

'THE RAGS' CELEBRATE A VERY SPECIAL

EASTER Monday sees the grand reunion to celebrate the centenary of Cardiff Athletic — The Rags. With more than 200 guests expected for the lunch, followed by the spectacle of the Cardiff match against the Harlequins and then more celebrations in true Welsh style, it's bound to be an occasion which will justify its place in Welsh rugby history and long linger in the memory of all those privileged to be there.

The occasion of a second string of a rugby club celebrating its centenary is probably unique in rugby history. If there has been another event of this kind, we would certainly like to know about it.

Players, officials and famous names from both the pre-war era and the more recent years of The Rags' progress will doubtless talk the night away about the past, the present and the future.

The past began in 1879, just four years after Cardiff RFC was founded, when an official second XV was

formed. In his book "The Greatest", D. E. 'Danny' Davies — former club captain (in 1926), committee chairman and the club's first WRU President (in 1961) and keeper of the records until handing over to John Davies in recent years — records that seven official matches were arranged for the reserve side in that first year.

This reserve team continued with varying degrees of success until 1926/27 — the year of Danny Davies' own captaincy — when the club committee decided that the strength of the club was so great that they would form two official first XV's. Such was the demand around the country with everyone wanting to play Cardiff RFC.

by
FRED CROSTER

This 'other side' carried on until season 1930/31, both teams playing on a home and away basis. Then it was decided to abandon this rare venture, due in part because of criticism from some other clubs. It was at this stage that Cardiff Athletic XV was officially formed.

And it was during this period that the second string earned its nickname.

Purely from the kitting out aspect, they were fondly referred to as "the rags and tatters" in comparison with the first XV and the name has stuck to this day.

Household names

The late Sid Cravos, later to become chairman, was club captain of the time and it is interesting to note the names of the second 1st XV who gained team caps that year. They were: Ken Harries, Stan Hughes, V. Marshall, Cliff Mills, Viv Osmond, Edgar Price, Goff Retter, H. Watkins and Dai Westacott whose father of the same name had been a notable club figure back in 1903. Many of these players were to become household names.

The first authenticated records show that in season 1884/5 under the captaincy of Chorlton James, the Second XV were unbeaten. They won 17 of the 18 matches played, drawing 1, with 30 goals and 42 tries against only 5 tries. On All Fools Day they met and beat the official 1st XV by one drop goal and one try to nil. That was the season following the origination by Cardiff of the four threequarter system, as we know it today.

This unbeaten record was repeated

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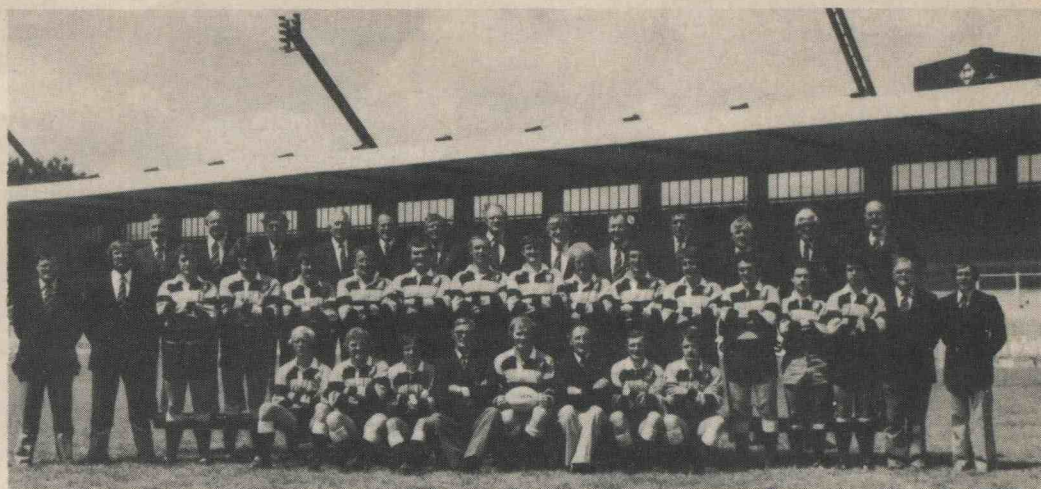
Front Row: G. DAVIES, D. REES, G. PORTER, D. E. DAVIES (Chairman), L. WILLIAMS

Cardiff's Rags and Tatters

shine through 100 years

the following season under the leadership of Dan E. Jones, who skipped the side for six successive seasons.

