

absent being down with impetigo, but this popular team of his went on to beat England and Wales. A cheque for £9,113.4.11, the match proceeds, was sent to the W.R.U. Each affiliated club received a bonus of £50. Cardiff made a profit of £304 on the programmes.

We played Cardiff Training College in October and won 21 points to six, Ray Cheney who had joined us from Newport was a match winner with five goals. The college team included Gary Laycock, David Griffiths, Gareth Edwards, Roger Beard, all of whom were to join the Cardiff Club. For our match with Neath at home on 17th December they were very strong at forward (their pack being Ron Waldron, Morlais Williams, John Dodd, Brian Thomas, Jeff Pyles, B. Davies, Dave Morris and R. Williams) a neutral referee was appointed, Paddy D'Arcy of the Irish Football Union. He was wanted, and a close game gave us a narrow win by nine points to six. Ebbw Vale, Cross Keys and Bridgend were played in Floodlight Alliance fixtures but this tournament was becoming administratively unpopular. We lost to Newport in the final of the Welsh (Snelling) Sevens by 21 points to 15. David Watkins being in form with the good Newport Seven. Then came our tour to South Africa.

This was a huge success, and the tour party managed by Lyn Williams, club chairman, and Haydn Wilkins, honorary secretary, could never have been treated more hospitably than they were by their kindly South African, and South West African hosts. They were made very welcome in the highest of circles, and at the Rhodes Fruit Farm prior to the match with Southern Universities, lunch was taken with the South African Prime Minister Dr. John Vorster. Cardiff gave an excellent account of themselves and inflicted upon Eastern Province—conquerors of the British Lions on a number of occasions—a rather humiliating defeat by 34 points to nine, of which we scored 29 in the first half. Haydn Wilkins reported that our display was fantastic, tries being scored "the like of which I have never seen". Maurice Richards who had an excellent tour, contributed no fewer than nineteen points made up of three tries and five conversions. It was a tired team which arrived at Johannesburg for the last match, they had left Cape Town at 6 a.m. on the Thursday prior to the match with Eastern Transvaal. The refereeing was not understood, we made some foolish errors and consequently lost by 25 points to five. The 'Management' reported that the tour was both pleasurable and exacting, and that the behaviour of the players was admirable. Readers will find the results in the statistics of the club with South African teams.

The top scorers for the season, including the S.A. tour matches were: Ray Cheney 151 points from 61 goals, Maurice Richards 117 from 33 tries and eight goals, Keri Jones 23 tries and John Huw Williams nine. Lyn Baxter made most appearances, 43 matches, and John Hickey, Tony Pender, Maurice Richards, Billy Hullin, Gerald Davies, John O'Shea, W. J. Thomas and W. Clive Evans all played 30 matches or more. Gerald Davies, Billy Hullin, John O'Shea, Gareth Edwards and W. H. Raybould now of London Welsh, each gained their first Welsh caps.

The Athletic XV had an extraordinary season. Dai Hayward the captain was injured in the third match and was out of action for the next twelve. On recovery he led his team with drive and vigour, exhorting them always to "move it"—and play running Rugby. His team of young and experienced players responded well and the result was the achievement of the best record of any of our reserve teams in our history, amassing the colossal total of 977 points in 38 matches, an average of 25 points per match with the try value at three points. The Athletic XV won the Silver Ball Competition winning all of the stipulated twelve matches, beating Aberavon Quins in the final, at Bridgend, by 27 points to nil.

