

The game between the wars

The post-war era brought quite a change in the nature of the game in Bangor. Because of the influx of a greater number of students, Rugby football both in the Normal College and the University College, became fairly well organised, and many more new clubs were being played. For example, in 1919, the 'Varsity played Ruthin School away, for the first time, and won by six points to nil. The home University matches were played on the town cricket ground (now the home of Bangor City Football Club), but on January 21st, 1920, the "Varsity leased a field in Penrhyn Park, where they played the first match there against Liverpool University, the latter winning by four unconverted tries to Bangor's one unconverted try.

Relations with the Normal College became a little sour in February, 1920, when at the beginning of the second half, the 'Varsity scored a try and "the Normals left The field. Further comment is needless", said the report. These were the days of course, when both teams had large quotas of ex-servicemen who had served on the Western Front - tough, uncompromising men, and from all accounts, these inter-college games were nothing short of brutal. It appears that in the next 'Varsity-Normal match, five 'Varsity men were rendered "hors de combat" by vigorous Normal College play.

The University team was now playing against Aberystwyth University College, and the other colleges at Cardiff and Swansea, and under the Presidency of the famous "Daddy" Archer (Professor R. L. Archer) they became' a formidable College Rugby force. Memorable team and committee meetings were held at his residence in Plas Menai, where he was surrounded by legion of cats - his constant companions. He was a man of formidable appearance, having been a useful player in his day, and it is said if anyone incurred his wrath, his gaze would fill people with terror, particularly as he had one glass eye, which many swore glowed at times when he was enraged.

The years 1922-24 saw the Rugby code develop in North Wales, and many new teams made their appearance in Bangor, both at the University and Normal College grounds-Prestatyn, New Brighton, Holyhead, Manchester University, Hoylake and Colwyn Bay. In the 1925-26 season the 'Varsity has an outstanding year when they only lost one match out of sixteen played. Their fixture list makes interesting reading:



The Friars School rugby pitch. When the School moved up to Ffriddoedd in 1901, this was the field that was used for recreation. It has changed little in 80 years, although for several years the ground was used for soccer. The Old Friars XV, later Bangor, used this field as well.

Photo: Barry Wynne.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, BANGOR. R. F. C. 1st XV.

David Price-White, with the ball, was the captain. He later became a leading figure in the reestablishment of Bangor R. F. C., both as a player and administrator.

October	10	v Chester	Home	Won 9- 5
October	17	v Colwyn Bay	Away	Won 16- 3
October	28	v Normats	Home	Draw 6- 6
November	11	v Rydal	Away	Won 20-14
November	1	v Liverpool	Away	Lost 0-11
November	28	v Normals	Away	Won 11-10
January	23	v Colwyn Bay	Home	Won 20- 0
January	30	v Normals	Home	Won 22- 6
February	3	v Chester	Away	Won 10- 3
February	6	v Liverpool University	Away	Won 12- 6
February	20	v Aberystwyth University	Home	Draw 0- 0
February	24	v Swansea University	Away	Won 8- 3
February	26	v Cardiff University	Away	Won 3- 0
March	6	v Manchester University	Home	Won 5- 0
March	17	v Normals	Away	Won 13- 5

On the 6 February, 1926, Bangor University College "defeated Liverpool University by four tries to two, thereby creating somewhat of a landmark in the history of Bangor rugby", as this was apparently the first time that UCNW had beaten them. This match was followed a few weeks later by Bangor's first win at Cardiff. But the great event was when Bangor won the English University Championship, beating Manchester University 5 points to nil. The Bangor City Football ground in Farrar Road was selected as the venue. As the *North Wales Chronicle* stated: "Unknown in the Bangor College a few years ago, the handling game has made remarkable progress there, and few would anticipate that they would this season be playing in the final of the English Universities Championship. They already hold the honour of being champions of the Welsh Universities. Manchester was much bigger physically, and they exerted early pressure and showed better combination, but Bangor tackled well and with great determination. Bangor exerted great pressure in the latter part of the first half, and scored through G. J. Davies, who converted. The second half of the match was evenly contested, and both sides went close, but no further score materialised". Towards the end it seemed that Manchester "lost their hands", and their play became erratic.

