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SWANSEA

v

CARDIFF

SATURDAY, 6th DECEMBER 1980

Kick Off 3.00 p.m.

PROGRAMME 15p

(Donation to Swansea and District Rugby Supporters' Club)

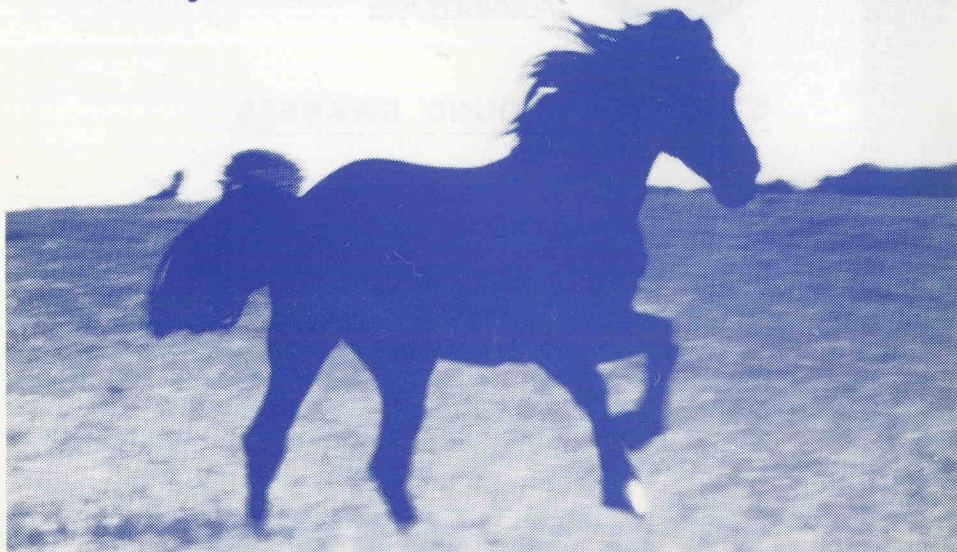
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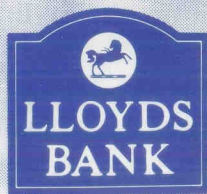
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EDITORIAL

As we approach the halfway stage of the season and take stock of the situation as regards Welsh rugby it would be fair to say it has been a sobering experience for us. Without making excuses, the leading Welsh players who went on the Lions tour have played too much rugby and several have only recently shaken off the effects of injuries they received. However with the international series due to begin on January 17th Wales can enter the fray with renewed vigour.

The visit of Cardiff to St. Helens is no ordinary fixture, it is one of our most attractive, a game guaranteed to make the blood flow faster and charge the emotions with anticipation.

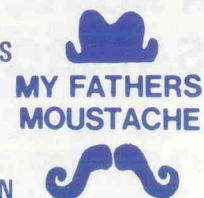
The Cardiff captain is John Scott the English international No. 8 forward. He has in his side three current Welsh internationals in the half-back combination of Terry Holmes and Gareth Davies, along with hooker Alan Phillips. They also have available for selection two former British Lions in David Burcher and Stuart Lane.

The Cardiff club have agreed to make a tour of New Zealand next May to play five or six matches, and are looking forward to the opportunity of visiting this great rugby nation. Cardiff will be the first Welsh club to visit the country.

Tony Swift and Trevor Cheeseman are named in the England 'B' side meeting Ireland at Twickenham on December 6th. The Swansea wing has been showing fine form recently, while Trevor is challenging John Scott for the No. 8 position in the England side.

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WINGS OF WINTER

1931 — 1933

John Buchan (a good rugby man) wrote, somewhere, in praise of the British winter. For (said he) "the land is bare; and you get the essential savour of earth and wood and water".

I suppose that at St. Helens we are altogether too urban to gain this impression of winter; but stand, if you will, on the touchlines at Burry Port or Pencoed (not to mention Maesteg !) and I think you may see what he meant.

But I doubt whether our wings, in the 'Thirties, shared his enthusiasm, as the depth of winter approached.

For we are not talking of our modern wings, who move infield, who, in defence, are expected to assist their full-back, whom they also cover when he makes his not infrequent forays upfield. No — it was a different world; and it was almost indecent for a wing to interfere in the ways I have mentioned. If he did, growled criticism of being 'out of position' were his lot; apart from which full-backs, I suspect, resented any intrusion on their preserves; they alone, it seemed, must be masters in their own '25 (if not in their own half). And I suspect also that in the 'Post' on Mondays they wanted to read that they 'never put a foot wrong' (Pendragon) or 'possess a sense of position verging on the uncanny (Scarlet). And that they could only expect such praise if they were utterly and completely alone.

Pity then the conventional wing of those days, standing apart in the cold and wet, (and it was wet, very wet; often, very often, in the thirties); and hour might go by, in a tight game, without a pass or loose ball, then it would come; a chance of a vital try — and the poor fellow, numb and frozen, dispirited, would muffle it. Cursed to high heaven he was then, when no-one had previously cared whether he was on the field or not !

