

The war years and after

When war broke out in September 1939, the Bangor Town club "put up its shutters", and it was to be a long time before the club re-emerged under its own name. The Colleges stuttered on for a short while, but wartime conditions made regular sport impossible. Yet, some form of continuity was maintained in the district, when the Directors and the staff of S.A.R.O. (Anglesey) Ltd., Beaumaris, continued to play the game near the works. In 1943, a nucleus of keen rugby players, who had been posted to the Saunders Roe dispersal factory at Beaumaris formed a team, and although the end of the war saw the return of a number of these enthusiasts to the South of England, sufficient interest had been created amongst those who remained to ensure that the game continued to flourish. Initially, the team called itself Fryars, and it was not until the end of the war that the name Beaumaris actually appeared.

When one looks at team photographs of the immediate post-war era, one can see that the Beaumaris team was a very strong mixture of Bangor local talent, University and Normal College players, the latter two groups "guesting" when college calls were not too heavy. Two Welsh International players, completing their studies at the Normal College, often turned out for Beaumaris, namely Haydn Morris (a future British Lion) and Denzil Williams.

A team which made its mark from the middle of the war years was that of H.M.S. Conway, the Merchant Navy training establishment which had moved in 1941 from Merseyside, and the ship had dropped its anchors in the Menai Straits, off Bangor Pier. The cadets leased the Bangor City Football ground for their athletic endeavours and during the winter seasons of the war, strange goal-posts soared to the skies on hallowed Association turf as senior soccer had been virtually abandoned in the district.

H.M.S. Conway had a most useful rugby fifteen, and many of Bangor's inhabitants saw a number of first class encounters on this ground, when various Forces' teams played "The Ship". When the war ended, the ground reverted to Association football, and H.M.S. Conway found a new berth off Plas Newydd, with excellent fields leased by the Marquis of Anglesey. From then on, to the ship's demise in 1975. H.M.S. Conway contributed a great deal to North Wales Rugby.

When the war ended in 1945, it was not long before Rugby football returned to Bangor in great strength. The Normal College and the University College had a large number of ex-servicemen, and the game was re-established with vigour. There were a number of Forces' teams in the district, such as Ty Croes (Army), R.A.F. Valley, H.M.S. Glendower (Royal Navy) and R.A.F. Penrhos, near Pwllheli.

Some tremendously epic matches were played between the Normals and the Varsity in the Humphrey Cup, played over three legs. The referee for these matches was usually Dr. Llew Rees, who had been appointed as a physical education lecturer at the Normal College in 1946, having recently been demobbed from the R.A.F. He was a player of vast experience, both in South Wales and in the Forces. His firm handling of these games probably prevented mayhem breaking out. On one occasion, which I witnessed, he sent a number of vociferous and bad-tempered Varsity supporters away from the ground itself.

His untimely death in 1972 left a tremendous gap in Bangor's rugby sphere, as he contributed an enormous amount of energy to the well-being of the game. He was appointed to the University staff in 1960, and the impact he made on the University football was impressive, and it can be said that under his watchful eye, the team in Bangor became a force to be reckoned with locally, and on the inter-collegiate level. Llew Rees also gave an immense amount of his time to school and other local rugby endeavours, and he never hesitated in allowing various teams to use the excellent playing facilities on Ffriddoedd, much to the Groundsman's apoplectic chagrin. He would expostulate red with fury, about the ground being overrun by "outside" teams, but Llew would look on with a twinkle in his eye, and a cigarette stuck in the corner of his mouth-and usually got his own way. At Llew's passing, Bangor lost a wonderful character.

The colleges, therefore, were contributing a great deal, but how was the game faring at its grass-roots? Unfortunately, Friars School was not sending any talent forward, and many potentially good players were lost to the game, although a few picked it up in the Forces either during or after the war. The Bangor Town Club had ceased to exist, and any talent locally was fostered by the team at Beaumaris, and up to 1962 this was the only club where young, local players from Bangor, Caernarfon and Anglesey could get any senior football experience.

The year 1949, however, was significant in the Bangor area from the school's point of view, as the Headmaster at Friars at last agreed that his pupils should be given the chance of playing either rugby or soccer. Nothing was actually done, however, until 1950, when, according to the school magazine, it was decided to re-start Rugby for the following reasons:

(a) the rugby generation of "Old Boys" wanted to re-start the School versus the Old Boys match and (b) there was the desire to give the senior boys, who did not play in the school soccer teams, "recreative activity luring the winter months."

Three matches were played in the season 1950-51; versus Baptist College, Bangor, a Varsity Fifteen and H.M.S. Conway. The school lost all three games. But the Phoenix had arisen.