A scoring record was created by Robert Bassett the young full back from Kenfig Hill. He is the nephew of the brothers Bassett who played for Cardiff prior to the war. The record was made up of 101 goals and four tries for the Athletic XV—228 points, six goals, one try for the 1st XV—18 points; eight goals, one try—21 points for the Extras XV, in all 267 points. For "The Rags" the 'men of the year', Hayward and Bassett. P. Lyn Jones was top try scorer, his 28 included six in the match against Old Penarthians on Christmas Eve, they were beaten 36-6. Steve Hughes got 24, Frank Wilson 15, John Uzzell 14, Roy Morgan a splendid back row forward 13—with three for the first team in addition. The

youngsters Brian and Bernard Evans each had 10. Amongst many of Bob Bassett's feats was kicking 10 goals and scoring a try against Cardiff High School O.B. He made most appearances, 26 times. Roy Duggan, Steve Hughes, Tommy McCarthy, Gwyn Thomas each played 24, Dai Hayward 23, Ian Robinson 22, and P. L. Jones and Gary Samuel 21 each. Athletic XV caps were gained by Robert Bassett, Roy Morgan, Gary Samuel and Peter Thomas "Pies", whose 16 appearances with The Rags and eight for the 1st XV qualified him.

Peter Thomas, R.A.F., captained the re-formed Extras XV and the results were the best of the three seasons to date. Fifty-two players were called upon of whom sixteen took part in matches for the three Senior teams, and most of the rest had played for the Extras and "The Rags". Peter Thomas did a good job. He already held an Athletic XV cap for 1957-58 and had toured East Africa with the Combined Services, having, like Lloyd and Cenydd Williams, Alan Priday and others, done National Service the withdrawal of which was not, nor has been, in the national interest of our country.

Our Junior XV was captained by R. Geddes, but it turned out to be rather a mediocre season and only twelve of the matches played were won. No player won an international cap but the team was successful in winning the Cardiff & District Youth "Sevens", and had been rather unfortunate with a crop of injuries in the early part of the season.

First XV caps were awarded to W. J. Carling, R. Cheney, John Hickey, Keri Jones and Phil Morgan, Billy Thomas our hooker was to retire, Graham Davies went to Bridgend, and Phil Morgan, who, after one season with us and a South African tour, decided to turn professional.

The annual report of the C.A.C. revealed a surplus of £4,552 which included TV fees of £329. The Rugby Club made a donation of £250 to the Aberfan Colliery Tip Disaster Fund. Alan Priday was still editing our Rugby programmes and was again captain of the Cardiff Cricket Club from whose report I quote: "The last match played on Cardiff Arms Park was on Sunday 16th September, 1966, and appropriately enough, our visitors were Glamorgan Nomads. The match was concluded by Mr. Norman Riches and Mr. W. J. Evans umpiring the closing overs and by the drinking of a toast in champagne to the future at Sophia Gardens". Cardiff Cricket Club was founded as far back as 5th May 1845 and after renting a field at Longcross for three seasons, became associated with "The Park", which is the Cardiff Arms Park of today—see my "Story of the Cardiff Arms Park". In the very earliest period of its history, the Rugby Club was privileged to change in the hut of the Cardiff Cricket Club, whose removal to Sophia Gardens in 1966 saddened the hearts of many cricket and Rugby sportsmen. With the erection of the new huge gaunt concrete stands for the club and the Welsh Rugby Union, the Cardiff Arms Park lost its original character of more than a century. It was no consolation that the sale of the cricket turf realised the sum of £684. The pitch was re-seeded for the Rugby ground and for some months pigeons fed well.

Two of our great prop forwards passed away, Ted Spillane of the early twenties, and Cliff Davies of the post war two period. Both loved our club and gave much sterling service for many seasons. They were very well known and beloved by all Rugby men.

BARRY JOHN'S DEBUT. GARETH EDWARDS KIDNAPPED.

SIX PLAYERS FOR LIONS TOUR

1967-68.

