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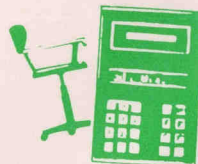
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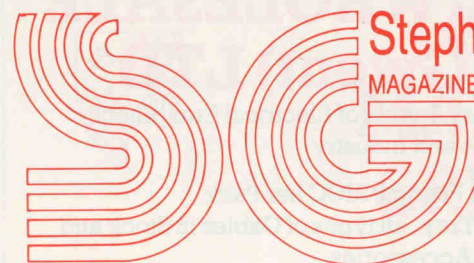
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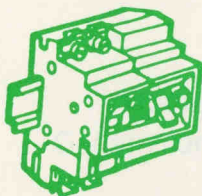
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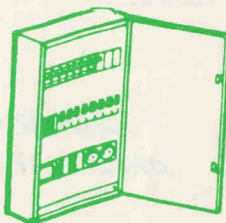
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CLUB NOTES ...

Among other things Cardiff have two certain tasks this season. They want to keep the Schweppes Cup and also find a points scorer in place of Gareth Davies who has retired after creating, in 1983/84, a Cardiff record of 383. In his last season he scored 338 but it is not only the Cardiff supporters who miss him — and Terry Holmes — but followers of the game everywhere. Gareth made his final appearance in Gwent on this ground last March when he kicked eight of Cardiff's 16 points. A former Cardiff Youth full-back, Arwel Parry, also kicked eight points out of Ebbw Vale's 19. That was Cardiff's second successive defeat here and the teams were, Cardiff — Mike Rayer, Alan Glasson, David Evans, Alun Donovan (Try), Adrian Hadley, Gareth Davies (Conv. Drop. Pen.), Neil O'Brien, Chris Collins, Alan Phillips (Capt.), Wally Blackmore, Mark Rowley, Robert Norster, Terry Crothers, Robert Lakin and Gareth Roberts (Try). The Ebbw Vale team was — Arwel Parry (2 Pen. 1 Conv.), Anthony Davies, Mike Jones, Steve Lewis (Try), Brian Thomas, Colin Watkins (Dp. Goal), Nigel Osborne, Syd Wharton, Ian Watkins (Try), Brandon Cripps (replaced by Glyn Harper), David Fryer, Wayne Matthews, Neil Robinson (Capt.), Carl Dennehy and Chris Evans.

Ian Watkins of course scored his first try for Ebbw Vale when just a teenager against Cardiff in a Cup tie back in February 1982 when he charged down a Terry Holmes clearance, a rarity in itself. Ian has been one of several forwards on a growing injury list and we have done well to survive during a period when the medical section of the Club has been very busy. Everybody will be needed for next Saturday's Cup game at Llantrisant and the task will not be taken lightly. Cardiff go to Treorchy in their Cup tie and will face a tough side as they well know, and one that is celebrating a Centenary.

In recent matches it must be said that we were lucky to defeat Cross Keys with a couple of late penalty goals and then were submerged by a Newport pack carrying too much power and experience for our young eight. Ceri Jonathan's performance at Rodney Parade was top class while last Saturday, Arwel Parry returned from injury to contribute 16 points in a match watched at Cheltenham by more of our supporters than theirs. These notes were written before last Wednesday's games between Cardiff and Oxford University and Ebbw Vale v Aberavon but before then the respective records were — Cardiff, 10 wins and 6 defeats (all away), Ebbw Vale ten wins and five defeats (one at home).

Due to the ground development the "Clubhouse Bar" is open AFTER the game only at the Indoor Cricket School at the side of the Pavilion which is restricted to players, officials etc.

Our next home game is on Saturday November 22nd against Northampton, kick-off 2.30 p.m., followed a week later by a visit from Swansea.

COVER PIC: Anxious faces last March when Ebbw Vale beat Cardiff 19-16.
Photo by courtesy of "The Gwent Gazette".

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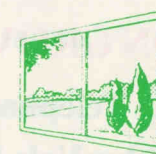
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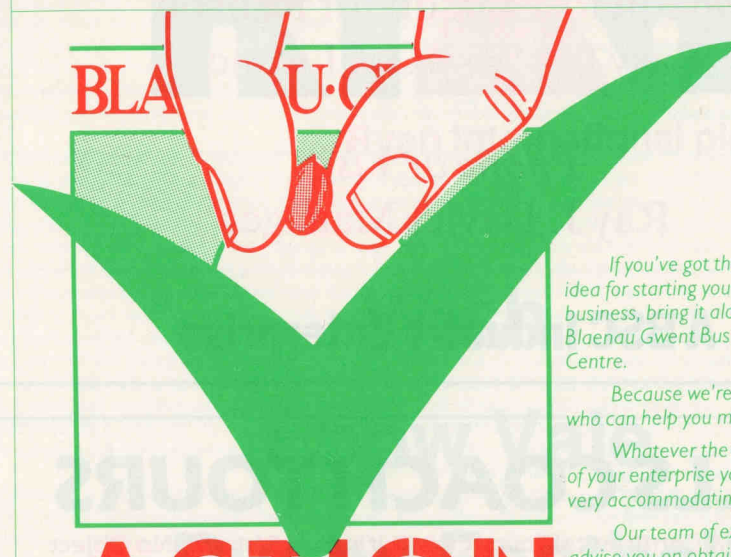