A number of teachers at the school were behind this resurgence, namely Mr. E. W. Jones, the Classics master, Mr. R. Lloyd, the physical education teacher and Mr. Nicholas, the English master. The following season was not auspicious either but much encouragement was given by these members of staff.

In the University College, Bangor, at this time, there was a highly active organisation of Old Friars Boys, who called themselves the Dominican Society, and they had a rugby team which took part in college competitions. In November, 1952, Friars challenged them to a match, and this was played at the Eithinog fields, where the new school and a large private housing estate now exists. In those days the Normal College leased it as part of their playing fields. The result of the game was a substantial win of 22 points to 8 by the Dominican side. Not one of us that day in the college side had learned our rugby at Friars, and the event seemed rather ironic to us all. The match became an annual fixture, and as the standard of the Friars team improved, so the Dominicans had to exert themselves even harder. By March, 1957, the school side had become well balanced and competent, and on two successive occasions we were beaten 6-3 and 11-6. The scores give no indication of the school's superiority-we were humiliated, and these enthusiastic youngsters "took us to the cleaners".

At about this time, a prophetic statement was made in the school magazine, concerning the standard of play and aspirations for the future. "Buan cawn weld bechgyn yr Ysgol hon yn cynrychioli eu gwlad os gallwn ni barhau i wella. Nid yn y De yn unig y mae chwaraewyr rygbi - profwyd hynny eisoes. It will not be long before boys from this school will represent their country, if we continue to improve. South Wales cannot claim a monopoly of Rugby players-this has been proved otherwise in the past".

Within a matter of months of that report, it was stated in the next edition of the school magazine that Dewi Bebb was doing his National Service in the Royal Marines, and he had been selected to play for the Royal Navy. It was in the 1958-59 season that he first played for Wales. Ten years later, Tony Gray, another ex-Friars pupil, got his first cap.

For over twenty years now, Friars School has provided teams of an excellent standard in North Wales, many of their players earning representative honours, and the school can boast two International players in this period, Dewi Bebb and Tony Gray. The Headmaster, Merfyn Elis -Williams gave an active lead here, as did Mr. Terry Lewis (the present Deputy Head) when he was appointed physical education master in 1961.



A triumphant Friars School Sevens team of the mid-1950's.

Left to Right: P. B. Newing; J. Williams; Dewi Bebb; T. B. Akrill; Elfyn Edwards; Gerald Thomas; Islwyn Parry



BANGOR NORMAL COLLEGE 1st XV. 1949-50.

This side contained some illustrious players. For example, seated with the ball is the Captain, Haydn Morris, who played wing three-quarter for Wales. Also he played for Cardiff, and was a British Lion, going on the South African tour in 1955. Standing, third from the left, is Denzil Thomas, outside half for Wales. His other clubs were Neath and Llanelli. Both players "guested" for Beaumaris on occasions.

Standing, third from left, on the right, is Bryn Davies, the present Secretary of the North Wales Rugby Union, and he is now back in his former college as a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education.

At the end of the row stands Dr. Llewelyn Rees, a redoubtable player in his day, who was eventually appointed to take charge of Physical Education in the University College, Bangor



The site of the former Beaumaris R. F. C. pitch. In the background is the old Saunders-Roe works. The field here once provided extensive facilities for rugby, soccer and hockey, from 1941 until fairly recently.