One of our 'conventional' wings in the early thirties was D. P. Manley. Whether he had had the sort of ill-luck I have just mentioned I don't know; but if he had, 'a section of the crowd' held it against him. 'Get your jersey dirty Manley !' they would exclaim testily. It was just the same sort of recommendation as made by a later generation to Wayne Lewis — 'get your hair cut !' when that enterprising young man got his box of tricks slightly jumbled.

It was unfair to Manley, the player who went slap bang through the whole of the formidable Neath pack to score (and they talked about it for years at the Gnoll) was not the one to mind a dirty jersey. Manley was indeed a player I much admired. He was tall, powerfully built and fast. His black hair and strong physique gave him, on the field, a menacing appearance, and if that was the impression our opponents formed, then they were right. Many a splendid try I saw him score, and the Irish selectors agreed, for he was in their trials when Ireland were particularly well supplied with fine wings.

Now what about the 'unconventional' wing I mentioned ? It happened this way.

I was in the stand one very wet Saturday towards the end of '32 or '33. We were playing Aberavon.

Now, in those more casual days, rarely indeed was the side that played was the one advertised in the 'Post'. There was no loudspeaker, and the sole means of communicating team changes was a rather small black-board on which were chalked the changes; the board supported, (in that order), by a pole and a fairly small boy, was carried with ceremony (and sometimes to the vociferous disgust of the spectators facing infield) around the touch-line. If you happened to in deep conversation with a friend, you missed its passing — and there was no second chance. Though it was still some years before the expression was coined — you'd had it !

But on this occasion, whether I saw the board or not, there was one change of which I was quickly appraised 'Wattie's playing!', 'Who!', 'Wattie Thomas — You know!', 'Oh yes — good! now we'll see something!', 'Good old Wattie!'. Comments of this sort flew at me from all sides — indeed in the few minutes remaining to kick off, his name seemed on everyones lips. Wattie Thomas ? I'd never heard of him, much less seen him. Yet so fulsome, so unanimous was the praise, that on me it had a perverse effect — I was heartily sick of Wattie and all his works before he set foot on the field.

Now as I have said, it was a very wet day, and good though the St. Helens surface was, it had not then the present marvellous quality. A hard forward game, granting the opposition, with little back play, was in prospect.

Wattie appeared. He took position on the wing. I turned a jaundiced eye on him. He was in build a little larger than Huw Davies.

It WAS a forward struggle. Three-quarters saw little of the ball — no reason why they should. And yet slowly I began to warm to Wattie. Did our full back miss the greasy, rolling ball ? Wattie was behind him to hack it into touch. Did the 'Bravon forwards make a fierce rush ? Wattie it was who bravely fell to stem it.

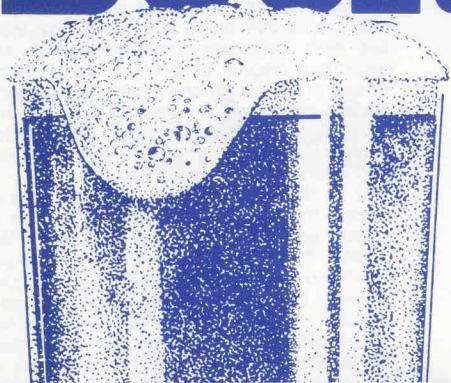
And then just before half time, thirty yards from the 'Bravon line near touch, the ball went loose. The very act of securing the soapy object was enough — yet Wattie was away; side-stepping, swerving, ducking, somehow keeping his feet while all 'Bravon slithered to their doom, he reached the line by the flag. Three - nil; but gloomy thought! Wind and rain in our faces second half!

And the pressure was on. We were saved from penalties by the ball now as heavy as lead. But we could not clear our lines, near which their pack raged close and interminably. Then a loose ball and our pack drove it to touch near their '25. Again loose, but on our side; again Wattie performed the near impossible in collecting it cleanly; he turned, and thirty-five yards out, from the touchline, against a strong wind, and with that lead-like ball, dropped as perfect a goal as I will ever see; 7-nil, and that was how it stayed.

I never saw or heard of Wattie Thomas before; I never saw or heard of him again.

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NEXT HOME GAME:
YSTRAD RHONDDA
Sat., 20th December

Cefnwr	Full Back
Asgell Dde	Right Wing
Canolwr De	Right Centre
Canolwr Chwith	Left Centre
Asgell Chwith	Left Wing
Maswr	Outside Half
Mewnwr	Inside Half
Y Rheng Flaen	Prop
Bachwr	Hooker
Y Rheng Flaen	Prop
Clo	Lock
Clo	Lock
Blaenasgell	Flanker
Wythwr	No. 8
Blaenasgell	Flanker

Referee: Mr. CLIVE MORLING, Birchgrove

*Internationals

CARDIFF

- 15 R. WILLIAMS
- 14 D. PREECE
- 13 D. H. BURCHER*
- 12 N. HUTCHINGS
- 11 S. EVANS
- 10 W. G. DAVIES*
- 9 T. D. HOLMES*
- 1 J. WHITEFOOT
- 2 A. J. PHILLIPS*
- 3 I. EIDMAN
- 4 K. EDWARDS
- 5 A. MOGRIDGE
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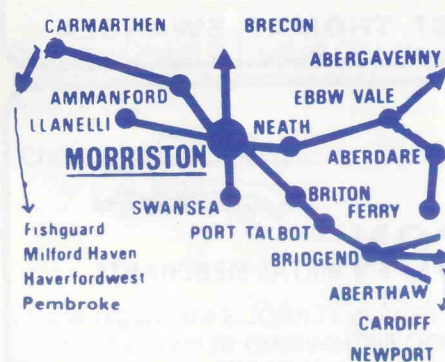
FIRST XV FIXTURES

