# CARDIFF RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR SEASON 1985-86

As my father, Willie Arthur, always maintained: "It's better to have memories than dreams," and I have some imperishable memories of season 1985-86. However early last September there were only dreams. Dreams of glory, but there were also thoughts of failure, even nightmares of tragedy. There were also doubts. Could this team that had been together for so long, and had achieved so much, launch yet another successful campaign. Or would the old war horse find that the season ahead contained too many battles to be contesting for the honours on the last field of glory.

The early games gave grounds for hope and cause for concern. We beat Cross Keys in the inaugural match of their Centenary season by 32 pts. to 11pts. This was followed by a 27 pts. to 10 pts. win over Glamorgan Wanderers at the Memorial Ground. This was a better win than it appeared at the time, since the Wanderers went on to their best ever season and finished second to Pontypool in the Western Mail Championship. Within five days of the start of the season, we were playing our third away game and, in the shape of Bangor, Northern Ireland, our second against centenary celebrating opponents.

In our first home game we defeated Bristol by 28 pts. to nil, followed three days later by a 30 pts. to 27 pts. win over Neath, also at home. In this game, Neath with seven forwards scored 18 pts. in the last eight minutes. Cause for concern. By October 9th we had also beaten Penarth, Coventry, Aberavon, Pontypridd and Newport. All except Aberavon away from home. Cause for hope.

However, despite the fact that we were winning, and scoring an average 25 points a match, we were not convincing. There was very little of the flow, flair and continuity that had characterised our play of recent seasons. Strangely, no one could pinpoint the precise cause of the malady. Many were the theories propounded, ranging from the introduction of the new tackle law to statements so outrageous that even *Private Eye* wouldn't print them. The only man who seemed unperturbed was Alan Phillips, the captain, who very sensibly was happy just to go on winning.

Nevertheless even he would be the first to admit that the whole team relied to an unhealthy extent on the genius of Terry Holmes and the boot of Gareth Davies. The *Western Mail* report on the Aberavon game stated: "Terry Holmes has imperiously returned to his best form. Without the magnificent Welsh skipper, a revitalised

one-man rugby army, Cardiff's desperate struggle for decent form would be a hopeless task." Whilst making allowances for the journalese, the comment summed up the situation, and the bubble burst against Bridgend on October 9th. Without the cunning and line-out expertise of John Scott and the inspiration of Terry Holmes, Bridgend out-thought and out-ran us to take our long-standing ground record by 16 pts. to 7 pts.

Three days later, on the 12th of October, we beat the redoubtable Fijian tourists on the National Stadium in a scintillating game of rugby football. This game should have given us a clue to the resolution and innate ability of our team, but was probably overlooked in the gloom that followed succesive Wednesday night defeats at Pontypool and Bath. We lost 12 pts. to 13 at Pontypool Park, and Gareth Davies dropped four goals, to match Barry John's record for the second time.

The more perspicacious of our members may well ask how we find ourselves in a situation wherein we play teams of the quality of Bridgend, Pontypool and Bath on successive Wednesdays, particularly when we have games against Newport, Fiji and Wasps on the intervening Saturdays. It is a long story, but basically it is the result of having fixed dates for the Welsh and English Cup competitions. Brian Mark, our more-than-capable fixture secretary is well aware of the situation and its consequent effects, but a solution to this congestion will of necessity be a long term and possibly contentious cure.

In the run-up to the first round of the Schweppes Cup, we beat the Harlequins at Twickenham by 38 pts. to 16, Newbridge at home by 41 pts. to 15, Leicester away 20 pts. to 15 pts, then we beat Oxford University and Ebbw Vale, both games at Cardiff. The cup game against South Glamorgan Institute on their home ground was significant for a number of reasons. First we won it by 25 pts. to 15, thanks largely to the five goals kicked by David Barry, playing at fly-half instead of the injured Gareth Davies. Steve Cannon also played shrewdly in the absence of Terry Holmes. The game was also significant for the first appearance in Cardiff colours of Robert Ackerman of Lions, Wales and London Welsh fame. However, his thunder was stolen by the College centre John Devereux, who used this game as a platform from which he launched himself into a meteoric rise to international fame.