Photo: Barry Wynne



BEAUMARIS v BECTIVE PLAYED AT DUBLIN IN 1954

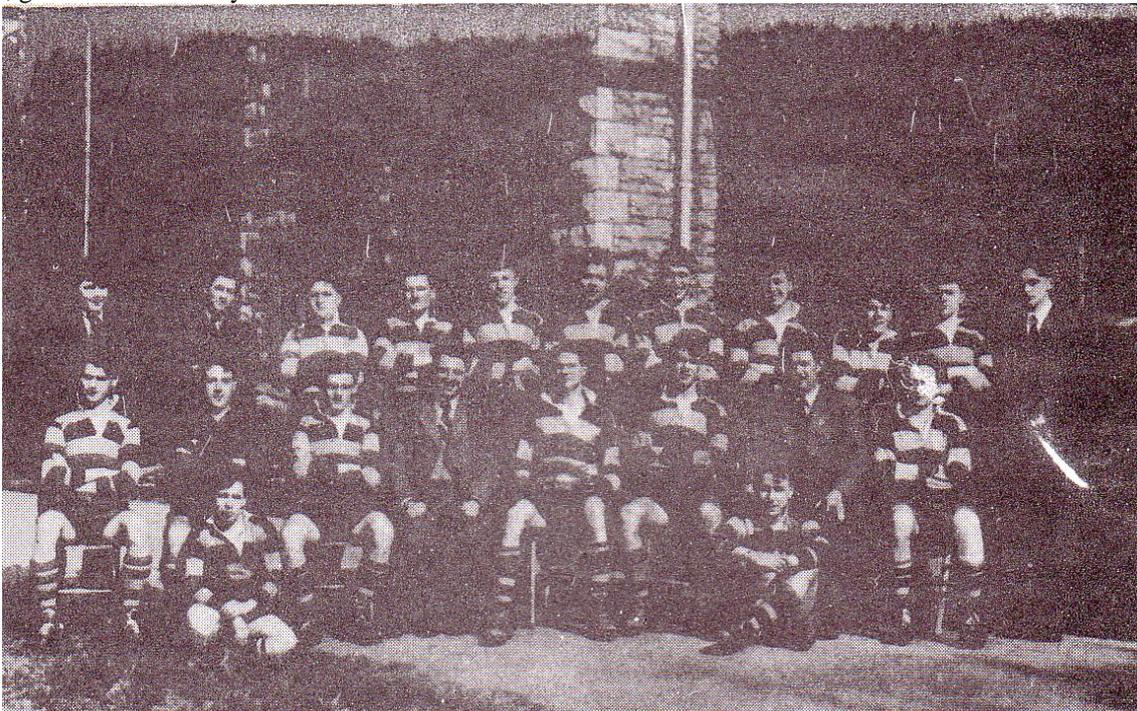
This is a photograph of both teams, but the Beaumaris XV here contains seven University players from Bangor, and this shows the very close ties that existed between "town and gown", which led to the strengthening of the game in the area. Seated next to Bill Roberts (second from end, on the right) is Hywel Griffiths, From Blaina, Monmouth. He was a very useful forward and represented U.C.N.W. as a heavy-weight boxer. A good chap to have around! Standing, on the left, slightly to the right of the gentleman in the cloth cap, is Neville Matthews, a stalwart of the club in its "Beaumaris" days. He is a native of Bangor, a former pupil of Hillgrove School and Shrewsbury, and for many years he worked in South Africa, and, it is only recently that he returned to live in Llandudno.



BEAUMARIS R.F.C. 1955



Action at Beaumaris in the late 1950's. Gordon Parry gains possession in the line-out, while Paul Newing, at No.4 in the line, gazes a bit anxiously.



FRIARS SCHOOL XV 1956

Chris Whelan; Barry Wynne; Wil Jones; Bryn Roberts; Islwyn Parry; John Williams; Elfyn Edwards; Wyn Jones; Eric Roberts; David Newing; Kersey-Brown
 1st. Row: Gwyn Bellis; Mr. E. W. Jones; Paul Newing; Tim Akrell; Mr. M. E. Williams (Headmaster); Dewi Bebb; Mr. Tom Davies (P.E. Master. Coach); Gerald Jones; Front: John Skinner; John M. Hughes.



BEUMARIS R. F. C. in it's final Years

Standing: Bill Roberts; Bill Slade; Gordon Roberts; Gordon Parry; Tony Hogan; R. Richards; Les Jones; I. Parry; Tom Davies; J. W. A. P. James.

Front Row: Elwyn Parry; G. Hewer; Cyril Jones; D. B. Roberts; Alun Roberts; Derfel Williams; T. H. W. Jones.

At the senior level the progress of the Beumaris club after the war seemed a chequered one as far as results were concerned, and a faithful band of players and officials kept things going in spite of many difficulties. Among these dedicated people were Bill Roberts, Gordon Owen and Neville Matthews, In the immediate post-war period, they fielded sides which were often weak, but as the 1950's dawned the standards improved, and they had become a well-established North Wales team. Initially their opponent in matches were confined to teams such as R.A.F. Valley, RA. Ty Croes, H.M.S. Conway, the Bangor Colleges, Llandudno and Kinnel, near Rhyl. In time, however, the fixture list included visits to the Wirral and other parts of Cheshire.

There was no doubt that facilities at Saunders-Roe were good, but the feeling was that the club had to have a place of its own, where they were not dependent on the goodwill of an industrial concern. Also, as result of a local pool of talent becoming available, and other schools in tile area were taking up Rugby football, it became increasingly obvious that if the game was to prosper in the locality, it was essential for a club to be set up in Bangor, which could tap this valuable source. The Beumaris club decided to look for a new base at Bangor, and plans were drawn up for the preparation of a new ground and clubhouse at Wern Fields.

The re-formed Bangor club came into existence as a result of a meeting held on Monday, July 23, 1962, but the home matches were still played at Beumaris until the new ground became available.

In fact, the work on the new ground had started in 1959, when the club took over the former town refuse dump about a mile along the Caernarfon Road. The site was a wilderness of ashes, stones, oil drums, weeds and old car bodies. After the site had been carefully surveyed, it was found that the area of six acres would allow for two full size Rugby pitches, and at that time it was hoped to incorporate a cricket square and a 40 yard running track. In the event, these plans were a bit ambitious, and the cricket and athletics facilities were not provided.

