his team were last season's captain John Hickey, Lyn Baxter, now in the honours at last, Peter Thomas, R.A.F. who has served the club well, Alan Drew and John's brother Dennis.

Welcome visitors that year were the Canadians, led by Dick Ellis as they are now.

THE ALL BLACKS TUSSELE

Dai Hayward was re-elected as captain, and the long awaited All Blacks game in November proved a mighty tussle. Dai's XV was magnificent against the odds, and barely lost to the tune of 5 — 6. A converted try, to a drop goal and a penalty goal. They should have altered the scoring value then. It would have been a draw.

It was a good year in the 'Sevens'. An invitation to participate at Galashiels brought success and gold medalions for Cliff Ashton, W. G. Davies, Billy Hullin, B. Perrins, John Price, R. M. Richards and Richie Wills. In the 'Welsh' Neath won the final after extra time by 10 — 5. All in all a successful season to record.

Steve Hughes, John O'Shea, Maurice Richards, Ken Jones and Keith Rowlands all made their marks. Ken and Dai were capped; Dai selected for the Welsh tour to South Africa. Alun Priday and Howard Norris made Baa Baas.

With Colin Howe leading the 'Rags' again they had a greatly improved season only losing five games with some notable victories.

At the end of the season, after forty years service as player, captain, committee man, Chairman, W.R.U. rep. and President, Danny Davies retired from committee. He still keeps the archives and seems as active as ever.

The Tenth Anniversary of the 1953 All Blacks victory was celebrated by a special dinner, the ground was floodlit and the Floodlit Alliance entered, and it was decided to run an Extra XV, with Stan Bowes as fixture secretary.

FUTURE PATTERN EMERGING

During the summer behind the scenes negotiations for the change over to Sophia Gardens for cricket, hockey and rugby use proceeded and the pattern of the future was beginning to emerge.

The First XV under former C.H.S.O.B. Meirion Roberts got off to a good start and in September they scored 223 points, averaging twenty-six per game. Howard Norris led the pack; the Floodlit Alliance was won; the final of



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the Gala Sevens was reached and captain elect, Keith Rowlands, selected for Wales against Ireland and France to help the Triple Crown success.

Into the team that year came Gary Davies, Tony Pender, Billy Hullin and Tony Williams whilst into Alan Drew's 'Rags' came Ian Robinson, John Huw Williams, John Evans, Frank Wilson and Bleddyn's son, Ashley. His team amassed 725 points, a remarkable record, second only to Peter Goodfellow's 1959 team. The Extras, captained by George Davey also did well.

When Keith Rowlands, that giant of a man with plenty of experience, took over as captain the omens portended a good run. This it proved to be and one factor was the decision to appoint an official coach. Hitherto, all through the long years, that task had been entrusted to the skipper of the year. Not without some success, obviously, but the time had come to accede to the W.R.U.'s request and the man appointed was Roy Bish, a former player of distinction and senior lecturer at the College of Education, proving even then to be a tremendous nursery of rugby talent. Roy has been a great asset. He is on committee now, selection also, and back as coach after scholastic commitments had curtailed that activity somewhat.

ANOTHER FINE SEASON

There were notable successes and it did prove a fine season. The 'Sevens' were won, Howard Norris and Ken Jones selected for the Lions and Alun Priday's 'Rags' were impressive. John Harding from Llandaff, Gerry Wallace from the Training College, Roger Walkey, now captain of Bath; John Davies, Ray Cheney from Newport and Bob Bassett were in his side, whilst with Keith in the Firsts were Clive Evans and that great character Billy Hullin.

The two Ala/uns — Priday and Drew — suffered from broken jaws during the session; 'Prid', Steve Hughes and Dai Hayward officially retired.

After such a fine season, Keith was re-elected captain for the Aussie's year. A vote of high confidence. He had broken his leg against his old club, the London Welsh, in December — the second time — Elwyn Williams had suffered the same injury against the Welsh in London back in September.

SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR

Keith's injury meant missing the tour to South Africa which took place that close season. A tour which was to prove that rugby football was more important than political issues. Billy Hullin led the team, and it was an experience to be always remembered.

West Germany were played early in September, the team responding well to Roy's coaching, and then the game against Australia the highlight. A tremendous display well planned and executed resulted in victory by 14 — 8. Billy Hullin gained his cap against Scotland, John O'Shea, Gerald Davies, Gareth Edwards and Billy Thomas on the eve of his finishing were made Baa Baas. With Dai Hayward as skipper (reluctant to finish), the 'Rags' won the Silver Ball and surpassed all previous records with a total of 977 points from thirty-eight matches. Never completely satisfied Dai was aiming at the 1000.

In that side were John Uzzell from Newport (where his drop goal had beaten the All Blacks), P. L. Jones, Gary Samuel, Gareth Edwards, Bob Bassett and Frank Wilson. The Extras captained by Peter Thomas kept going and provided a gap from the juniors which was proving most useful.

SAD LOSS

It was with deep sadness during the season that we learned of the death of Cliff Davies, without doubt the greatest rugby character of his era, respected with affection wherever the game was played. The Old Players formed a special sub-committee

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with Dr. Jack as Chairman to ensure that his dependants would not want.

On a pleasant note during the close season the club received the *Sunday Telegraph* Pennant as winners of the joint English/Welsh Championship Table the previous year.

Excitement off the field of play was also evidenced in the committee room and elsewhere with the display of the new ground plan model showing the setting which is now so wonderful.

NEW OUT-HALF

With Howard Norris taking over as captain, the season started off in great style. 222 points scored in the month of September, with a new outside half who was named Barry John. Probably the best performance of Howard's first year as skipper was the win by 16 — 11 against one of the most powerful Baa Baa XV's to visit for many years. A tour of France was undertaken and the 'Bill Everson, Vince Griffiths Memorial Sevens' won at Newport, with Tony Williams leading the Seven superbly.

Howard skippered the Baa Baas during the season, and the points tally of 703 was the second highest since the war. **The season saw the passing of Rhys Gabe — a link with history had gone.**

The Lions toured South Africa. Selected from Cardiff were Gerald Davies, Gareth Edwards, Barry John, Keri Jones, John O'Shea and Maurice Richards. A new club record.

'New' names to note in the sides were Dennis Gethin, a fine fullback, Ian Lewis, from the Rhondda and an excellent outside-half prospect, Alex Finlayson, the 'flying policeman' and this year's vice-captain, Mike Knill, another police notable and John James, captain this season. John Price's 'Rags' had a fine season, carrying on the winning of the Silver Ball tradition.

LANDMARK GOES

The close season, as soon as the last game actually ended, saw the North Stand starting to come down, a landmark lost, but just look at what has been gained. The new colossus grew at a remarkable rate. Now it seems to have always been there.

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Howard Norris was re-elected as captain and what a good start to the season was made. With Tony Williams again leading the seven, the first ever 'Sevens' Tournament organised at Twickenham by the Harlequins was won. Shades of pre-war. An invitation to travel to Auverne in France on their National Heroes Day, 11th November was accepted, and this looks like becoming a yearly event.

The South African University XV was defeated handsomely, Newport just deprived again of their elusive four wins and the Baa Baas beaten by 20 — 16 with Howard scoring one of his rare tries. This was a splendid win; Gareth Edwards could not play, Billy Hullin was in the Baa Baas side and third string scrum half Gary Samuels — 'Sambo' — took over like a veteran to play one of his best games over for the club. What a servant he has been since.