Bangor University College's team that day was: D. W. Jones; R. R. Thomas; A. P. Rees; D. G. Bell; Langley; W. T. Williams; G. J. Davies; D'Alton; Kenion; B. Davies; A. G. Bower; A. Williams; W. T. Pritchard; R. E. C. Peters and G. Jones. The next time the 'Varsity won the championship was 42 years later.

In October, 1927, there appears for the first time a report in the local press of a new team, formed of local players, and having no association with either Colleges - the Old Friars XV. This was a team of old boys from Friars School, which, under the Headmastership of Mr. Bodfan Griffith, had switched from Association Football to Rugby Football in 1919. The Varsity played a match against them, but the Old Friars side "was rather easily disposed of through their inability to field a full side". However, it was a beginning, and local young men were at last taking up the game.

When Friars School took up the game, they found a number of difficulties, the main one being that very few schools played rugby in North Wales, and consequently the school had to take on senior sides such as the University, the Normal College and Colwyn Bay. Nevertheless, on occasions they upset teams much heavier and more mature than they were. For example, on October 10, 1928, Friars registered a win over the Normal College, on the Normals' ground, by 39 points to 6, and a few days later, on Saturday, October 13, they held the University College to a draw, three points each. On November 14, 1928, the school registered its first win at Ruthin School, where they won by 19 points to nil, and a long column in the *North Wales Chronicle* gave great prominence to the result.

The Old Friars side usually played their home matches on the Friars School field at Ffriddoedd. The shirts worn were black with a broad yellow band and a narrow magenta stripe, and by 1929 they had become a well established side locally. From this side, however, there grew something bigger. A movement, long overdue, was started at a meeting held at the Castle Hotel, Bangor, on Friday, 6 December, 1929, when it was decided that it was time for the formation of a local Rugby team again. A report of that time stated: "the demand has existed for some time, but has lacked a moving spirit to translate the wish into the deed". A definite step was taken by the appointment of a provisional secretary, Mr. Cyril Powell, of the Town Hall, Bangor. The Committee members were Messrs. T. Williams, F. Webster, G. E. Elkes, J. H. Wartski, T. J. Edwards, C. H. Crebin, J. H. Gee and D. A. Price-White. The last mentioned gentleman played a very important part in the establishment of the town club before the 1939-45 war. He was a local boy, and went to the University in Bangor, and in its sporting sphere, he played an active part, particularly in the 'Varsity rugby XV. In the season 1927-28 he was captain of the College team, and the University magazine that year took the opportunity of expressing the team's indebtedness to him for his fine ' leadership, adding that "his tact, patience, and encouragement have helped the club through a very lean season". When he left the College, he channelled his energies into the new Bangor club.

BANGOR R.F.C. 1930 – 31

A rare photo! This was the Bangor team reformed after a gap of over 50 years. The team was:

Back Row (Left to Right): Cyril Powell (Referee); T. Eames Hughes; F. Richards; H. Yates; A. Adamson; J. St. Bodfan Griffith; Harries; C. E. D. W. Freeman; W. M. Shepherd; H. Crosbie; I. C. H. Freeman.

Middle Row: J. Gee; S. H. Williams; J. Shepherd; J. Hughes; A. Potter; I. I. Edwards.

Front Row: G. H. Davies; F. Lloyd; A. H. Butler.

The shirts worn by the players are the old Friars XV colours, namely, black, yellow, with a thin magenta stripe on the yellow. The group are standing in front of the old Bangor City Cricket pavilion in the Farrar Road ground. This structure has long since disappeared. The occasion of this photograph was Bangor R.F.C.'s match against Colwyn Bay, at the end of March, 1931. Bangor won by 6 points to 5 in an exciting match, watched by a large crowd. The rugby club gave the total receipts from the game to the City Soccer club.



On Saturday, January 11, 1930, on the Friars School field, the newly formed Bangor side took on its first opponent - the University, and lost by 6 points to 3. It was reported that the town side gave a "creditable display", their principal players being T. Hughes, Kerr, Potter and Gee. Ivor Williams scored the Bangor club's try.

It was from the Old Friars side, therefore, that the new club emerged. The Old Boys team had been restricted to former pupils of Friars, and this often meant difficulty in fielding a full side on a number of occasions. They wished to broaden their base, and the new Bangor club was the result. The players were now drawn from members of the University staff, and the inevitable number of young men from South Wales who were increasingly finding employment in the Bangor district. Some leading lights in this early era were I. I. Edwards, who was secretary for some years; Cyril Powell, who was employed at the Town Hall, and David Jones, an employee of the Penrhyn Estate, (both from South Wales). Other stalwarts were John Gee, a bank official and E. P. Jones, a science teacher at Friars School, and an active club secretary.