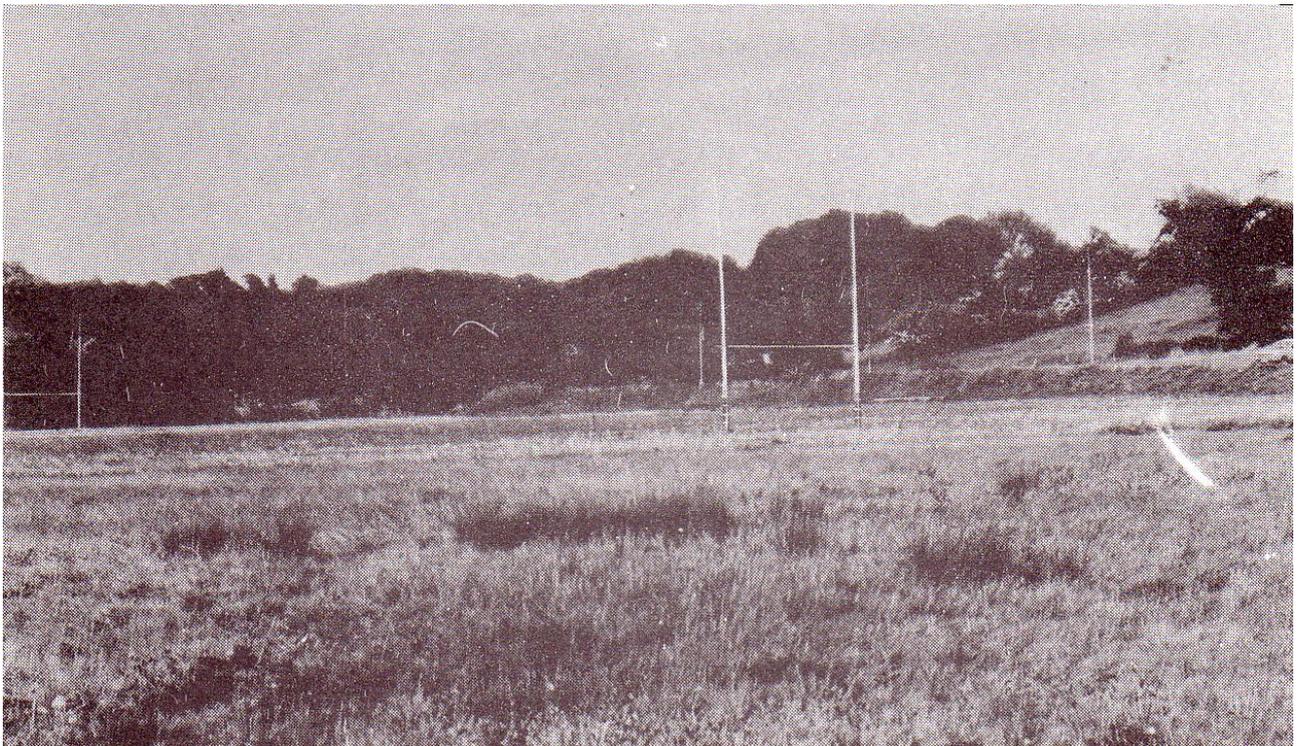
A local contractor was employed to bulldoze the site to a level surface and about 200 tons of soil was spread on the site, sufficient to make one pitch. This was later treated with fertiliser and seeded by an agricultural contractor. These operations, with fencing to allow animals to graze on the site cost more than £600. Afterwards more than 600 tons of ground soil were carried from Caernarfon and spread on the surface.

Apart from the hire of specialised plant and transport, nearly all the work was done by voluntary labour, including the spreading of 250 tons of soil, and raking off and carting away some 100 tons of stones. In spite of all the voluntary work,

however, the club spent over £950 on this part of the project. The foundations for the club room and changing facilities were laid by volunteers, and a prefabricated timber building was bought for £2,500. Although these sums may not seem a great deal in these inflationary days, at that time it was a frightening sum of money. Nevertheless, success met the efforts of the club, and by the beginning of 1963, the ground had taken the shape we are familiar with today.

A great deal of preparation work was now being undertaken for the 1963-64 season, and if one, looks at the club minute book, one can see how very hard the members worked. In all these efforts, Bangor was encouraged by the knowledge that since October, 1962, they had become probationary members of the Welsh Rugby Union.