Not until 1939/40 did this happen again when, because of the outbreak



Back Row: B. MARK, A. D. WILLIAMS, C. T. HOWE, T. L. WILLIAMS, C. D. WILLIAMS, P. GOODFELLOW, K. A. ROWLANDS, M. L. COLLINS, LLOYD WILLIAMS, C. H. NORRIS, D. M. JAMES, W. H. WILKINS, L. M. SPENCE.

Second Row: P. NYHAN, R. BEARD (Coach), GLYN DAVIES, P. REES, L. O'BRIEN, D. LLEWELLYN, P. RAWLINS, I. ROBINSON, A. ELLISON, B. LAKIN, G. MEEHAN, D. CHURCH, J. WHITEFOOT, S. MILLER, D. MILLER, A. D. S. BOWES, J. EVANS (Coach).

Seated: A. YEANDLE, B. NEWMAN, J. O'BRIEN, J. DAVIES, (Chairman) M. JOHN, (Captain) A. J. FRIDAY (Hon. Secretary), J. DAVIES, M. HENRY.



(Inset) R. BALE

S. C. CRAVOS, A. T. THOMAS.

WAKELING, L. EVANS, D. J. AMOS, R. WILLIS, W. E. N. DAVIES, B. H. JENKINS (capt.), D. ILES, W. H. DOUGLAS, H. LOVELUCK.

of the Second World War, the record was: played one, won one. Then last season (1978/79) under the captaincy of Mervyn John, the Rags played 32, won 31 and drew just one.

Some of the scoring records, despite the formidable fixture list, speak for themselves: 72/73 under Tony Williams, they amassed 1,165 points in winning 33 of the 38 matches played. The following season, again with Tony as an inspiring leader, it was 35 wins out of 35 with 1,106 points on the board. There was one spell, from November to April, which produced at least 40 points in every game.

Before carrying on in that remarkable vein, let us go back to those illustrious names who were captains and/or recipients of Cardiff 'Rags' caps. Caps were first created back in 1885/86 for both the 1st and 2nd teams. Since 1956, caps for both teams are only awarded after 20 team appearances in one season. The recipients proudly wear them after being duly presented at the annual dinner. In the 1920s, with fewer matches then played, caps were given for 15 matches.

More names

Back to those names. Before the last war: **Duncan Brown**. His father before him was an international from the club and Duncan was one of the founders of the highly successful Youth section; **Hubert Johnson**. 'Uncle' Hubert, as he was known the world over, died last year. The trophy room bequeathed by this great man who became captain, chairman, president and a legend in his time, will be a permanent memorial.

Ted Parfitt, Gwyn Nicholls — one of the game's immortals, in whose memory the Arms Park Gates were named; **Jack Bassett**, one of the country's finest fullbacks; **R. D. and T. R. Turnbull**, what memories these names conjure up; **Ianto Evans**, in the Cardiff 7, which won the Middlesex 7's just before the war; **Charles Arthur, Les Arnold, Jim Hickey, Tom Holley**, known all over the world for his talented hands with the club, at the Varsity matches and with most of the major touring sides and still going strong.

E. R. Knapp and the incredible character of characters **A. D. S. 'Stan' Bowes**, still serving, still Blue and Black right through; five times captain **G. V. Wynne-Jones**, the oldest living 'Rags' captain and now earning world-wide fame with his weekly radio programme, his 'Echo' column and his *Welsh Rugby* column: **Lyn Williams**, that fine flyhalf who is chairman of the centenary committee now.