Our captain was C. Howard Norris, and Gerald Davies his vice-captain. It was to be another season of remarkable events and achievements. There were a few disappointments. Howard joined the club in 1958-59 making his first team debut against Penarth on 24th September, and his last appearance on 6th November 1971 against Oxford University. He holds the club record of 415 first fifteen appearances and was yet another product of the prolific Rhondda Valley nursery to earn fame on the Rugby fields. From Porth Grammar School with a Secondary School cap, to Rhondda Junior Rugby, National Service, St. Lukes College Exeter, he graduated to Cardiff where he gained the highest honours. Over

six feet and more than sixteen stone, Howard moved from the back and second row of the pack to become one of the best of Cardiff's post war 'props', and to gain his Welsh caps, and a British Lions tour to New Zealand with a club-mate D. Ken Jones in 1966. At Twickenham in December 1967 he led the pack of the Barbarians who held the Sixth All Blacks to a draw of six points all until the fifth minute of injury time when New Zealand, profiting from a miss kick of the 'Baa-baas' full back, S. J. Wilson, ran the ball out to score the most sensational of tries and gain victory by 11 points to six. Howard is now a member of the committee and serving very usefully as a coach.

Among those who made their débuts were Alec Finlayson who was one of our former Youth players, J. H. James the former Cambridge Blue, Maurice Braithwaite the former Pontypridd forward and Barry John, already a young but senior Llanelli player and possessor of three Welsh caps. To elaborate here on John's Rugby achievements would be 'gilding the lily', his main honours are listed amongst my statistical records, his fame has been written at length in the world press and his artistry on television in very recent times; his own "Barry John Book of Rugby" has been published. Like Cliff Morgan on the Lions tour of 1955, and Gareth Edwards perhaps in 1974, Barry appears to have reached the peak of his Rugby brilliance in New Zealand in 1971 where he was crowned so to speak—"King John", thus becoming royally superior to our great "Prince of three-quarters" Gwyn Nicholls, 1892-1910. The best of Barry John's Cardiff predecessors, P. F. Bush, J. Clem Lewis, Cliff Jones, W. B. Cleaver and Cliff Morgan, each had their own characteristic style of play, and to assess the best of them all would need comparing like with like. None of them had the benefit of an inside half anywhere near as incomparable as Gareth Edwards. But what Barry possessed, and they did not, was an elusiveness and deception born of apparently ample time in which to move, he was expert in the touch finding technique between the two 'twenty-fives', his goal kicking approach was simple, speedy and accurate; he was one of the club's best drop goal kickers and kicked four in one match against his old team Llanelli in November 1970. Undoubtedly, Barry John and Gareth Edwards were the greatest pair of half-backs in the club's history.

We got off to a very good start in September with eight wins, then a draw with Aberavon, scoring 222 points of which 57 were obtained in our match with Torquay when P. Lyn Jones got four tries. The second of our matches, against Neath on 6th September was a travesty of good football. Neath started off with very much robust intent and some rough play, which, after some repetition, invoked many calls and boos from the crowd to "send him off". The game deteriorated and Randall Davies was ordered off the field and later sentenced to three months suspension by the W.R.U. Fixtures were cancelled for three seasons. Up to the end of December only four matches were lost, to Newport (A), Ebbw Vale (H), Llanelli (A) and Neath (A), but we were suffering somewhat from injuries, and during the season four of our players were off for many matches, notably Gerald Davies, Maurice Richards, Tony Pender and our skipper Howard Norris.

We were at the top of the Unofficial Championship table for practically the whole season, but late in the season, we could not play six of our stars who were selected to tour South Africa with the British Lions, a record number then, Gareth Edwards, Gerald Davies, Barry John, Keri Jones, Maurice Richards and John O'Shea and lose two out of our last three matches, on tour in France. We suffered twelve defeats in all and lost the Welsh Championship to Llanelli who had beaten us home and away.

We scored two wins over Newport, 19 points to three, away, and 26 points to three at home, of which 23 were scored in the second half. London Welsh beat us on the morning of the England/Wales match at Twickenham, by 14 points to six in a match of 15-man Rugby well and truly eulogised by two London sports writers, one of whom reported that it was 'Rugby for the Gods', and another of the man with a half gallon can of beer under his arm who said "After that there don't seem any point in going to the international, does there".