The Annual Meeting of the Bangor Rugby Club was held, for the first time in the new Club House at Wern Fields, on Friday, July 12, 1963. The highlight of the evening was the election of J.W.A.P. (Jimmy) James as honorary Life Member - "only the second time this honour has been bestowed in the history of the club", stated a local press report. In proposing the election a tribute was paid to the tremendous energy and enthusiasm shown by Mr. James in his work as match secretary, and as member in charge of the development of the new ground and pavilion. Mr. Howard Slade, the club's architect, was also thanked for the design, and the erection of the pavilion.



The field at Wern, Bangor. This was the ground which the club created from an old refuse dump. In September, 1963, Bangor R. F. C. returned the city after nearly a quarter of a century's absence. Another move is in the offing, as the new by-pass will cut through part of the pitch, and it means a new layout to the ground, and a new clubhouse.

Photo: Barry Wynne.



Arthur Rees, Chief Constable of Denbighshire, kicks off at the official opening of the new ground in Wern Fields, September, 1963. Bill Roberts, with hands on hips, who refereed the match, watches with approval.

Photo: North Wales Weekly News



The Bangor R. F. C. XV who played in the official opening of the ground in September 1963.

Standing: Tony Gray; Tim Crook; Tudor Jones; K. Bearne; D. Bowers; P. Wright; -- T. H. W. Jones; Bill Roberts (Ref.).

Front Row- David Gray; A. Flood; C. Jennings; Allan Davies; Brian Unsworth; Eddie Burford; Terry Lewis. John Leyshon also played. His photo is inset.



Normal College v. Bangor, in January, 1964. C. W. Jones of Bangor, gives the ball a vigorous kick to touch.

On Thursday, September 12, 1963 a Select Bangor XV played a Select Merseyside XV to mark the official opening of the new club house and ground. "Youth is being given the opportunity here today, and I hope they will grasp it with both hands" said the Mayor of Bangor, Councillor Emrys Edwards, when he opened the new club house. The Mayor was presented with a pen and pencil set and the Mayoress with a bouquet from the Club Chairman, Mr. Gordon Owen, The Chairman described Councillor Edwards as Bangor's "sporting Mayor", and in fact, the Mayor's brother, I. I. Edwards had played an active part in the Bangor club before the war. The Chairman then introduced Mr. Ewart Davies, Ammanford, President of the Welsh Rugby Union, and Mr. Danny Davies, Cardiff, a district representative of the Welsh Rugby Union. The Chairman paid further tributes to Mr. Bill Roberts (Club Treasurer), Mr. Alan Davies, (Hon. Secretary), Mr. G. S. Handforth (Club Vice-Chairman), and the President, Mr. P. D. Kemp. Mr. Owen added that the club had received grants from the Ministry of Education towards a public appeal sponsored by the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Michael Duff, patron of the club.

Mr. Ewart Davies said Bangor was the first club to take on such a venture, and he wished them well. "This is a red-letter day for Welsh Rugby, and an effort which must encourage other clubs to do likewise", he said. He concluded by hoping that clubs such as Bangor would go from strength to strength. With the advantage of hindsight we can now see that Bangor's example caused other clubs in North Wales to emulate its example.

A large crowd watched the match that followed the opening, and after an entertaining game, the Merseyside team won by 24 points to 8. Bangor's team was: A. Davies (Bangor); J. Leyshon (Bangor and North Wales); C. Jennings (Waterloo and Lancashire); B. Unsworth (Bangor and Lancashire); A. Flood (New Brighton and Cheshire); T. G. Lewis (Bangor and London Welsh); T. H. W. Jones (Bangor); C. Crook (New Brighton and Cheshire); D. Bowers (New Brighton); T. Jones (Bangor); P. Wright (Blackheath and England); E. Burford (Trawsfynydd); David Gray (Bangor and North Wales); K. Bearne (Liverpool and Scotland) and Tony Grey (Bangor and Newbridge). The referee was Mr. W. T. Roberts, Vice-Chairman of the North Wales Rugby Union.

Two days later, on 14 September, 1963, the first home match of the season for the full Bangor side took place when they played Llandudno, and won 19 points to 3. Bangor won more possession from the scrums and did more of the attacking in the early part of the game. After play had been confined for some time within the Llandudno "25", Bangor scrum-half. I. Rees scored a good try near the posts. Llandudno equalised from a penalty goal, but just before half-time Allan Davies of Bangor kicked a penalty goal. After five minutes of the second half a well-judged kick ahead by Bangor outside-half, Terry Lewis resulted in a try being scored in the corner by Tony Gray. Midway through the second half, David Gray scored under the posts. Allan Davies converted and two minutes from the end of the game, David Gray went over again. Allan Davies converted.