The town club embarked on a regular number of fixtures, and on Saturday, January 25, 1930, they played their first match against the Normal College on the latter's ground, and after a keen and open game, lost to the college by three points to nil. On this particular day, and in spite of having more players to call upon, they could only field 13 men, "but every man did his share".

The following week they played the University and lost again. The following were the players selected for that match: Crebbin, Kerr, A. M. Jones, F. Lloyd, Ellis Jones, J. Edwards, R. W. Jones, F. Webster (Captain), W. Ellis, D. S. Davies, Richards, R. W. M. Jones, Potter, Billy Williams and S. Williams. The reserves were: Crossley, Gee, Dickie and Williams. (Newspapers at this time often failed to give initials before some players' names). The colours that the Bangor Town side wore were the same as the Old Friars side, but these were changed two years later.

At the end of 1930, Bangor Town had their own ground at Ffriddoedd, on the present site of Tryfan School. There was an official opening, and Colwyn Bay were the visitors. Mr. Bodfan Griffith, Headmaster of Friars School, who was a keen and active worker for the development of the club, "kicked off, amid applause". Bangor had a good game and won by 15 points to nil. After the match both teams were entertained to tea "by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bodfan Griffith". There was not a pot of ale within sight.

Within a matter of three weeks, on Saturday, January 23, 1931, Friars School beat Bangor Town by 11 points to 3, and some scathing remarks were made about the Town's play, considering they were much bigger than the school team.

In the 1932 - 33 season, Bangor Town Rugby Club was formally accepted as a member of the newly formed North Wales Rugby Union. Since the club was now identified with Bangor, and in view of its early association with the soccer club, it was decided to revert to the original colours of Royal Blue and Scarlet, this time of the ringed pattern, and these were sported up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

The early thirties, therefore, saw the Rugby code becoming firmly established in the Bangor area, with teams in the Normal College and the University, Friars School, and in the newly formed Bangor Town Club. This meant at a local level, that a number of matches could be played in a highly competitive spirit, and a close relationship developed between the clubs, which exists to this day. In 1932, the University magazine was glad to report that Rugby in North Wales was on the up-grade, so much so; that the College had to field three teams, an undertaking they would not have contemplated a few years previously.

The Bangor Town's fixtures were extended in 1932 to include games against Holyhead, Colwyn Bay, Rydal School, Prestatyn (later to move to Rhyl), Dolgellau Old Grammarians, Porthmadog, Ruthin, Wrexham and Ruabon. Visiting teams during the Easter period included Cross Gates, and Kersal from Yorkshire, and the Irish Railway Union. For a while the club played at its Ffriddoedd ground, mentioned above, and they used the changing rooms at Friars School. The ground was leased from the Penrhyn Estate, who through their Agent, Major Wordsworth, was always helpful to the Club. However, the purchase of this land for the building of the new Girls' Grammar School (later Tryfan), caused a move to the lower end of Penrhyn Park, near the lodge at Penrhyn Quay.

At this time, the Three Salmons Hotel, now known as the Glanrafon Hotel, was adopted as the club headquarters, with a warm welcome from the landlady, Mrs. Woolley. Teams changed there and the upstairs rooms were used for functions, and in recent years the Glanrafon Hotel has become the assembly point for club teams travelling to away matches.



The Glanrafon Hotel, formerly the Three Salmons, where Bangor R. F. C. had committee meetings before the war. It is still the embarkation point for the club's away matches.

Photo: Barry Wynne

At the schools' level, an interesting match was played at Wrexham, on Saturday, December 19, 1931, between North Wales Schools and South Wales Schools. It was the first game in which North Wales Rugby had been officially recognised in a representative match. The *North Wales Chronicle* stated that "local followers of the game will be pleased to hear that Bangor boys played a worthy part in the game". At first, North Wales Schools were superior in all departments of the game and only the "misfortune of slipping" robbed them of two tries. Gradually, however, the South recovered, and towards the end was clearly on top. This was due to their backs, whose handling and speed off the mark "were delightful to watch". It seemed that territorially, the match was very even, and the two sets of forwards were well matched. It was in the back division that the South was superior. One player got a special mention, a Friars boy, J. G. Hughes, who led the North Wales pack. It was said that he "was worthy of a place in a national schoolboys team". H. Duggan (Friars) was "right up to his usual well-known school form", and Idris Roberts (Friars), at scrum-half, played one of his best games, "and did much to reduce the effectiveness of the South backs, his spoiling and kicking being particularly in evidence".