One of our best wins was that over the Barbarians by 16 points to 11, we were weak, but the 'Baa-baas' were strong and included two French internationals, Gachassin and

Lacaze. Two of our boys who came in for much praise were Billy Hullin and young Ian Lewis a former Porth Grammar School and Llandoverly product, who had joined us from the training college. Lewis had a splendid game showing touches of class and much promise.

Our three match French tour to Lyons was disastrous. Such tours at the end of a strenuous season against strong and augmented opposition should never be undertaken. The results, particularly when we cannot send our strongest players, are most damaging to the club's reputation. The first match again a Lyonnaise Selection was lost 11-8, the second with U.S. Bressane lost 13-3, the third, against another Lyonnaise Selection was won by 12 points to nine. According to press reports, the accommodation provided for some of our players, officials and club supporters was of the very lowest category of quality, two in a bed and so on, and of "red lamp" standard. It should be—never again!!

Honours. Owing to a change in the administrative policy of the W.R.U., Cardiff were not allocated a match with the Sixth All Blacks, but eight of our players were chosen for the East Wales XV, namely Keri Jones, Gerald Davies, Frank Wilson, Barry John, Gareth Edwards (capt.), John O'Shea, Lyn Baxter and John Hickey; the All Blacks luckily escaped with a draw of one try each, that of East Wales was scored by Frank Wilson. A full Cardiff Club XV might have won?

Keri Jones, Gerald Davies, Barry John, Gareth Edwards, John O'Shea and Maurice Richards played for Wales. Gareth Edwards at the young age of twenty years and seven months was honoured with the Welsh captaincy against Scotland.

On Wednesday 14th February, Gareth Edwards was kidnapped by a group of seven students of Swansea University College, it was their "Rag Week". They demanded a ransom of £50 from the Cardiff Rugby Club, stipulating that unless the ransom was paid "It was to be presumed that Edwards would not be available to play for Cardiff against Newport next Saturday". The City Police were notified and on Friday 16th February Gareth was released and driven from a Swansea hideout to the Cardiff Teachers Training College where he was a student. He said he had been well treated and had signed fifty Rag magazines. No ransom was paid. Gareth duly played in the match which was at Newport, and contributed to a splendid Cardiff 19 points to three victory by scoring one of the tries.

Cardiff's top try scorer was Frank Wilson with 17. Wilson was a most promising wing and a local Llandaff North product, but he turned professional. P. Lyn Jones got 15 (four in a match against Torquay), Gerald Davies 10, Maurice Richards 9 and Barry John 9 with 9 dropped goals. Billy Hullin—one of our two international scrum halves, got in the act with six tries and a couple of goals. Dennis Gethin scored 157 points from 66 goals and a try. First XV caps were awarded to Maurice Braithwaite (the delectable tenor), Dennis Gethin, Barry John, Roy Morgan, Ian Robinson, John Uzzell and F. H.—Frank—Wilson.

The first team results were P46, W32, L12, D2. Points 703-314.

The Athletic team was captained by John Price our rugged but popular lock forward who had joined us in 1962-63 from Penarth whose team he had also captained. His "Rags" (he called upon no fewer than 69) produced one of the best ever Athletic seasons and the official record was as follows: P33, W30, L1 and D2 with 700 points scored to 140. One single defeat was at the hands of Taibach at Sophia Gardens on 11th November by the narrow margin of 5 points to 3. "The Rags" being very unlucky in losing scrum half Gary Samuel, injured, early in the game. But there was to be retribution. In the final of the Silver Ball Competition played at Bridgend on 25th April, John's men inflicted a most salutary defeat on Taibach by no less than 27 points to 3. Amongst 49 scorers, P. Lyn Jones got 16 tries, Alec Finlayson 13, John Uzzell 13, Frank Wilson 12, John Huw Williams and Roy Duggan eight each. The goal kicking being shared amongst four players, none of them, Ray Cheney, Bob Bassett, Ian Lewis and Dennis Gethin, were able to reach 100 points. Meirion Davies, John Evans, Mike Knill and Gerald Morgan, four of John Price's "Athletic Pride" were awarded caps. Blazer badges were awarded to players of the 1966-67 successful season.