The Bangor club had now entered a new era; it had a lease on the ground for 21 years, and in 1968 the club was fully affiliated to the Welsh Rugby Union. It had a full list of fixtures, and at Easter time, the club entertained teams from all over the country, and a number of Irish sides also visited the ground. The colours the team wore were those of Beaumaris, namely white shirts with green hoops. Bangor's players also represented North Wales on several occasions, and some important matches took place on the new ground. It would be a hopeless task, within the confines of this booklet to give an account of all these matches, but a few deserve more than a passing mention, as they reflect the growing influence of the game in the area.

On Saturday, April 8, 1967, North Wales entertained Bridgend on their first visit to the area when a match was played on the Bangor ground, and it turned out to be a fast and exciting match, with Bridgend running out as worthy winners by 17 points to 9. The Bangor players in the side that day were Iorrie Rees, David Gray and T. W. Jones, the latter winning a special accolade for "some precise touch-finding".

The sensational result of the decade came a mere ten days later, when North Wales travelled to Newport to take on Monmouthshire in the Welsh Counties Championship Final. This game to decide the championship provided one of the biggest upsets in the Rugby Calendar. Monmouthshire were captained by David Watkins, that year's Welsh International XV Captain and they fielded five other internationals, including the hero of the England v. Wales match, Keith Jarrett. North Wales started with great determination, and eventually dominated all phases of the game.

The forwards showed power and skill in scrums and line-outs, and the back row excelled in cover, defence and speed to the loose ball. This enabled them to deny possession to the experienced Monmouthshire threequarters. The North Wales backs showed outstanding speed and determination and the wing three-quarters. A Kersey Brown and D. W. Jones, were firm favourites with the large crowd. Whenever the first line of defence was broken, Tony Uray's great speed and experience enabled him to cut off the danger.

North Wales emerged as convincing winners by 24 points to 6. This result, it was claimed, had placed North Wales on the Welsh Rugby map, and would be a great encouragement to both senior and school players to keep up to a high standard. Bangor, as an area, was well represented by John Kidner and Stuart Turner, from the University College, Tom Jones, Tony Gray and David Gray from Bangor, and Kersey-Brown from Penmaenmawr. The latter player was a former pupil of Friars School. W. E. Lewis, another ex-Friars boy, was a reserve for the side. D. W. Jones, right wing threequarter, was a former student of Bangor Normal College. G. Jones, at right centre, and Geoff Evans, second row, were also both former members of the University College team.



The North Wales side that shook Monmouthshire in the Welsh Counties Cup, by winning the Final 24 points to 6 points, at Rodney Parade, Newport. The team:

Standing: J. Bryn Davies (N.W.R.U. Hon. Sec.); T. Crook (Colwyn Bay); Kersey Brown (Llandudno and London Welsh); Peter Rogers (Ruthin); J. Kidner (U.C.N.W.); N. Ashworth (Colwyn Bay); I. Rees (Bangor).

Seated: D. Gray (Bangor); T. Gray (Bangor & London Welsh); John Rogers (Ruthin and Old Birkenhead); D. W. Jones (Birkenhead Park); G. L. Jones (U.C.N.W. and London Welsh).

Front Row: K. Jones (Chester College); T. W. H. Jones (Bangor); S. Turner (U.C.N.W.). D. Mycock (Colwyn Bay).



ANNUAL DANCE 1964

Left to right D. Tree; R. Vere-Whiting; W. T. Roberts; G. Handforth; W.J.A.P. James; C.W. Jones; J. Breen-Turner; N. Dale Jones



BANGOR R. F. C. 1965-66

Standing in the back row, fourth from the left, is Geoff Evans, the Wales second row forward. He was, at the time, a student at University College, Bangor, and he frequently turned out for the team; The team:

Standing: S. P. Jackson; Randall Richards; Bob Taylor; Geoff Evans; David Gray; Raeph Hogan; Len Beer; Allan Davies; J. W. A. P. James.

Seated: John Popplewell; David Grove; Barry Mordike (Capt.); Les Roberts; Iorrie Rees.

Front: Richard Lord; Ian Evans; Ellis Davies; Michael Thomas.

The 1967 - 68 season was probably the most successful in the history of the Bangor club, and some of the achievements of the team bear repeating. They suffered one defeat only; some of the wins came easily, but there were a considerable number which were won by strong determination. This inspiration was instilled into the team by Iorrie Rees, the Captain. There was also the driving energy of the late Len Beer in the pack. The only defeat was at the hands of the University College. The team visited Ireland, where they had a convincing win over the Dublin Railway Institute. The highlight of the year was against a star-studded Staffordshire Police XV, and after a tremendously hard and exacting game, Bangor won 8 - 6. This was the beginning of a hard but successful Easter programme, which included new fixtures against the Welsh Guards and Sefton Park. After beating the Guards 16-0, a very weary team "stumbled and fumbled to beat Sefton Park 8-6 in a disappointing match". The season ended on a successful note when the club completed the double over Ruthin by winning 9 - 6. The success of the team was reflected in the number of players who represented North Wales, namely David Grey, Les Roberts, G. Dowden, R. Taylor, W. E. Lewis, P. Jackson and Iorrie Rees. The actual record speaks for itself: Played 31; Won 29; Drawn 1; Lost 1; Points for 555; Points Against 90.