South Wales Schools finished worthy winners by 24 points to 3 points. The team that day was: T. W. L. Roberts (Ruthin); G. S. Hughes (Wrexham); W. Wooler (Rydal); C. W. Webster (Ruthin); G. H. Parry (Friars); R. E. Bibby (Rydal); I. Roberts (Friars); H. Duggan (Friars); J. G. Hughes (Friars); J. Mell Mellor (Rydal); J. Waggott (Rydal); J. B. Townley (Rydal); D. Owen (Ruabon); E. Hartley (Ruthin); A. J. Partridge (Ruthin).

This was probably Wilf Wooler's first representative match: little did he realise that before long he would become one of Wales' most gifted players. Another important match took place on November 18, 1934, when the first senior representative game was played between North Wales and Monmouthshire on the Bangor City soccer ground at Farrar Road. The North Wales side contained six players from the Bangor area. The team was: J. W. James (Bangor Town); J. S. Hughes (Wrexham); L. R. Matthews (Bangor Town); L. Lambert (Welshpool); C. D. Chadwick (Newtown); J. Rees (University College, Bangor); J. R. Henderson (University College, Bangor); A. George (Newtown); R. H. Davies (Newtown); D. J. Morris (University College, Bangor); H. Heap (Rhyl); T. Jennings (Newtown); I. B. Williams (Bangor Town); L. T. Dale (Wrexham) and R. O. Davies (Wrexham).

According to the *Manchester Guardian*, North Wales had a long way to go before they could hope to hold their own in a representative match. "Monmouth was superior all round, particularly in their handling of the greasy ball. They also excelled in positional play. The North Wales tackling was courageous, but not good enough to withstand the swift handling movements of their opponents". It seems that J. Rees, of the University College was very prominent. Jimmy James, the Bangor full back, played a stalwart game, and he was cheered at one point in the game for a "particularly fine tackle".

The South Wales side ran out winners by 26 points to nil. This, however; was the beginning of a series of representative matches which were played in the area, and the game benefited by being staged in a predominantly soccer locality, as many friends new to the game were won over that day.

It is interesting to note that a dinner was given at the British Hotel, Bangor, on the evening of the match, for the teams and officials, with an official welcome to the sides given by the Mayor of Bangor, Councillor John Williams. On the menu, in the sweet section, for those who felt they needed such a delicacy, there was the offering of "blanc mange and stewed prunes". The Rugby Code now seemed to have a promising future in the Bangor area, but at the school level there was bad news. In the 1933-34 season, Friars School was having a very lean time. The team was much too light, especially in the back division, and the results were poor, as most of the 25 matches played were lost. This state of affairs continued in the 1934-35 season. One has only to look at the table below to realise the despondency that had gripped the school.

v. B. G. F. Swann's XV	Home	Lost	0-14
v. Bangor Town	Home	Lost	6-27
v. Normal College	Home	Draw	3- 3
v. UCNW	Away	Lost	0-23
v. Porthmadog	Home	Drawn	3- 3
v. Holyhead	Away	Won	6- 0
v. Kinmel School	Away	Lost	3-. 8
v. UCNW 2nd XV	Away	Lost	0-15
v. Normal College	Home	Lost	3-14
v. Bangor Town	Home	Lost	0-34
v. Bangor Town	Home	Lost	0-12
v. Kinmel School	Home	Lost	0- 6
v. Old Boys	Home	Lost	5-12
v. UCNW 2nd XV	Home	Lost	3-12
v. Bangor Town	Away	Lost	0- 6
v. Rydal School	Home	Lost	0-23
v. Porthmadog	Away	Lost	5-14
v. Dolgellau County School	Away	Won	8- 0
v. Holyhead	Home	Won	6- 3
v. Normal College	Away	Lost	4-13
v. Holyhead	Home	Won	24- 5
v. Old Boys	Home	Draw	3- 3

In the Autumn of 1935, it was decided by the school to cancel all future fixtures with the town team, and significantly, the school magazine stated that it was difficult to complete a fixture list "since so few schools in North Wales play Rugby. It has therefore been decided to fill in some of the blank dates with Association matches ". In the Spring term of 1936, only two 1st XV matches were played," the game with Rydal had to be cancelled owing to an unfortunate epidemic of measles". There was also a comment on the "divided allegiance" of the pupils, and the decision was taken to concentrate on Association football.