The record of Cardiff Extras XV was a modest one, P22, W12, L8 and D2. Most of

the matches were played at Sophia Gardens, Haydn Thomas the appointed captain gave way, for personal reasons, to one of the club's first team stalwarts Mal Gough. Fifty-nine players were called upon, mostly from within the club's existing four teams, our intake of new youngsters was poor and Stan Bowes and Lloyd Williams filled the 'missing breach' on occasions. Those who made most appearances for the Extras XV were Stan Thomas 17, Barri Evans 15, Terry Stephenson 15 (he scored seven tries), Tony Cosh 14, Mike Alexander and Alan Dent 13, and Mal Gough who was called to the fold played in twelve.

The Youth XV played 26, won 13, lost 10, drew 3, and scored 239 points to 219, rather a disappointing season, due to some injuries and a lot of changes. The strongest part of the team was in the pack where captain Gilbert Lloyd was leader.

Brian Mark was once again the excellent editor of the Rugby Club programmes, and those of 1967-68 saw the introduction of the "Know the Laws" series by A. D. 'Fred' Croster (the noted Welsh Rugby Union senior referee) an excellent feature for player and public alike. Fred, a schoolmaster, was an excellent "P.T." instructor, as I well remember from my Home Guard days, and it is good to record that he still continues to make his excellent contributions to the programmes of today.

On a jocular note, I can record that on the return coach journey from Coventry, where he had contributed two tries to Cardiff's excellent 27 points to 12 win, Gerald Davies lost possession of his most distinguished beard. His playing colleagues didn't like it, but they spared his upper lip. The month of September saw the passing of Rhys T. Gabe, who, with E. Gwyn Nicholls formed Cardiff's greatest threequarter partnership at the turn of the century. Both helped to make our club great, and two world wars were to pass before another great pair might be compared with them—Jack Matthews and Bleddyn Williams.

On the 3rd October 1967 Cardiff staged a match with a British Isles international team, for the benefit of the dependants of one of Rugby's most popular forwards, Cliff Davies.

CARDIFF WIN THREE MAJOR SEVENS EVENTS

THE NORTH STAND IS DEMOLISHED. THE JUNIORS PLAY NEW YORK XV

1968-69.

Howard Norris earned a second term as captain. He nominated as his vice-captain the experienced all-rounder Tony Williams who was to do so well in the club's Sevens participation. The season saw the demolition of the north stand in connection with the overall plans of the C.A.C. and the W.R.U. As the work progressed, the site resembled a "blitzed" area of broken tangled structure, a desolate sight, nostalgic to many of our club supporters. Our players would not again hear the cheering and acclaim of the crowd from this side of the ground in future club matches.

This season saw the introduction of what was formerly known as the "Australian dispensation" which provided that when the ball was kicked directly into touch between the two twenty-five lines, it had to be brought into play from the touch line opposite the place in the field from where it had been kicked. It is now a permanent feature of the Rugby game to encourage more running with the ball and less kicking. (The rule was tried out experimentally at Northampton in 1927 in the Edgar Mobbs memorial match between the Barbarians and East Midlands. A "Times" report was not favourable to its adoption.)

September 1968 did not presage a very good season as we lost, rather unusually, four matches—to Bridgend (H), Coventry (H), Gloucester (A) and Aberavon (A), but we were beset by injuries, and in three of our matches we were reduced to fourteen men before half-time which again prompted agitation for a bye-law to provide for replacements.

The season was well advanced before our British Lions players were available. Gareth Edwards and Gary Samuel were injured, two of our leading scrum halves! Gerald Davies went up to Cambridge and played only two games for us, Barry John only 14, John O'Shea 11 through injury and business commitments, Maurice Richards 23 and Gareth

Edwards only 10. Keri Jones the wing did not play at all having turned professional after his return from the Lions Tour. Lyn Baxter's Welsh tour to the Argentine, coupled with injury later, restricted his appearances to nineteen. It was a credit to good leadership that only five more matches were lost—three to Newport and once to Swansea and Coventry.