GREAT SEVENS YEAR

The 'Snelling Sevens' was won, with Tony Williams leading them superbly and Barry John, coming into the line-up at the last minute winning the Bill Everson Award as the 'Player of the Tournament'. This was followed the week after with a great display by a seven containing three changes. Barry John, Nick Williams and Billy Hullin were out; Alex Finlayson, Brian Coles and Gary Samuels came in, and Neath were beaten in the first National Sevens Final to be played on the Arms Park. Tony Williams deservedly received a special W.R.U. Award as the 'Player of the Day'. **Thus the three sevens of the year were won. A great season in keeping with the highest traditions. The players who did it were, Nick Williams, Elwyn Williams, John Hickey, Lyn Baxter, Tony Pender, Alex Finlayson, Brian Coles, Barry John, Tony Williams, J. H. Williams and Meirion Davies.**

'New' names again to note, Roger Beard, Mervyn John, Terry Stephenson and Meirion Davies. Gareth Edwards, Barry John, Maurice Richards and Gerald Davies were in the National XV again and all were selected for the short Welsh tour to New Zealand and Fiji. Billy Hullin and John O'Shea were in the Barbarians party to tour South Africa.

John Davies captained the 'Rags' once again and they lost just two games. An excellent record.

A change in administration at Youth level saw stalwarts Duncan Brown, who had been one of the founders, and Bill Lewis standing down with Keith Rowlands and Alun Priday taking over the reins.

Meantime, the new grounds, national and club were becoming a city landmark and preparations were well in hand for the long awaited opening. This came earlier than most thought but not quite yet.

John 'Tess' O'Shea, who had joined the club from Newbridge, took over from Howard as captain of the side, and with the visit of the South Africans uppermost in his mind there were problems. Maurice Richards departed North, Gerald Davies went to Cambridge and both Barry John and Gareth Edwards were injured. The team, sadly depleted went down to the Springboks after a hard struggle; then for the rest of the season recovered in great style to lose just three more games.

It was Easter before Barry and Gareth were able to turn out as partners and the Harlequins were well and truly beaten that day. Ireland was toured and Howard Norris reached the milestone of playing his 400th game for the club. He is still seeking an elusive couple to beat the long standing record set by Alun Priday. The National Sevens were again won and Tony Williams again the 'Man of the Day'. *What a grand servant Tony has been and when he was made a Baa Baa to achieve a tremendous family record it won universal acclaim.*

A change in administration. After many years of service Frank Trott, beset by illness which also prevented him from acting as Athletic Club Secretary as well (Ken George later took over), reluctantly gave up the Secretary-



CARDIFF R.F.C. — 1970-71

(Back Row): D. Hayward, R. Bish, C. Howe, G. Porter, A. T. Thomas, M. Collins, K. A. Rowlands, P. Goodfellow, L. Spence, L. Williams, P. Nyhan, B. Mark, S. Bowes. (Second Row): L.I Williams, S. Watkins, M. Knill, A. Finlayson, G. Wallace, L. Baxter, I. Robinson, M. Braithwaite, R. Lane, M. John, A. Priday, T. Holley. (Seated): R. Williams, J. Regan, T. Williams, H. Johnson (Chairman), J. Hickey (Captain), H. Wilkins (Secretary), D. Hoyle, L. Jones, G. Samue., G. Davies.

ship, and the club was fortunate in having Haydn Wilkins ready to step into that arduous position.

The season ended on a high note, the 'Rags' under John Davies again did well whilst the Juniors had another good season.

DREAM COME TRUE

Came 1970 and the opening of the new club ground. After all the hard years of negotiations it was truly a dream coming true. Preceded by the official opening of the national stadium now the property of the W.R.U., the club ground adjacent, where the cricket had long been, had been transformed into a playing area and amenities making a sporting complex unique in the world. Hubert Johnson and all those who had toiled so long were justly proud.

John Hickey, a local boy, was the captain, the W.R.U. President Ken Harris chose the opposition and it was

a truly great occasion. One which will always be remembered. Invited were sporting and civic dignitaries from far and wide with a very warm reception given to the former Cardiff captains introduced to the crowd before the game began. A warm nostalgic moment. The game which followed was in the best traditions of the great club whilst at the after-match function many happy moments in Cardiff's rugby history were relived until the early hours.