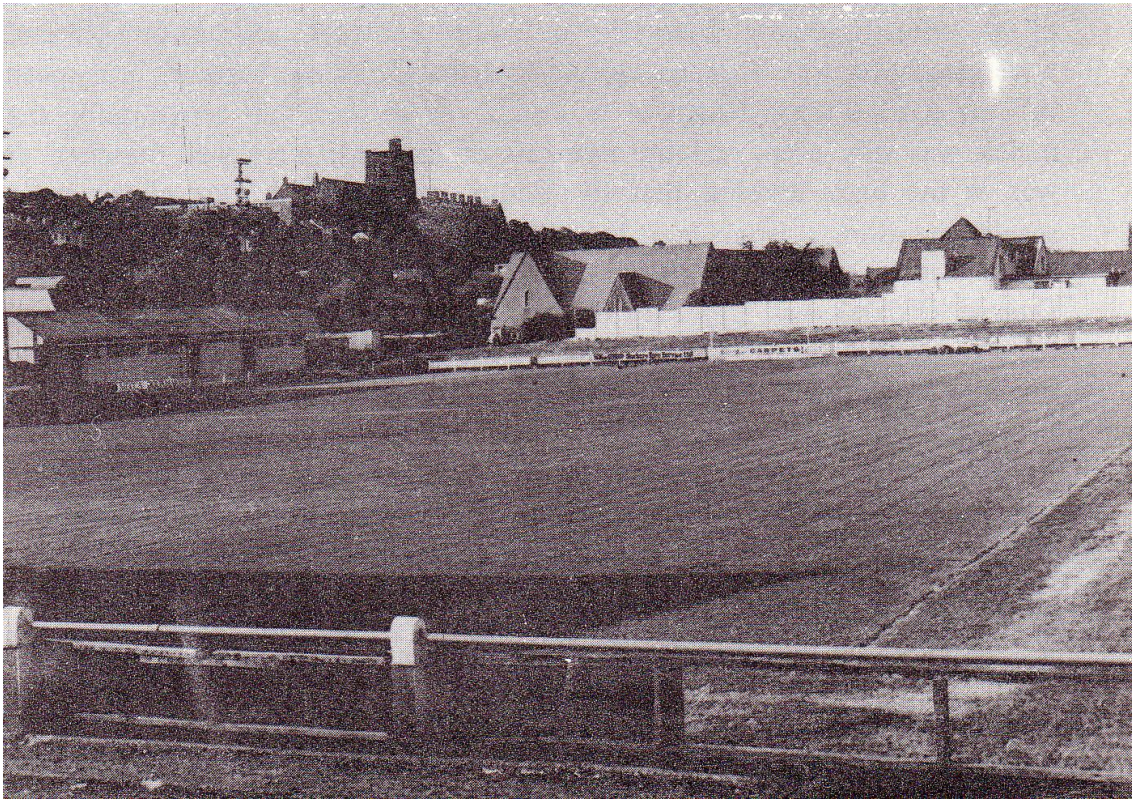


Photo: Barry Wynne

The Bangor City F. C. ground in Farrar Road, as it is today. At one time, this was the home of the Bangor Cricket Club, until the beginning of the First World War in 1914. At the end of the war in 1918, there was an amalgamation of the Bangor Cricket Club, the Bangor City Football Club, and the Comrades of the Great War Football Club into one corporate body under the title of the "Bangor Athletic Club". This arrangement soon proved highly unsatisfactory, as the ground was obviously not suitable for cricket, football, and the occasional rugby match played by either the Normal College or the University. During the season 1927-28 all the cricket fixtures had to be played on opponents grounds, and eventually in 1929, the Cricket Club moved to Ty Newydd, and the soccer club alone took a lease on Farrar Road. Bangor R. F. C. and North Wales XV's used the ground in the early 1930's, and during the Second World War, it was a rugby and athletics grounds for H.M.S. Conway. The last time the ground was used for rugby football was in May, 1969, when a North Wales XV played Llanelli.