Over the Easter weekend in 1969, Bangor Rugby Club had a bumper crop of points, when they defeated Milford Haven by 40 points to 3 and two days later they scored 53 points without reply against Cefneithin.

On Monday, May 12, 1969, "great rugby was served up on soccer pitch", according to one daily paper. This match, played in the Investiture year, was between North Wales and Llanelli, on the Bangor City Football ground. The Bangor area was well represented, and the team read as follows: W. Owen (Dolgellau); Peter Jackson (Bangor and Bristol University); G. Frankcom (R.A.F. Valley and England); Stuart Turner (University College, Bangor); Ken Collier (Coleg Harlech and Bridgend); B. Charnley (University College, Bangor); John Pugh (Ruthin and Chester); Tim Crook (Colwyn Bay); John Powell (Wrexham); Peter Ray (R.A.F. Valley); John Rogers (Ruthin and Old Birkonians); Mike Roberts (Colwyn Bay and Oxford University); David Gray (Bangor); Foster Edwards (University College, Bangor) and Tony Gray (Bangor and London Welsh). The match was an exciting one, but North Wales lost by 12 points to 5. The game had been arranged as part of the "Croeso '69" celebrations, and provided a festive occasion for over 2,000 spectators. North Wales served up some scintillating rugby. It was, in fact North Wales' willingness to take chances and throw the ball around that cost them the game, Llanelli being very quick to capitalise on any mistakes. North Wales started the game well, and took the lead in the seventeenth minute when B. Charnley of the University College made a break, giving a reverse pass to G. Frankcom, a former England International, who scored by the posts. Colwyn Bay's Mike Roberts converted.

Llanelli reduced the leeway a minute into injury time when Hefyn Jenkins crashed over the line following a poor clearance. In the second half Llanelli scored after a short spell of "sloppy play" by North Wales. They scored again a few minutes later. North Wales replied with some all out attempts to get back on terms, but their attacking policy left big gaps behind and on several occasions Llanelli capitalised on errors and came dangerously close to scoring. Llanelli scored again when Alan John intercepted a pass and put John Vaughan clear to score.

North Wales lost this match, it was stated, because of their determination to give fans what they wanted - fast open rugby. They would probably have won the game by keeping it tight, but this they refused to do.

The referee was Mr. Gwyn Walters, who came out of retirement to take charge of this match. He was probably Britain's leading referee in the 1960's, and he was presented with a small memento 'by the Llanelli team at a dinner in Bangor Rugby Club's pavilion after the match.

The match that created a great deal of excitement in Bangor was the visit of the club to Cardiff in the Welsh Rugby Union Championship on December 7, 1973. This was the second time that Bangor had visited the Arms Park, as earlier that season they appeared there in August in the National "Sevens" competition, when they lost narrowly to Newport. This game, however, was the first time that Cardiff and Bangor had met. Bangor's team was: L. Pritchard; P. Jackson; W. E. Lewis; I. Hutchinson; J. Bird (Captain); R. Walters; S. Robinson; R. Hogan; L. Roberts; D. Hibbert; C. Davies; B. Roberts; R. B. Jones; D. Gray and A. J. Gray.

Any hopes that Bangor would bring about a giant-killing act were fairly quickly dispelled. Cardiff showed no mercy' after the first twenty minutes, when the game had been fairly even. Then the crunch came. Cardiff's John Davies landed a penalty, and that was the signal for the beginning of a crushing defeat. As one newspaper put it "The reason why Bangor could not match Cardiff was their almost total lack of possession. Had Bangor been allowed to use the ball, then their reputation as an all-out attacking side could have made a big difference to the score". We need not dwell on the way the tries were scored-the final tally was 69 points to Cardiff and 3 points to Bangor. Some consolation for Bangor was that this was not Cardiff's biggest win that season, as earlier they had beaten Maesteg 77 points to nine. In spite of the score the Bangor players agreed that it had been a wonderful experience.

In 1974, a number of Bangor players achieved representative honours in another important match. This was the visit of Tonga, to Rhyl, on September 21st. It was the first visit of this team to the Northern Hemisphere, and the first visit of a national side to play rugby in North Wales. Tony Gray, Peter Jackson and David Gray played on that day and J. Deakin of the University College was one of the reserves. North Wales won, in a shock result, by 12 points to 3. The previous week the Tongans had beaten East Wales. "The speed of the Gray brothers to the breakdown" gave North Wales ample opportunity of getting good possession. Peter Jackson on the wing was outstanding.