On to post war and more records. **Bob Bassett**, of the same family as Jack, scored 228 points as fullback in 1966/67. **Leighton Davies**, now with Newport, and **Nick Ward** came next with 170 points. Under skipper **Dai Hayward**, another name to conjure with, they won the Silver Ball in Bob's record year, beating Aberavon 'Quins' in the final. John Price led the Rags to a repeat performance next season when the final victims were Taibach. They are back in the Silver Ball again after some years in exile.

Dr. Jack Matthews, profiled by 'Geevers' in this issue, ended his own

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RAGS AND TATTERS *continued from page 9*

playing days with the 'Rags' after his great international career before becoming chairman of the club. **Selwyn Evans**, **Gwyn Davies**, also a fine cricketer; **Hadyn Wilkins**, now chairman of Cardiff Athletic Club, a fine flyhalf, first class cricketer and proud that son Alan is a talented cricket professional; **Dai Amos** of County fame; **Derek Iles**, another flyhalf who might have been capped by Wales; **Ian McJennett** and his son **Mark**; **Geoff Beckingham**, one of the cleanest hookers ever for Wales; **Rex Willis** — yes, he started with the 'Rags'.

Roy Roberts, the uncle of 'The' Williams' family; four times captain **Peter Goodfellow**, how aptly named and what a servant still with the all conquering youth section; the late **Sid Judd** who would have been one of the games' true 'greats'; **E. L. Horsfall**, capped for England; **Dennis Murphy**; **Alun Priday**, club secretary after a record number of 1st XV appearances as fullback, also capped for Wales; **Alan Barter**, **Howard Nicholls**, **Colin Bosley** of London Welsh; **John Dodd**, worth many caps; **Peter Nyhan**, now looking after the programme notes; **Kingsley Jones**, the start of his club, country and Lions career; **Ray Glastonbury**, a fine wing; **Colin**

Howe, another exceptional character to say the least and still serving on the committee.

Tommy McCarthy, settled in South Africa but still comes back; **Billy Thomas**, a grand hooker for Wales; **Billy Hullin**, capped as scrumhalf after being 1st XV captain; **'Big Jim' Mills**, going strong in many ways 'Up North'; **Lyn Baxter**, who became captain of Penarth; **Roy Duggan**, now one of the architects of the success at Bedwas; **Billy Raybould**, capped for Wales and the Lions; **Ian Robinson** — Robbo's caps for Wales were so popular and he's far from finished; **John Huw Williams**, coaching the Welsh Schools; **Mike Knill**, captaining Penarth in their own centenary year after his international career ended; **Gerry Wallace**, Wales 'B' cap; **John Hickey**, who had one of the best 'Rags' teams of all; **'Big' Harry Morgan**.

There are many more. Some may surprise you. I'll go on. **Stuart Watkins**, 26 caps on the Welsh wing but proud of his 'Rags' cap; **David Barry**, back with the 1st., as deputy for Gareth Davies; **Trevor Worgan**; **Chris Camillieri**; **Peter Rawlins**; **Peter Bolland** — how well he is doing at Tredegar; **Gareth Luff**; **Bob**

Newman; **Adrian Jones**, brother of P.L. and, cap of the near future; **Andrew Yeandle** and the one and only **Terry Holmes**.

One name left now **Williams**. Of the **EIGHT** brothers who played for the 1sts, from Gwyn to Bleddyn, **Lloyd**, **Cenydd**, **Elwyn** and **Tony** had 'Rags' caps before furthering their illustrious careers.

That in some way epitomises the worth. There are nineteen senior internationals in that little lot.

Many have had to be left out. Forgive the omission if you are one. Space shortage is the only reason.

Through the 100 years, the 'Rags' have played a marvellous part in the story of this great club. Internationals galore have turned out readily and proudly. This current season, under **Roger Lane**, is no exception and they are celebrating in true style.

The centenary committee under chairman **Lyn Williams**, their captain in the post war years, with **John Davies**, four times captain and now secretary, have worked hard and long. The big day comes on Easter Monday. But the traditions and the memories will live on for another 100 years and more.

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