

articles by Cardiff's Rugby and "Soccer" Clubs chairmen D. E. Davies and Ron Beecher, under the title of "Rugby Football At Ninian Park".

Legal action was taken by the Cardiff Athletic Club to secure the strip of land of the Cardiff Arms Park fronting Cowbridge Road to Cardiff Bridge. It contained a cluster of splendid old trees and part of it had been used by the club for many years for the deposit of grass cuttings, etc., and minor storage. The Marquess of Bute had never developed this strip of land like the strip now occupied by the Westgate Street flats, and the Western Ground Rents Ltd. which had acquired lands from the Marquis issued the Cardiff Athletic Club a writ claiming the strip of land in question. The legal action was lost and so were the amenities of this shady tree-lined strip at the cricket end of the ground and behind the bowling green. Passers by on the Cowbridge Road often rested on the low castellated like wall in the shade of the trees. The site is now occupied by the City Centre Hotel, a few trees remain.

The impact of television was now a serious concern of the gate taking clubs, Welsh and English, which had now begun to be seriously affected by very poor gates when Rugby matches were televised on the same day. The subject was seriously debated at the A.G.M. of the W.R.U., delegates of senior clubs reporting that gates of only £25 and even less were taken when there was a clash of a match with the media of TV. When I made my debut for Cardiff against Newport in April 1921 there was a crowd of 35,000 to watch—and incidentally see Cardiff win by 19 points to nil. A record crowd of 48,000 watched Cardiff v. Newport in February 1951. Our new club ground at the Cardiff Arms Park with its two stands was planned to hold some 15,000 spectators, and on only a couple of occasions has there been a gate of over 10,000, the average for a club match being somewhat half of that total. Such is the price of progress, of the media which today forms part of every home in the land and has become what we might describe as a necessity to the people of most parts of the civilised world.

The annual dinners of the Rugby club were now to be held, and rightly so, in our clubhouse. In January we sent congratulations to Dr. Jack Matthews about whom I and others have written, Dr. Jack had become a Justice of the Peace for the City of Cardiff. As a past captain of the club and chairman too, I know well that he can quite adequately deal with any law-breakers—even if they were Rugby players. On leaving Wales with his Springboks Ferdie Bergh the manager wrote me saying "Quite frankly, I don't know who has the worst lot in this world, a Rugby Football team manager or a liaison officer." It was hard work. In this season I was re-appointed chairman of the Cardiff Rugby Club, whilst being a member of the management committee of the Cardiff Athletic Club and of the Welsh Rugby Union, I undertook the work as the Rugby programme editor and at the same time continued to maintain all of the official records. On top of all this I was pressed by the W.R.U. to undertake the job of Welsh liaison officer to the South African tourists which entailed my staying with them at the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl, which was their headquarters for all their matches in Wales. They treated me very kindly and were very courteous to me; the aftermath of the Cardiff match required tactful, and factual handling.

#### THE CLUB'S FIRST W.R.U. PRESIDENT

#### FOUR BROTHERS IN CARDIFF'S FIRST XV

1961-62. P42, W27, L10, D5. Points 390—197.

In terms of points, there was only one season since the war in which fewer points were scored than in Lloyd Williams' second term of captaincy, that was in 1958-59. Two of our great forwards had gone, J. D. Evans retiring and Danny Harris turning professional. Keith Rowlands joined us from Llanelli, and he, together with two other forwards Alan Groves and John Selway gained 1st XV caps and so did A. D. "Tony" Williams. Gordon Wells retired after seventeen matches and generally we lacked scoring potential.

Our fixture list was the subject of criticism, but the W.R.U.'s joint usage of the Cardiff Arms Park, mainly in the second half of seasons, made it impossible for the Cardiff club

to arrange a regular home and away fixture list like that of other Rugby clubs; the playing condition of the ground was far from perfect.

We suffered a most depressing month of December, losing successively to the Harlequins (A), Ebbw Vale (H) and Neath (A). These defeats were immediately followed by a most unique misfortune in the club's history, as we had to cancel at Christmas time our three holiday matches with the Wasps, Watsonians and the Royal Navy owing to frost. In April we again suffered three defeats in a row, to Gloucester (A), Pontypool (A) and Ebbw Vale (A). But there is no Rugby season without some Blue and Black magic and some brilliant football was shown in our matches with the Barbarians and the Harlequins at Easter time, and against Llanelli over whom we scored 'doubles' as we also did over Aberavon. We scored two wins and two drawn games with our Newport rivals who were captained by one of the world's best hookers, Bryn Meredith, who gained all the highest honours of Rugby football.

Two of the teams who opposed us, Neath and Bridgend were captained by former Cardiff players John Dodd and W. R. Evans respectively; Cambridge turned out three Welsh Blues against us at Grange Road, they were Brian Thomas, Roger Michaelson and R. B. Collier, we were beaten by 18 points to six.

Glyn Williams with 10, Gordon Wells 10, Meirion Roberts and Dai Hayward six, Ray Glastonbury and Les Hewer five each were the top try scorers. Alan Priday scored more than a third of the total club points with 56 goals and two tries, he played in 39 of the fixtures and only one player, Malcolm Gough with 41 made more appearances. Kingsley Jones the vice-captain, and Keith Rowlands were chosen for the British Lions tour to South Africa, both played for Wales during the season as did Meirion Roberts and Lloyd Williams who captained the Welsh team against Scotland.

Harry Morgan had another successful season as captain of "The Rags". His Athletic XV won 27 of its matches losing only six, with eight drawn. The points were 511 to 241. Two matches previously postponed, with Maesteg Celtic and Cilfynydd were played away on the same day 30th April. "The Rags" beat the former by 22-3 and the latter 24-11. Alan Drew the former Cardiff High School Old Boys full back was top scorer with 137 points from 49 goals and four tries. Steve Hughes with 19 and Les Hewer 10 scored most tries. New Athletic XV caps were Gwyn Bayliss, Geoff Davies, Les Hewer and David Walkey. Young Davies was rated highly by my W.R.U. colleague V. M. Griffiths from Newport, but it was David Watkins who stayed with Newport and gained so much fame in later years. Harry Morgan played in 40 matches including ten for the premiers, Alan Drew also 30 with four for the 1st XV.

Our Youth XV was captained by Colin Prescott and they played 22, won 15, lost 4 and drew 3, the points being 307 to 60. Four of the players gained Welsh Youth international caps, Colin Prescott (captain), Jim Mills who later turned professional, Gareth Jones and Islwyn Matthews.

Four of the Williams Taffs Well family were now currently playing for the club and all four, Tony, Cenydd, Elwyn and Lloyd played four times in the First XV matches. At Ninian Park once again, Cardiff played Bristol in a floodlight match, and Bristol turned on a great performance to beat us by four converted goals to one try. It was the last time floodlight fixtures of ours were staged at Cardiff City's football ground as they were banned by the Football League. In the Welsh (Snelling) "Sevens" played at Swansea we were beaten in the 2nd Round by Ebbw Vale eight points to nil.

This season I was appointed President of the Welsh Rugby Union for an annual tour of office, being the first ever Cardiff Rugby official to be so honoured. Both the Athletic and the Rugby Club showed their appreciation of this honour and I was presented with suitable gifts. Alderman E. Ewart Pearce, M.B.E., J.P., F.C.A., a former member of the Rugby club, Athletic club auditor and vice-president of the Cardiff Athletic Club was installed as Lord Mayor of the city. He invited officials of the club to his installation banquet and showed his love and keenness for the Rugby game by attending the Rugby matches with Swansea and Newport in his official capacity accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoresses of those towns.