Photo: Barry Wynne

Tryfan playing fields (formerly the Girl's Grammar School). In 1932 Bangor R. F. C. moved from the Friars School pitch to open land where this photo has been taken. At the time there was no school and very few buildings in this area. The changing rooms at friars school, however, were still used.

BANGOR R. F. C. 1931 - 32



Back Row: I. Thomas G. Parry R. W. Jones N. Owen R. Mackenzie C. A. Kortegas J. James A. M. Jones Dai Jones (Trainer and Manager)
 Middle Row: Tiffy Ellis (Groundsman) C. Humphreys D. A. Price White H. A. Jones (Vice Captain) I. B. Williams (Captain) J. Gee A. Ll. Parry A. L. Owen
 Front Row: I. I. Edwards E. Roberts



FRIARS SCHOOL 1st. XV. 1931-32

R. Burnell; G. M. Roberts; I. W. Jones; A. Humphreys; A. Williams; G. Wyn Griffith D. Lewis; B. G. Swann. G. H. Parry; I. Roberts; J. G. Hughes; A. Duggan; R. Wyn Jones; G. Goodwin, R. E. Hughes; L. Jones.



BANGOR R. F. C. 1932 – 33

Back Row: E. Owen; V. Bellis; I. B. Williams; A. Ll. Owen; A. G. Humphreys; I. W. Jones.

Middle Row: W. M. Shepherd; D. A. Price-White; H. A. Jones (Captain); Mr. D. Jones (Chairman); J. W. James; C. W. Humphreys; R. G. Kerr.

Front Row: G. W. Jones; Ieuan Edwards; E. M. Roberts.



BANGOR CRICKET CLUB

In 1936, Bangor R. F. C. moved to the cricket ground, and played there in 1936-37, and 1937-38. In the season 1938-39, they moved over the road, the other side of the score-board in the picture. These pitches were also used by Hillgrove School for rugby in mid-week and on Saturday morning. In the season 1939-40, the first year of the War, the rugby posts were moved back to the cricket pitch boundary, and the school continued to use the field to play rugby. Bangor R. F. C., however, never went back.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, BANGOR, R. F. C. 1933 - 34

The formidable Professor Archer, the team Chairman, is standing on the left of the picture.

Behind these bare facts, however, one can detect the influence of the new Headmaster, Mr. Ivor Williams, who had taken over from Mr. Bodfan Griffith, a keen supporter of the Rugby Code. The latter retired in 1935, and the new headmaster, although an enthusiastic sportsman, was no great lover of the rugby game. He was a brilliant Classics scholar, and in his younger days had been a highly competent cricketer and soccer player. The oval ball to him at this time was an excrescence. The writer of this booklet received a withering refusal a few years later when he headed a deputation of fifth formers requesting that a school rugby XV be reformed. None of us had any skill whatsoever in soccer, and we wanted to channel our energies in some other direction. His reply will go down in the annals of school history - "Take up Ping-Pong". With a twinkle in his eye, his final words to us were: "Constipated sparrows could play rugby better than you fellows". And that was that.

I do not wish to denigrate the memory of my late Headmaster, as he was a great character, a dedicated teacher and could show exceptional kindness to his pupils, although heaven help any scoundrel who crossed him. Ironically he would have made a tremendous second row forward, as he was a very big, powerful man. However, over the years, pressure was brought to bear on him by some of the staff in the school, and in 1949 he gave permission for rugby to recommence.

In 1936 a very significant move was made by Bangor Town to share the facilities of the Bangor Cricket Club. This was a natural development since very many of the team were also playing members of the cricket club. At first the pitch was beyond the further boundary of the cricket field. This was the pitch on which the writer was first introduced to the game, as in mid-week, and sometimes on Saturdays, Hillgrove School, Bangor, played their games under the enthusiastic promptings of Mr. J. Morgan, the Headmaster. In those days, the boys of Hillgrove stayed until they were fifteen years of age, and they had quite a useful preparatory school side. One of the stars of this team was Douglas Baker, who eventually became an Oxford Blue and played for England at Fly-half.