On November 23rd we suffered our fourth defeat of the season against Llanelli at Stradey Park 3 pts. to 13. This game was our 22nd outing in just twelve weeks. Not only that, but with the exception of Swansea, we had played almost every significant club in the British

Isles. By the turn of the year we had achieved another six straight wins, including a home cup match against plucky Pencoed. In the end we ran out winners 24 pts to 3 pts., but that seemed of little significance compared with the appearance, as a substitute, of P.L. Jones for the village side, and the fact that Pencoed with what must have been the entire population of the village, plus distant relatives, turned up for a rollicking good day out at Cardiff. And we were delighted to have them.

Our win against South Wales Police was marred by the sending off of Robert Norster. in a bad tempered game all round, it was sickening that Bob should have been singled out for dismissal, and subsequent banning from international rugby, whilst the real villains went undetected. The ruling of the W.R.U. that they will not consider for national selection players who have been sent off, whilst made with the very best of intentions, gives too much scope to the provocateurs and causes more problems than it cures.

At this point in the season my dreams of glory were not diminished. My thoughts of failure had not been fully justified either, but tragedy had struck. Malcolm Collins, a dear friend and colleague, had died from a heart attack in the most tragic of circumstances.

However on New Years Day 1986, despite the gloom and rain, all my fears were banished. Cardiff played Bath at the Arms Park, and thrashed the best team in England by 30 pts. to 12 pts. in a brilliant game of rugby football. I knew from that point on that our team was capable of beating the best — and beating them with style. What a show the boys put on, without realising it, for Mair, wife of Malcolm Collins, who had made her first appearance at the Club since her husband's death.

Our wins in December over Swansea, London Welsh and Pontypridd were achieved without the help of Terry Holmes, who had made his first appearance for Bradford Northern on December 9th, thus ending weeks of speculation about his future. People have varied opinions about his decision, but everyone in Cardiff, certainly, will agree that he was one of the all-time greats, as a player, as a man and a club man and we can only wish him all the very best of luck.

I didn't share the general trepidation regarding the club's playing future consequent upon the demise of Terry. I had always felt that despite an abundance of talented players throughout the team, everyone left it to "Hombers" to create the miracles, which he inevitably did. Without him the load would be spread more evenly



Edwards, R. Norster, J. Scott, R. Lakin, G. Roberts, I. Eidman, R. Ayres, G. Samuel (Coach). Hayward (Chairman), A. J. Phillips (Captain), A. J. Priday (Hon. Secretary), W. G. Davies. I. Robinson, A. D. S. Bowes, M. John, C. D. Williams, J. D. Nelson, L. Williams, J. D. Davies, W. H. Wilkins, G. Davies, P. T. Goodfellow van, D. J. Crothers, H. Stone, K.

and after a period of adjustment we would compensate with a raised level of team work all round.

In January we followed up our win at Bath with an excellent away win at Moseley, received a right hammering at Aberavon, a stumbling win at London Welsh, and a magnificent cup round win at Neath Athletic. One cannot praise Rhys Stephens and his committee too highly for their efforts to host this 3rd round cup match.

There were no games played during February, then we restarted in March with a drawn match 16 pts. all with Llanelli. This game preceded our fourth round cup match with Glamorgan Wanderers, who had spared no effort to prepare themselves for this encounter, which we won 21 pts. to 12. The cup was now beginning to dominate the thoughts of everyone, and it didn't really surprise anyone that we lost at Ebbw Vale a week before we played Bridgend at Swansea in the semi-final. We won the cup match against Bridgend and then proceeded to lose to the Barbarians 19 pts. to 24 pts. a week later. We were soundly thrashed by Bridgend as a consequence of sending a sub-standard team to the Brewery Field four days later.