1980

Wed.	Sept.	3	PENCLAWDDA	W	6-28
Sat.	"	6	CROSS KEYSH	W	26-10
Wed.	"	10	BURRY PORTA	W	9-31
Sat.	"	13	MOSELEY	.....H	W	28-9
Sat.	"	20	BRISTOL	.....A	W	6-10
Wed.	"	24	EBBW VALE	.....A	W	12-18
Sat.	"	27	NEWPORT	.....H	W	23-3

1981

Sat.	Jan.	3	ABERAVON	.....H	FINAL TRIAL
Sat.	"	10	W.R.U. Cup 3rd Round		WALES v. ENGLAND
Sat.	"	10	WALES v. SCOTLAND		FRANCE v. SCOTLAND
Mon.	"	19	NEWPORT	.....A	
Sat.	"	24	COVENTRY	.....A	
Sat.	"	31	ABERTILLERY	.....H	
Fri.	Feb.	6	PENARTH	.....H	
Sat.	"	7	IRELAND v. FRANCE		SCOTLAND v. WALES
Wed.	Oct.	1	PONTYPOOL	.....H	D 9-9
Sat.	"	4	HARLEQUINS	.....A	W 9-24
Wed.	"	8	PONTARDDULAIS	.....A	W 9-47
Sat.	"	11	LLANELLI	.....A	L 9-19
Sat.	"	18	NEATH	.....H	W 24-8
Sat.	"	25	NEW ZEALAND	.....H	L 0-32
Wed.	Mar.	4	PORTHCAWL	.....A	
Sat.	"	7	FRANCE v. WALES		IRELAND v. ENGLAND
Sat.	Nov.	1	BLACKHEATH	.....A	W 9-12
Tues.	"	4	S. WALES POLICE	.....H	W 70-6
Sat.	"	8	LLANELLI	.....H	W 17-6
Sat.	"	15	W.R.U. Cup HENDY		W 30-9
Wed.	"	19	BRIDGEND	.....A	L 12-13
Sat.	"	22	RICHMOND	.....H	
Fri.	"	28	MAESTEG	.....A	W 13-19
Wed.	Apr.	1	CROSS KEYS	.....A	
Sat.	"	4	LONDON WELSH	.....A	
Sat.	"	11	W.R.U. CUP FINAL		
Wed.	"	15	CARDIFF	.....A	
Sat.	"	18	HARLEQUINS	.....H	
Mon.	"	20	BARBARIANS	.....H	
Sat.	"	25	WALES v. Pres. XV	.....A	
Mon.	"	27	ABERAVON	.....A	
Sat.	"	11	BRIDGENDH	
Sat.	"	14	BATHA	
Wed.	"	18	EBBW VALEH	
Sat.	"	21	SALEA	
Sat.	"	28	W.R.U. Cup Semi Finals		



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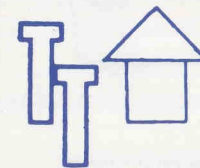
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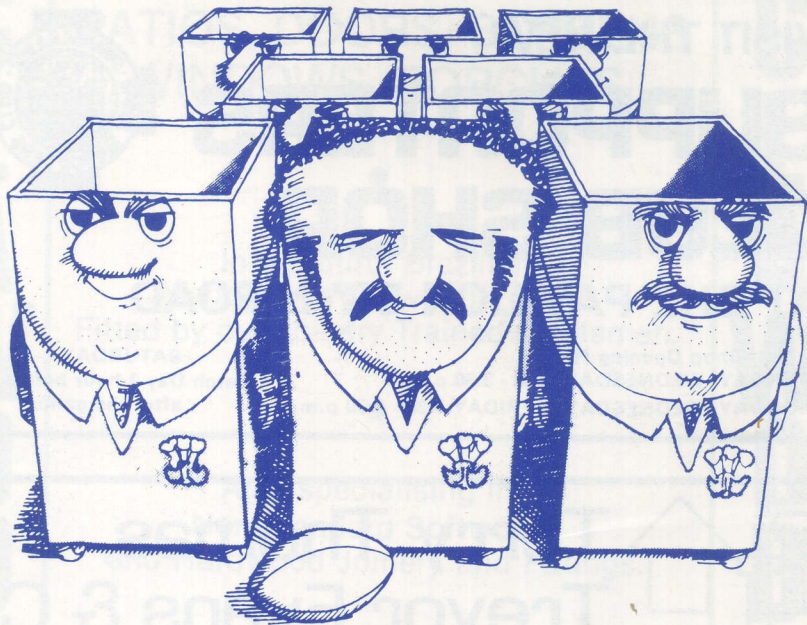
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