Newport, three up and one to play, arrived at the Arms Park determined to achieve their age-long ambition to defeat Cardiff four times in one season. It was a nail-biting affair, in front of our biggest gate. After fifteen minutes in the second half, the scores were nine points all, Newport really did put the pressure on, and for practically the rest of the game they were camped almost permanently inside Cardiff's twenty-five and looked as if they must win. But it was not to be, and by desperate tackling and covering, Cardiff held out to the end, thus once again thwarting Newport's efforts, they were better on the day. Our Newport friends and rivals won the Welsh Unofficial Championship, Cardiff were runners-up.

Newcomers met, and defeated, were the Scottish club Gala, Cape Town University and Glamorgan Police. The match with the Constabulary was distinguished by some fine play. Omri Jones for "the Coppers", and Barry John for Cardiff whose full-back Dennis Gethin converted eight tries. Gala, Liverpool and London Welsh were beaten at Christmas time, Barbarians and Harlequins at Easter, Gala and Watsonians on tour in Scotland, and Liverpool, Birkenhead Park and Chester, on the tour at the end of April. In the match with the Barbarians, Barry John made history by being the first player to wear a microphone during part of the game in connection with a documentary film later seen on television.

Dennis Gethin with 199 points from 80 goals and one try beat the existing club record for a full-back, exceeding the 176 of Alan Priday in 1962-63. Mervyn John also beat the try scoring record for a forward, his 13 exceeding the 12 record previously held by Les Spence and Cliff Howe. Other top try scorers were Alec Finlayson 18, Maurice Richards 13 and Tony Williams 9. New caps were awarded to Roger Beard (33 games), Alec Finlayson (29) and Mervyn John (25). Tony Williams played in 40 out of the 45 fixtures, Gethin 39, John Hickey 38, Elwyn Williams 37, Ian Robinson and Howard Norris 34, Garry Davies and Maurice Braithwaite 33, Ken Jones 24 and Maurice Richards 23.

It was a magnificent performance to win three major sevens events, and most of the credit was due to the astute and intelligent leadership of our captain, Tony Williams. The first event was the first held Harlequins Invitation Sevens (Lord Wakefield Trophy) on 4th September. We fielded practically a reserve team, four of them named Williams, Tony, Elwyn his brother, Nick and John Huw; Meirion Davies, Billy Hullin and John Hickey completed the team which beat the 'Quins' in the final by 21 points to 13. For the Welsh (Snelling) Sevens on 26th April, we had the assistance of Barry John who scored a record number of points to gain the Everson Award. A try in the dying moments by our crafty Billy Hullin against Llanelli in a tensely exciting final gave us victory by 17 points to 13. On the following Saturday the Welsh National Sevens were staged on the Cardiff Arms Park for the first time, and for this event Barry John, Billy Hullin and Nick Williams were replaced by Alec Finlayson, Brian Coles and Gary Samuel. In the final we beat Neath 11 points to three and Tony Williams earned the accolade of "Sevens player of the year".

The Athletic XV was captained by John Davies, the blonde haired forward and intelligent pack leader who had graduated to Cardiff via Cowbridge Grammar School, Aberystwyth University College, Pontypridd and London Welsh. His team had a most successful season which compared very favourably with the two previous ones. Only two matches were lost and scores of over 40 points were made against Old Illydians, Neath Athletic, Newport High School Old Boys and Cilfynydd against whom, at home, 57 points were scored in a victory notable for Terry Stephenson's seven tries which equalled the record of J. Williams of Cardiff Reserves in season 1896-97. (Seven tries were scored by P. K. Heard in a First XV match in 1878-79.) Another try scoring record was achieved—for a forward that is—Chris Jones who got 14 in the season including four in one match. Mervyn John scored 9—and the record of 13 with the 1st XV. Alec Finlayson and Barry Winter each got 7; the goal kicking was shared between Bob Bassett, John Evans, Mike