Cup Final fever was now raging throughout the ranks of the players and committee with the result that intervening matches were either used as cup preparation or as inconvenient occurrences before the big day. The consequences of this attitude resulted in two away losses to Neath and Swansea, although it must be said that Swansea played brilliantly, revealing late in the season their true potential. We did run up a massive 68 pts. against Bedford in a game that marked the return to the first team of Mark Ring. His recovery from serious injury is a minor miracle in itself, and its timing was such that he proved himself a serious contender for the Cup Final.

The Cup Final itself was a brilliant affair, contrary to the predictions of the Press who forecast a dull forward-dominated game. To win the final is reward enough — but to win what is now regarded as the best cup final to date, against traditional rivals like Newport, and to win it with style in the very best Cardiff traditions was a memorable experience.

Ian Eidman, Alan Phillips, Jeff Whitefoot, Bob Norster, Kevin Edwards, Owen Golding, John Scott and Gareth Roberts were all superb. Little Neil O'Brien was a revelation, Gareth Davies played to his world class form, Alun Donovan and Mark Ring probed and taunted, Adrian Hadley scored three tries and won the Man of the Match award, Gerald Cordle and Mark Rayer were dangerous attackers and staunch defenders.

Four days later the same team with the exception of David Evans for Gareth Davies, and the much underated Howard Stone for John Scott, completed the most successful and glorious week the club has experienced for a long time. they took on the might of Pontypool, and instead of showing understandable signs of fatigue and a Cup Final hangover, they ran them ragged. It was an amazing game. The forward exchanges made strong men blink, but the pack took it all, soaked it up, and came back in a manner that had Pontypool in disarray. It was a performance of high quality and character, and it made us all very proud. These last two games, confounded our critics, silenced those who thought we were over the hill and wrote another chapter in the illustrious history of Cardiff R.F.C.

After the cup final Gareth Davies announced his retirement. In his twelve seasons with Cardiff, Gareth scored 2,853 points in 357 appearances, and in this, his last season, he scored 338 points, over a third of the total scored by the team. Gareth to the end remained an enigma. Possessed of beautiful hands, an amazing kicker, and a silky, balanced runner he could produce play that transcended the normal, and entered the realms of the immortal Welsh fly halves. He could on occasions also make you shake your head in disbelief. Nevertheless whatever mood he was in — he always entertained, he always scored points and, a rarity in fly halves, he was always there. Another great club man. he will certainly be missed.

Another retirement was announced by Gary Samuel, one of our famous duo of coaches. His partnership with Roger Beard has taken us through one of the most successful periods in the history of the club. Possessed of all the skills himself, he worked unstintingly to impart those skills to others, and brought a fluency to our threequarters that delighted us all.

This would be a good point at which to thank Roger Beard, who with Gary Samuel, took us through to an ultimately dramatically successful climax to the season. Very few people are aware of the commitment required from the club coaches. It is a job that takes its toll of both time and nervous energy and requires complete dedication. Roger gives freely of his time and his dedication and I sincerely hope he finds another Gary Samuel very quickly.

Another person who finds that being in charge is a lot more than merely carrying the ball onto the field is the club captain. Alan Phillips has coped with his responsibilities both on and off the field in an exemplary manner. He has visibly grown in presence and maturity as the season progressed and the glory of holding the Welsh Cup aloft at the end of the season was just reward for his dedication.

Probably the busiest bees on the committee are the selectors, C.D. Williams, Mervyn John and Gary Davies. Who do you please as a selector when you have a grand stand and a committee box full of people who could pick a better team? My thanks anyway for performing admirably what is a thankless task.

My thoughts turn to Brian Mark at this moment. He missed our triumphs at the end of the season due to illness, and we all wish him a speedy recovery. Come back soon Brian, not only do we miss you personally — but who else amongst us can manipulate the fixture list?