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GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

We've said it before and we'll say it again — things ain't what they used to be. Did you realise that there are no trams left in Cardiff? Even the trolley buses have disappeared with the Capitol Cinema and the Lascar seamen who used to do their shopping in Woolworths. Brain's Dark now costs more than two bob a pint and someone went to watch Glamorgan playing cricket at the Arms Park last summer only to discover they had moved to Sophia Gardens, wherever that is. Does Johnny Clay know about that?

Is nothing sacred? Tradition has left the Capital city like Shirley Bassey, Paul Rees and the Great Western Railway. The way things are going Cardiff City will end up in the Second Division — playing Swansea Town.

And yet some of the old values remain. Tucked away behind the Welsh Rugby Union hospitality suite (that also includes the North stand), there are still young men playing rugby in blue and black jerseys. No doubt Bleddyn Williams, Jack Matthews and Billy 'The Kick' Cleaver have packed it in by now, to make way for the new generation of Lloyd Williams, Dai Hayward and Alun Priday.

And what's this about a Welsh Cup competition? What would the old WRU say! Clubs getting big money and playing to win! The next new-fangled idea will be stopping Billy Cleaver from kicking straight to touch from inside his 25. No doubt some bright young spark will suggest four points for a try. Still, it looks as if the Cup is here to stay and trust Cardiff to take more than a passing interest in it. In the 15 years of competition they have been in seven finals and won four of them since 1981. It all began when the Cardiff Treasurer, the No.2 financial big-wig in Britain after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, went to Fantasy Island. All he wanted was four Cup wins and four meaty cheques to follow. It was worth talking to that 'orrible little squirt for.

The dreaded and worrying early rounds of this year's Cup competition begin on Saturday and this time last year both our Clubs were a bit edgy. Cardiff's fears were well founded for although they won at the South Glamorgan Institute 25-16, the students had Devereaux and a lot more and scored three tries. We went to Newport, but instead of going over the Bridge as usual, discovered a pleasant haven in Pill where a warm welcome awaited in the burly shape of Bunner Travers who played with the aforesaid Bleddyn, Jack and Billy. We won the Cup tie 27-9 despite an amazing run by winger Brian Thomas who is a farm boy and not used to the urban atmosphere of downtown Newport. Instead of taking the shortest route to the Pill line he went inside, then cut back, then double-tracked, scissored with nobody and would have disappeared up his own you-know-what if he hadn't bumped into a Pill Harrier. It was Brian's third game of the season after injury and he was disorientated after playing full-back against Cardiff a week before. We were all a bit bewildered after that Arms Park game because we led 12-7 during injury time and lost 13-12. Our visit to Pill brought a victory and a defeat. We won the game comfortably but were hopelessly beaten in the clubhouse which, luckily, was so full that no-one could fall down.

The early rounds of the Cup worry bigger Clubs and so do the present proposals for the competition in the future, but all being well it will go on, and so will we. Meeting new friends in places where only the heroes of 'Star Trek' have been before, and like Heineken, reaching parts etc., etc. Cup defeats and those in regular fixtures are forgotten in the mists of time, but as long as each Welsh club keeps the game going in its neighbourhood all is well.

Our results against Cardiff in the last few years have been up, down and sideways. In the 83/84 season we had modest hopes of repeating our double victory of 82/83, but in November 1983 we lost 31-16 at the Arms Park and in the March 1984 game here, not only lost but disappeared out of sight, going down and down, 61-18. In 84/85 we won at home 22-13 but lost at Cardiff 44-13 and last season, after losing 13-12 away, beat Cardiff in March 1986, 19-16. Two successive home wins over Cardiff gives our players an incentive but old hands will realise that our visitors have a new generation worthy to wear the jerseys once filled by Bleddyn, Jack and Billy Cleaver.

For all sorts of reasons we welcome Cardiff. Our links go back so far and have been forged on and off the field. A young Bleddyn Williams, then in Rydal School, played his first game for Cardiff against Ebbw Vale and tradition is strong in both Clubs.

That's why it's nice to see Cardiff again. But is it true that the trams and the Capitol Cinema have gone? And is Dai Hayward really dropped from their team? At last?

R.E.L.

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