The first match to be played at Ty Newydd was on Saturday, October 31, 1936, when Holyhead were "entertained", the Anglesey side losing by 48 points to nil. Bangor's team was: J. M. Williams; A. Lapidus; G. M. Roberts; E. Owen; A. Ll. Owen; I. E. Hughes; J. Pritchard; G. R. Coles; D. A. Price-White; A. Williams; C. Lee; W. Parry; E. W. Jones; Norman Gibbons; H. A. Cole (Captain).

In a match at Ty Newydd on January 9, 1937, the name of Des Treen appears in the Bangor team, when they defeated the University team 11 points to 3 points. According to the match report, he hooked very well and gave "splendid service", and with the exception of the war years, when he saw service with the R.A.F., Des Treen continued to make a valuable contribution to the game, especially later on in the 1950's when he became the Secretary of the North Wales Secondary Schools Rugby Union. He retired recently as Senior Maths teacher at Syr Hugh Owen School, Caernarfon, and those who worked with him remember with gratitude his infectious enthusiasm for the game. Even in his own school he managed to establish four teams in an area where Rugby was virtually unknown in the early 1950's.

There is an interesting story about Des Treen in his playing days-in a particularly vigorous match; he was warned by the referee as to the manner of his hooking for Bangor. The referee, in a strange decision, told him that he would be

sent off unless he played in another position in the pack. Under protest he acceded to the referee's ordinance. He maintains to this day that he has never heard of a similar decision made by a referee, anywhere.

On February 20, 1937, the first representative match was played at Ty Newydd, when North Wales played Monmouthshire, losing by 14 points to 3. The following represented North Wales: T. W. L. Roberts (Ruthin School and St. Mary's Hospital); D. G. Pugh (University College, Aberystwyth); F. N. Hughes (Rhyl); G. S. Hughes (Waterloo and Wrexham); G. H. Davies (London Welsh and Bangor); W. S. Risk (Bangor); M. R. Bell (Liverpool University and Wrexham); D. Treen (Bangor); J. Woodward (University College, Aberystwyth); S. Taylor (University College, Aberystwyth); A. Williams (Bangor); G. R. Cole (Bangor); B. J. Perry (University College, Bangor) and W. A. D. Laurie (Rhyl).

A group from the Bangor club went up to Edinburgh on February 5, 1938, to see Wales lose to Scotland. By all accounts it was a memorable visit, as apart from seeing the match, several of the group made a broadcast from B.B.C. Scotland's studios. They were asked to sing, with a quartet from the Penrhyn Male Voice Choir. Mr. Ffrancon Thomas, conducted, ably assisted by two other gentlemen. David Price White of the Bangor Club, and Mr. J. Morgan, Headmaster of Hillgrove School. It seems that it was a hilarious occasion, and certainly the first time that the Bangor club made its presence felt on the air.

On February 12, 1938, Bangor beat Machynlleth at Porthmadog by 14 points to 8. It apparently was a rough game, and Bangor were assisted by John Roberts (Cardiff), who had represented Wales at outside half. During the game the spectators got a bit out of hand, and "they had to be spoken to, as large numbers had congregated behind the Bangor goal".

The first Sportsman's Dinner was held at the Castle Hotel on Saturday, March 19, 1938, and one of the speakers was a member of the Bangor Rugby Club. He stated in his address that if Hitler had played rugby, there "would have been none of his nonsense". He would have been sorted out at an early age, as no one would "have tolerated his offside tactics". It's an interesting thought.

In the 1938-39 season, the Bangor Club made a move across the lane at Ty Newydd to the present industrial site. In those days it was an enormous field owned by the Penrhyn Estate, and the club played here until the outbreak of the 1939-45 war. They still used the Cricket Club facilities, however, although these were rather crude. They changed in an outer shed, and hot water was obtained from the famous "Queen Mary" boiler. This appliance was lovingly tended by one of the most popular characters associated with the Rugby Club from its inception, and also with the cricket club. He was Artificer (Tiffy) Ellis, a First World War sailor, who had all the sailor's talent for spinning a good yarn. In fact, it was a great pleasure to find him still with the club when the team was re-established in Bangor in 1961, and he acted as Steward for some time in the new clubhouse.