To each in turn of our committee, to Peter Nyhan, Alun Priday, Jack Davies, Haydn Wilkins, Peter Goodfellow, Howard Norris, John Evans, John Nelson, Ian Robinson, Colin Howe, Tony Williams, Lloyd Williams and Stanley Bowes, thank you all, not only for your own special contributions, but for your tolerance of my own idiosyncracies and unstinting support for the maintenance of our standards and traditions.

The office staff under the control of Mr. Alf Heffell; Jackie, Anne and Julie, were quite magnificent. Always helpful, always efficient and always smiling — it's a pity they can't make decent coffee.

It was a revelation to me to realise that looking after the ground staff and the various pitches was only a sideline for Albert Francis. The fact that he does this to perfection should not hide the fact that he is even better at manipulating our manufacturers and sponsors into making splendid donations to anything connected with the playing side of the club. His help in these matters, and in the players fund-raising activities is immense.

There is a whole army of people connected with the club that help to make it tick, and give unstintingly of their time and expertise. The club doctors and physios deserve a special word of thanks for their constant attendance. Then what about Mr. and Mrs. Ted John who live in that little cottage in the forecourt of the club. Then there are the stewards, and the St. Albans Band, and Ken Jones and his merry men, and of course the best supporters of any rugby club in any country in the world. Thank you all. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

CARDIFF FIRST XV 1985-86: Alan Phillips (captain).

FULL PLAYING RECORD:

Played 44 Won 33 Lost 10 Drawn 1 Points for 971 Points against 574



M. John, I. Robinson, A. D. S. Bowes, C. T. Howe, C. D. Williams, J. D. Nelson, L. Williams, J. Davies, W. H. Wilkins, G. Davież D. W.R.U. Cup:

1st Rd v.South Glamorgan Institute (A) 25-16

2nd Rd v.Pencoed (H) 24-3

3rd Rd v. Neath Athletic (A) 22-0

4th Rd v. Glamorgan Wanderers (H) 21-12

5th Rd v. Bridgend (A) 17-9

Final v. Newport (National Stadium) 28-21

#### **SEVENS TOURNAMENTS 1985-86**

Aberaeron 7's:

Cardiff v. Cwmllynfel 40-4 Cardiff v. Tregaron 26-0 Cardiff v. Brownhill B 6-22

Snelling 7's:

Cardiff v. Glamorgan Wanderers 12-16

C.H.S.O.B. 7's:

Cardiff v. NHSOB 28-0 Cardiff v. S.W. Police 16-4 Cardiff v. Newbridge 20-6 Cardiff v. Bridgend 6-29

# INTERNATIONAL HONOURS:

Ian Eidman; Fiji, E,S,I,F. Adrian Hadley; Fiji, E,S,I,F. Terry Holmes; Fiji. Robert Norster; Fiji. Jeff Whitefoot; Fiji, E,S,I,F. Paul Rees; F (Wales B)

TOUR SELECTION:

Wales to Fiji, Tonga and W. Samoa, May 1986: Ian Eidman, Adrian Hadley, Robert Norster, Jeff Whitefoot.

Wales B to Italy, May 1986: G. Roberts (selected but withdrawn).

Highest Number of Appearances:

Alan Phillips 37; Adrian Hadley 35; Gareth Davies 34.

Highest Points Scorer: Gareth Davies 340 points.

Highest Try Scorers:

Adrian Hadley 21, Gerald Cordle 15, Gareth Roberts 10.

First Team Cap: Mike Rayer.

D.J. HAYWARD, Chairman, Cardiff Rugby Football Club.

Our coach trips to away games were reasonably supported at the beginning of the season but the second half left a lot to be desired with many coaches only half full or less. It was felt that the long lay off in January and February had a big effect on the response to our trips although the January trip to Twickenham for the England v. Wales International was another resounding success.

