

## A DREAM

1921-22. P47, W29, L13, D5. Points 501—272.

R. A. Cornish was appointed captain and he chose the burly forward Idris Richards as vice-captain. Arthur Cornish was a well built centre, fast and elusive, an adept at the "dummy", a little selfish perhaps in crying out for the ball, but an asset to any team. As a schoolboy he gained a Welsh cap, and as a senior, gained ten. His Cardiff University studies were interrupted by his war service in the Royal Navy. He was later to serve his club as an administrator for many years, and also the Welsh Rugby Union. A schoolmaster, he played 267 games for his club and scored 149 tries.

Injuries and other causes kept Joe Dangerfield, Dai Llewellyn and Joe Hopkins off the field for half of the season. I, too, was out for 15 matches as the result of a severe knee injury in the match at Llanelly, when, bending to pick up the ball I was charged into by one of the Llanelly pack, a parson at that, the Reverend J. G. Stevens who may not have heard the whistle. I received treatment at the Lynn Institute, St. Johns Square from Jack Petersen, the father of Jack Petersen the famous heavyweight boxer. Newcomers were Jack Powell, a wing, brother of "Wick" Powell, Norman Payne and Dr. W. J. Roche forwards, the latter went to Newport the following season to take up practice, and was already capped for Ireland from U.C. Cork.

Although losing 13 matches, we did better with our two rivals Newport and Swansea, winning two games against Newport and three over Swansea. Bristol, remarkably, scored a double over us as did also Aberavon; the French club—Societe Generale Athletic de Paris (Clem Lewis played rather selfishly), Blackheath, Leicester, Neath, Llanelly beat us once, and, to cause another shock, so did Guys Hospital. The first match against Bristol was notable for three reasons, the first being the re-appearance of Arthur Cornish after his long lay off from the previous Boxing Day, secondly it was the opening of Bristol's new Memorial Ground at Horfield, and thirdly, they had a splendid team which included L. J. Corbett and R. C. Pickles in the centre, and one of the best hookers in English Rugby history J. S. Tucker, all three destined to become English internationals. Held to a draw of three points at half time, Bristol put on the pressure in the second half, Arthur Cornish appeared to be limping, and even Dr. Tom Wallace at full-back accepted a "dummy"; a good Cardiff team were beaten 19 points to three.

Our best win was over the Barbarians by two goals, six tries to one penalty goal. It was in April that the club reached its best form, and not one match was lost, the victims being United Services (29-12), Barbarians (28-3), Harlequins (20-16), Headingly (29-0), Penarth (16-0), Pontypool away (3-3), Bridgend (4-3), Llanelly (9-6) and Newport, away, the second time by 8 points to three. In the Barbarian/Cardiff match "Codger" Johnson and Clem Lewis got a hat trick of tries, Jack Powell the other two. Powell scored four in the match against Headingly on Easter Tuesday. A dropped goal by myself against Penarth (home) and Bridgend (away) was sufficient to win both these encounters by a single point. Johnson 29, Powell 15, Arthur Cornish 14 and Dangerfield and Clem Lewis each with 11 were the season's top scorers. New caps were D. E. Davies, S. R. Lindsay, Norman Payne, Jack Powell, W. J. Roche, Phil Rowlands and Ivor Thomas. Blazers were awarded to players, and although there is not any record of the precise names of the recipients, they were most probably awarded to those who had taken part in 15 matches or more.

During the season, on 20th January in fact, the draft scheme for the purchase of The Ground from the Marquis of Bute was put to an extraordinary meeting at the Cory Hall, Cardiff, and there is evidence of the real need for economy in running the club, for example, the Reserves' Easter Tour was ruled out, and players' expenses for the season, £252, were also questioned and examined. One of our Cardiff Extras' players (this unit was formed in 1921-22) Mr. Trevor Phillips (now hon. secretary of Cardiff Athletic Bowls Club) applied to borrow a set of white jerseys for use against Monmouth Grammar School, the request was granted, 'provided that the jerseys were laundered after use and any torn ones replaced'. The minutes record a fixture between Cardiff Extras and "The Judeans". One of our groundsmen was given a week's notice for misbehaviour, but he claimed that he was entitled to one month which was admitted, but the club insisted on his reporting to the secretary's office twice daily until the period was up! Aubrey Baker, one of our old forwards was a groundsman, and the head gateman was George Greening who served as such for many years.

There were about twenty applications from all quarters, mainly charitable, for assistance by way of donations, special matches, use of the ground, etc., including one from the Bute Estate to use the ground for a Ladies' Association match between Dick Kerr's team and a French ladies combination which was agreed to on the basis of half share of gate. A Past v. Present match was played on 11th March in aid of the Lord Mayor's fund for the unemployed. I played for a very mixed Present XV and, naughtily, "Codger" Johnson scored four tries to enable us to win by 22 points, to a generous 17 points from scores by Charley Culverwell, Con Scanlon, Ewan Davies and Frank Gaccon. Billy Spiller tackled me hard on a couple of occasions without any compunction whatever.

In this third post war season, the club did not find favour with the Welsh international selectors as not one of our players was awarded a Welsh cap. In the third post World War II season of 1947-48, the Cardiff club supplied Wales with practically two thirds of her players, ten being selected against England, Scotland and France, and nine against the Touring Australians, and against Ireland. The Reserves XV under the captaincy of Charley Bryant had quite a successful season, having played 32, won 24, lost 6 and drawn five, with 266 points to 118, although the scoring was not very high. The captain himself was top try scorer with nine tries, the next in order of merit was W. Higginson with four tries, four dropped goals and one penalty, Sam Lindsay, four tries, 1 dropped goal and four penalties, Dickie Podd and Joe Dangerfield scored four each. There was a record of 26 scorers in all, but no records of players' match appearances.

Arthur Cornish had served in the Royal Navy during the war, he was an early riser. After overnight stays for away matches, Blackheath for example, he was wont to walk around the hotel bedrooms rather early in the morning to rouse the players and committee, exhorting them to "Get up, rise and shine". To those, who like myself on occasions, wanted to have a 'lie in' after the night before, his visits were not always welcome, and often, some of the half-awake sleepers would shout at him and tell him to "be off". I am not given to dreaming, but only a day or two after Arthur's sudden death (we had met in committee only two days before) a most vivid dream occurred to me. I was lying in bed in an hotel bedroom on the morning after the match of the day before, and I woke up to see Arthur at the foot of my bed. His arms were resting on the rail of it, and he was smiling down at me. His smile seemed to be a most happy one, and he appeared to be at peace, and contented. Perhaps it contained a message, I cannot say, but what I do remember to this day, is that I had never before seen him smile so happily.