Although there was only one team playing for the Club in the period up to the outbreak of the war, a considerable number of players gained representative honours in schools and University rugby, as well as for the new North Wales Rugby Union. Among these were Frank Lloyd, G. M. (Pongo) Davies, both U.A.U. players; G. Hodgson, Jackie Rees, Idris Roberts, Jimmy James, D. Price-White; J. G. Hughes, "Tanker" Yates, Des Treen, Brian (Ginger) Williams and H. A. Jones.

Only one important representative match was played in North Wales in that final season before the war, and that was North Wales v. Merseyside at the Rydal School ground, Colwyn Bay, on Wednesday, November 9, 1938. It was a keen struggle between teams which contained some distinguished players, and there were five players from the Bangor clubs. Merseyside won 18 points to 12 points, and they were victorious because of their superiority forward, and they had better place-kicking. The North Wales forwards, heavier than their opponents, "were too ragged in their work", but the back division, which included Wilf Wooller, the Welsh International and Old Rydalian, was at all times equal to the Merseysiders. This is a match I remember well, as it was my first visit to a representative game. One of the most unforgettable moments was when Wooller thrilled the very large crowd with a glorious try after an electrifying run nearly the length of the field. North Wales were not able to convert one of the four tries they scored, but Merseyside converted three of their tries. (In those days, of course, a try was three points).

One of the stars of the Merseyside team was D. D. Evans (New Brighton), the ex-Welsh International scrum half; he continually harassed the - North Wales side. R. W. Booth (Cardiff and Wales) also guested for North Wales, and his play was conspicuously brilliant. A "local" player who shone was W. S. Riske of Bangor, formerly of Glasgow Academicals and a Scottish Trialist. The North Wales team was: W. E. Rees (Rhyl); A. Griffiths (University College, Bangor); R. W. Boon (Cardiff and Wales); W. Wooller (Rydal, Cardiff and Wales); P. B. Downes (Rydal and Birkenhead Park); G. Harrison (Bangor Normal and Ebbw Vale); W. S. Risk (Bangor and Glasgow Academicals); W. E. N. Davies (Cardiff); Des Treen (Bangor); C. Leach (Colwyn Bay); I. Williams (Bangor); S. K. Roberts (Chester); A. Davies (Cardiff); E. F. Richards (Rydal and Birkenhead Park) and N. Dugard (Rhyl).

During the late thirties, the Bangor college teams had full fixture lists, and were playing with some distinction, as the college records show. Apart from various inter-college fixtures, the colleges made a full contribution to the North Wales scene, playing Holyhead, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Porthmadog, Machynlleth, Wrexham and a new team which had been established in the Pwllheli area, R.A.F. Penrhos. At the beginning of December, 1938; Bangor Normal College beat the latter side 20 points to 5, G. Harrison, a distinguished college player, scoring two tries. On Saturday, 14 January, 1939, the Normal College at home, tore Bangor apart to the tune of 27 points to nil.

Schools rugby in Bangor was virtually non-existent, but it is interesting to see that there were regular reports of Hillgrove School playing matches against other preparatory schools along the coast, namely, Trearddur Bay, St. Chad's; Prestatyn. Arnold House, Oriel House (St. Asaph), and Woodland's School, Deganwy. Pupils at these schools usually stayed until they were 14 or 15 years of age, and some good football was witnessed. There is an amusing account of one match played in March, 1939, at Ty Newydd, between Hillgrove and Arnold House, the latter school winning by 11 points to 3. It was, according to the *North Wades Chronicle* "played in a hurricane". I played in this game, and conditions for young players were atrocious. Our opponents were at least a stone per player heavier than we were, and Selwyn. Jones, now a bookmaker in Bangor, was hooking and he got a special mention because "he acquitted himself with a great deal of success". One person who revelled in that mud was Clive Smith, at centre and he was a tower of strength. Until recently he was manager of the Padarn Lake Hotel, Llanberis.

At this level, however, rugby was not a local growth, as most of the pupils at these schools were boarders, and they came from outside the Principality. Probably Hillgrove was the only school which had a fair proportion of local children. Nearly all of these have now ceased to exist, and Hillgrove caters for a much younger age group.



Four players from Bangor clubs, who represented North Wales v. Monmouthshire at the first representative match to be played at Ty Newydd, on February 20th., 1937. Left to Right: Glyn Hughes (University College, Bangor, Waterloo and Wrexham). G. H. Davies (London Welsh and Bangor); B. J. Perry (University College, Bangor); Des Treen, (University College, Bangor).