

BENNY OSLER'S THIRD SPRINGBOKS ARRIVE

1931-32.

Our big win in the opening match of the season with the Cardiff & District R.U. by 54 points to nil did not presage a successful season, the results being P43, W25, L16, D2, with points 451—281. Howard Poole was appointed captain and his vice-captain was Harry Bowcott, they were our half-back partnership, the club's two British Lions on the British Tour to New Zealand/Australia of 1930. Our best wins were over London Irish on Boxing Day, 29-3, the Harlequins 24-10 on Easter Monday, and we managed 22 points against Coventry and Guys Hospital. We registered three wins over Newport—losing the last of the four matches, but 16 losses were a lot, despite the fact that nine of them were by merely five points or less. It was Swansea, under captain Jack Rees their forward, who really chastened us because they won all the four matches. They could boast of at least five international forwards in their club, Tom Day, Will Davies, Watkyn Thomas, D. Thomas, Dai Parker, as well as Eddie Long and Joe White: they could call upon Claude Davey, P. Jim Dark and J. Idwal Rees in their backs.

Swansea had achieved this feat once before, in 1903-04, under the captaincy of Bill Parker. In that far off season Swansea had one of the greatest half back combinations in Welsh international history, Dick Jones and R. M. 'Dicky' Owen. The latter diminutive scrum half gained no less than 35 Welsh caps. He passed away in the current season 1931-32. From my record of matches between Cardiff and Swansea, readers will note that Cardiff has won the four fixture tourney on three occasions, F. E. Hancock's season of 1885-86, Percy Bush's unbeaten *Club* season of 1905-06, and the 1936-37 season of L. M. Spence.

It is sad to relate the loss of form of a captain, this did however happen to our skipper Howard Poole and caused him to be dropped by the committee, and the acting captaincy to be taken over by Harry Bowcott. Poole's defection made way for the debut of the third member of the Turnbull family, Maurice J. Turnbull, also J. E. "Jackie" Bowcott both of them playing with Harry Bowcott the outside half. Maurice Turnbull achieved the unique distinction of becoming a triple international: Rugby and hockey for Wales and cricket for England; he got a Cambridge Blue for hockey and cricket. Jackie Bowcott also gained his Cambridge rugger Blue, playing alongside Cardiff's Cliff Jones at half. Our forwards this season lacked fire, there were also newcomers amongst them to be blooded. The brilliant forward Norman Fender had turned professional, and one of our best and most popular threequarters John Roberts went to China as a missionary in January of the season. D. J. Tarr played 23 times in our pack, he will be remembered as having broken his neck (and survives today) playing in his only game for Wales against New Zealand at Cardiff in December 1935.

Cardiff's third 'crack' at the South Africans under B. L. "Benny" Osler ended in defeat by two goals, one try, 13 points to one goal, five points. It was a very good game in which Cardiff gave their supporters much to cheer; their equalising try towards half time was a brilliant effort in which the ball had travelled from Maurice Turnbull to Bowcott, B. R. Turnbull, Graham Jones and finally to Ronnie Boon who scored in the corner from where Tommy Stone converted. Tactically perhaps the Springboks were best, and they were profitably served by the astute kicking of Benny Osler. Danie Craven did not play in this match but he was in the Springbok XV at half back later against Wales, currently he is often referred to as "Mr. Rugby", the leading figure of the South African Rugby Board.

Top try scorers were A. T. Thomas 15, Graham Jones 14, H. M. Bowcott 10. In the opening match, G. V. Wynne Jones and John Roberts each got three tries and Tommy Stone kicked six converted goals. Tommy kicked 37 goals in all, and supplemented with three tries. He played in every match except one in the 43 games. New caps were awarded to five new forwards, Tom Gadd, Iori Isaacs, Lew Rees, Colin Roas and Don J. Tarr; one went to Cyril Cross one of the backs who got in 29 games. Roy Gabe-Jones our most useful out-half or centre, was captain of the Cardiff Athletic XV whose record was P28, W14, L13, D1, with 288 points to 203. Sixty-nine players were tried in his team. G. V. Wynne Jones was top scorer with twelve tries including four in one match against Aber-gavenny. Athletic caps were awarded to Duncan Brown, Don Carne, P. J. Fletcher, Hubert Johnson and Ivor Williams four forwards, and three backs in Ron Jones, E. Noel Morgan and T. J. Schofield.

For the year to 30th April 1932, the management committee of the C.A.C. produced an annual report. I undertook the report and statistics for the Rugby club and have contributed ever since. The management chairman drew attention to the fact that there was an accumulated liability of £12,000 to the debenture holders in connection with the ground purchase of 1922 and that negotiations were taking place with the Welsh Rugby Union.

The Rugby committee complained about a proposal that had been made by the chairman of the C.A.C. to stage a match in aid of the funds of Cardiff City Association Football Club, the proposal was dropped. It was recorded that the general secretary of the C.A.C. had been authorised to obtain two she cats to deal with rats on the ground.