FITTING CLIMAX

The season was an interesting one. The crowd enjoyed their new home, the atmosphere always seemed there, where it had always been and some of the games were sheer joy. Who will ever forget Barry John's four drop goals against Llanelli with Clive his own brother their captain. A fitting climax was the selection of Gareth, Barry, John Bevan and Gerald Davies for the supreme Lions fantastic tour 'Down Under'. »



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This present season brought in veterinary surgeon John James as skipper. Sadly, he had an accident whilst vaccinating a cow just as the season started, Alex Finlayson his vice captain is proving a fine leader in his absence whilst burly George Beard has rendered excellent service in that vital role when Alex has been on Police and top representative duty. It is true that it is good for rugby when Cardiff are going well. Opponents agree that meeting the 'Blue and Blacks' brings out the best in them with a 'big gate' in the bargain. This year portends well once again with good coaching and Youth products coming through. Now settled comfortably with accommodation second to none, the change which seemed a dream has come true. It may not be widely realised that throughout all the years the club were not the actual owners themselves of the Arms Park. Now, the W.R.U. own the National Stadium; the club own their own ground alongside. **A big step which must rank in posterity as supremely important.** With floodlights also installed, with facilities and all amenities quite unsurpassed the future will prove the wisdom of Hubert and those who made it possible.

BECOME A MEMBER

Now that this has all come about, there is limited room for increased membership of what has been so often called, "the greatest club in the world". This membership provides a seat in the stand for all home games, every service possible for tickets for Home Internationals, very good catering for lunches, low cost car parking, right in the centre of the city, free parking mid-day for lunches, plus the unique rugby atmosphere of bars, lounge and trophy room in very good company. All for £7.35, and in the Athletic Club set-up there are four cricket teams, four hockey teams, three rugby teams, tennis bowls, golf, skittles and a very enthusiastic choir. The Supporters Club, recently re-formed is already proving its worth.

All this takes a lot of administration and the club have been fortunate to have Miss Anne Davies there for a long time now, sorting out the problems, doing the hundred

and one things that are necessary to ensure that things run smoothly. Her aide, Miss Susan Allen, enjoys every moment there, whilst still looking after all the liquid and other refreshments as she has done for so long — where would the club be without her — is Babs Filer, known the rugby world over. The back room staff, with Ken George as General Secretary all play a vital part.

Yes, Cardiff R.F.C. where 'the best is good enough', now looking forward to their centenary, have justly earned their high place in the history of our game.

OFFICIALS:

CHAIRMAN: Colin Howe, one of the great characters of the game. A local product, prop of note for many years, then committee, now holding high office with distinction.

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Peter Nyhan, former captain of the 'Rags' and a most conscientious worker for the club.

HON. SECRETARY: Haydn Wilkins, former top class cricketer and club outside half of note, took over from Frank Trott after many years on committee and as selector.

COACH: Roy Bish, W.R.U. Staff Coach, senior lecturer in P.E. at Cardiff College, former centre with Aberavon and Neath, most knowledgeable rugby man.

COMMITTEE: Stan Bowes — President of Glamorgan County last year, **Malcolm Collins, Peter Goodfellow, Dai Hayward, Hubert Johnson** (Chairman of the Athletic Club), **Brian Mark, Gwyn Porter, Alun Priday, Keith Rowlands, Les Spence** (W.R.U. Representative), **A. T. Thomas, Frank Trott, Lloyd Williams and Lyn Williams** — five internationals, six former captains and all former Cardiff players, except Roy, in that list.

MASSEUR: Tom Holley, player since pre-war, now in his 25th year as 'rub-adub' man. Great character, ask the players and many touring and other country's teams.



Not a ground to look down on, even then, Cardiff Arms Park with the Cardiff Athletic and Glamorgan County cricket-ground (left) as it appeared before the Welsh Rugby Union took their multi-million pound gamble.