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the Chairman, Secretary and Committee of the Cardiff Athletic Club for their continual support and assistance during the past year. It has been greatly appreciated by our Officers and Committee. Finally the Officers and Committee extend a very sincere thank you to the club Steward and Stewardess for their kind co-operation throughout the past year.

KEN JONES Chairman, Supporters Club.

### RECORD OF RESULTS - SEASON 1985/86

#### CARDIFF FIRST FIFTEEN

Date	Opponents	H.	Posult	Score for Score again										ains	nst	
Date	Opponents	or A.	Result	G.	T.	DC	PG	МС	Pts.	G.	T.	DO	G PG	MG	Pts.	
1985 Sept. 2 4 7 11 14 18 21 28	Cross Keys	A A H H A A	Won Won Won Won Won Won Won	3 1 1 3 2 3 1 1	2 3 1 3 4 2 3	1	2 3 3 1 2 1 2 2		32 27 15 28 30 37 20 24	1 4 1 1	1	1	1 1 1 1 1 1 2		11 10 3 0 27 6 13 12	
Oct. 2 5 9 12 16 19 23 26 30	Pontypridd	A H H A H A H	Won Won Lost Won Lost Won Lost Won Won	2 1 3 1 4 4	2 1 1 1 2 1 2 2		4 1 1 3 4 2 3 2 3		32 13 7 31 12 20 13 38 41	2 1 1 2 1 2	1 4 1 1 1		1 1 1 1 2 2 1		3 7 16 15 13 12 16 16 15	
Nov. 2 6 8 23 27 30	Leicester Oxford University Ebbw Vale Llanelli Maesteg S. W. Police	A H H A H	Won Won Won Lost Won Won	1 6 1 2 4	2 2 1	1	1 1 1 1 2		20 44 13 3 15 38	2 2 1 1	1 1		1 1 1 1		15 7 12 13 3 6	
Dec. 7 14 26 28	Swansea London Welsh Pontypridd Bridgend	H H H	Won' Won Won Canc.	2	1 1 1		3 2 2		13 22 10	1	2		2		12 17 4	
1986 Jan. 1 4 11 18	Bath Aberavon London Welsh	H A A	Won Won Lost Won	2 1 2	3 1		2 1 1 1		30 13 3 19	2	1		1 2 1		12 7 24 3	
Feb. 8 26 Mar. 5 15 29	Bristol S. Glam. Institute Llanelli Ebbw Vale Barbarians	H H A H	Canc. Canc. Draw Lost Lost	1 1 1	1 1 1 1	1	2 1 3		16 16 19	2 1 4	1 1	1	2		16 19 24	
Apr. 2 5 11 19 29	Bridgend Bedford Swansea Neath Pontypool	A H A H	Lost Won Lost Lost Won	8 1 2 4	5		1		3 68 10 12 27	3 4 3 2 1	3 1 1 1 1		1 2 3		30 28 25 22 19	
	TOTALS			69	54	3	65	_	971	49	27	2	35	_	574	

### Cardiff First Fifteen - (continued)

### W.R.U. Cup:

	Opponents		Result	Score for							Score against					
	Opponents			G.	. T.	DG	PG	G MG	Pts.	G.	T.	DG	PG	MG	Pts.	
1st Round	S. Glam. Institute	A	Won	2	1		3		25	2	1				16	
2nd Round	Pencoed	H	Won	1	3		2		24			1			3	
3rd Round	Neath Athletic	A	Won	2	1		2		22			1			. 0	
4th Round	Glamorgan Wanderers	Н	Won	1		2	3		21	1			2		12	
5th Round	Bridgend	A	Won	1	2		1		17			1	2		9	
Cup Final	Newport	-	Won	3	1		2		28	3			1		21	
	TOTALS			10	8	2	13	-	137	6	1	2	5	-	61	