And so the game has developed in Bangor, and North Wales. More and more representative games are being played, and in 1979, Carmarthenshire played North Wales at Bangor, and in September of the same year we saw, at Colwyn Bay, Romania play the men from the Northern part of the Principality. It augurs well for the game, although the Bangor teams in the 1979-80 season had mixed fortunes.

In retrospect, it seems that the rich period in Bangor Rugby was in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The University team achieved further glory when, in the 1969-70 season they shared the U.A.U. title with Newcastle University, after a drawn game in Manchester. In the previous six years, Bangor had appeared twice in the final and twice in the quarter finals of this competition. Moreover, in the same period, University College, Bangor had had five representatives in the British Universities XV. This was a great record for a small college. The future of the game in the University is assured, with the team having the resources both in manpower and facilities.

The Normal College in the 1960's had a number of seasons when they performed to a very high standard, and several students in the past decade have gained representative honours, for example, John Davies, Allan Beaumont Jones, Ross Edwards, John McBride, Gareth Richard, Alan Roberts and Ieuan Jones. Recently, however, the College has, because of government policy, contracted in terms of numbers. It means, therefore, that the club is not as strong as formerly.

At the schools level, Rugby at Friars School has maintained its strong position, and it has a number of dedicated teachers on the staff who will see to it that this state of affairs continues. The new school at Tryfan has also introduced the game for the first time in the 1979-80 season, and time will tell whether it will take root.

As for the town club, the last few years have seen varying fortunes in playing terms, and it is facing increasing competition from clubs such as Menai Bridge, Bethesda and Caernarfon. Another area of major concern is the new by-pass that will entail moving the ground once again, although this time, hopefully, a few hundred yards. Nevertheless, it means disruption, and the worries associated with the move are taxing the members of the club committee. But as in the past, these difficulties will be overcome.

The town club has been well served by a number of people in the past fifty years, and some of these have been referred to earlier; it would be impossible to mention them all in a small booklet such as this, but a few deserve a special acknowledgement because of outstanding service to the club. These personalities are mentioned at the end of this account.

The new town club has also supplied three Presidents to the North Wales Rugby Union in Mr. Mansel Williams, the former Director of Education for Caernarvonshire; Mr. R. I. Davies (who also represented the University College) and J.W.A.P. (Jimmy) James, the present chairman of the club. Season 1979-80 brought another significant honour to the club, in that A. J. (Tony) Gray, the former London Welsh International was elected North Wales representative on the W.R.U, in place of Gwyn Roblin and he was also appointed a member of the Welsh Selection Committee (The Big Five).

No list of persons who have made major contributions to Rugby in the Bangor area would be complete without the names of Harry Lapidus and W.T. (Bill) Roberts, who were leading personalities of the Beaumaris period. Bill Roberts was also concerned with the move to Bangor, as Treasurer of the club. The services of these two great protagonists of the game have been recognised by their election as Honorary Life Members of the club.

There are many others who have played an energetic part in the Bangor area for the past fifty years, and their contribution to the game has been of an inestimable value. Some have given freely of their time coaching aspiring youth on school or college fields. Others have been involved in the thankless task of administration, and a considerable number have enjoyed playing the game at all levels.

The City of Bangor can feel a sense of pride, after 100 years, in its participation in Rugby Union Football, and although we live in the shadow of the great South Wales clubs, in our own way we have played a not inconsiderable part in the growth of the game in the Centenary Year of Welsh Rugby.



Bangor in action against Caernarfon at Wern Fields, March 1980

Photo: Gwyn Roberts



YSGOL TRYFAN Ist. XV. 1979-80

Back Row: R. Haynes (P.E. Teacher); Aled Williams; Robin Hughes; Paul Tynan; Colin Roberts; Owen Evans; Dafydd Charles; Sion Williams; Mark Williams; Arnold Williams.
 Front Row: John Pritchard; Kevin Edwards; Emrys Bebb; Stan Owen; Cerwyn Jones; Wyn Roberts; Geraint Williams; Gronw Percy.



FRIARS SCHOOL XV. 1979-80

Back Row: Stephen Conway; Alun T. Jones; Ian Williams; Stephen Rees; Meirion Davies; Jonathan Jenkins; Christopher Shears.
 Middle Row: Dominic Pritchard; Phillip Owen; Martin Jones; Dewi Griffiths; Dylan Thomas; Glyn Roberts; Andrew Leung; Iwan Griffith.
 Front Row: H. Glyn Williams; Adrian Jones; Ifor Roberts; Glynne Roberts.