# Seven-a-Side Tournaments:

**Snelling Sevens:** 

Lost in First Round to Glamorgan Wanderers 16-12

## Aberaeron Sevens:

Cardiff 40 – Cwmllynfel 4 Cardiff 26 – Tregaron 0 Cardiff 6 – Brownhill B 22

# C.H.S.O.B. Sevens:

Cardiff 28 – NHSOB 0 Cardiff 16 – S. W. Police 4 Cardiff 20 – Newbridge 6 Cardiff 6 – Bridgend 29

### CARDIFF ATHLETIC FIFTEEN

Date	Opponents	H		L		S	core	e fo	r		Score against					
	орронента	A			. T	. D	G P	G M	G Pts	. 0	6. T	. DO	PG	MG	Pts	
1985				T	1		1			T						
Sept. 14	Bedwas	Н	Won						9	1					0	
7	Neath Athletic	H	Won				1		44		1				10	
11	Bristol United	A	Lost		-				0	1	1		3		9	
14	Bath Athletic	A	Lost	1	2		1		17	12	1		2		22	
18	Llandaff	H	Won	12	1		1.0		16	1	1		-		0	
21	Coventry Extras	H	Lost	1	1		1		7	11	1				10	
25	Old Illtydians	A	Won	13	1		1		25	1	li		1		7	
28	Pontypool United	A	Won	4			1		47		1 *		1		3	
Oct. 2	Cardiff & District	H	Won	15	3		1		42				2		6	
5	Newport United	H	Won	15	4				46	13			1		21	
10	Parammata	H	Lost	1					6	1	1		2		10	
16	Pontypool Athletic	H	Won	1	4				22	1	2		-		8	
19	Rumney	A	Lost		1				4		1		1		7	
23	Pyle	H	Won	1	3		2		18	12	1		1		16	
26	Trinant	H	Won	4	4		1		40	lĩ	1		1		9	
30	Pontypridd Athletic	A	Won	1	3				18	1	3		1		12	
Nov. 2	Leicester Extras	H	Won	2	1		1	1	19	1	1		2		16	
6	Newport Saracens	A	Won		6		1	Î	27	1	2		1		11	
8	Ebbw Vale Athletic	A	Lost				3	3	9	1	1		î		13	
16	Barry	H	Won	3	7		2	2	52	1	1	1	î		6	
23	Abercarn	Н	Won	3	3		2	_	36		1	1	i		7	
30	Berry Hill	A	Won	3	2		-		26	3	1		1		21	
)ec. 7	Swansea Athletic	A	Won	3					18	1			1		0	
14	Risca	Н	Won		3				12		1				4	
986									12		1				4	
an. 4	Moseley United	Н	Draw		3				12	1			2		12	
11	Bridgend Sports	A	Won	1	4				22	2	2		4		20	
18	Reading	A	Won	-	4				16	3	1	1	1		28	
19	Abbey	A	Won	2	1		2		22	1	1		3		15	
25	Llanharan	Н	Won	1	4		-		22	î	1				10	
far. 4	Abercynon	A	Won	4					24	Î	1		1		9	
8	Pontypool Athletic	A	Won	3	6				42	3	2		1	1.	26	
12	St. Peter's	H	Won	1	1		2		16		-			1	0	
15	Ebbw Vale Athletic	H	Won	5	2				38						0	
19	Pontypridd Athletic	H	Won	6	4				52						0	
21	Newport United	A	Won	2	2				20	2	1		1		19	
26	Maesteg	A	Won	1	3				18	~	2				11	
pr. 5	Blackwood	A		3	4				34	2	5	1			20	
9	Bedwas	A	Won	2	5				32	î	2 2				7	
12	Wakefield 2nd XV	A		6	2				44	3	2	1			26	
13	Thornensians	A	Won	I	6				30	2	-	1			5	
15	Resolven	A	Won	2	4				28	3	1	1			6	
30	C.H.S.O.B.	A	Lost	2	2				20	3	1	1			0	
*	Kenfig Hill	11	Won	4	9				20	7	1	1		10	V	