THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Another event of historic significance, from Bangor R.F.C.’s viewpoint, was the visit to Cardiff on Saturday, July 26, 1980, to participate at the opening of the Centenary celebrations of the Welsh Rugby Union. Many members and their wives had travelled down on Friday, July 25, to stay at the Water’s Edge Hotel, Barry. There was the usual festive atmosphere, and most retired to bed in the early hours of the morning.

Saturday dawned, slightly overcast, but very warm. The Club Chairman, Jimmy James, was entertained, with other chairmen of the eleven founder member clubs, by the W.R., at a reception on the Saturday morning. The other Bangor members who had been delegated to march in the Grand Parade, found their way to the Sophia Gardens Pavilion by 11.30 a.m., to pick up a packed lunch: There were generous portions of slab cake, crisps and rolls with assorted "fillings", and one can of beer each. By midday, the weather had become very close, and thirsts were difficult to quench, but a couple of intrepid characters went foraging, and more ale materialised. I should imagine some hampers for the other original member clubs were, perhaps deficient in the necessary beverage.

The Bangor club leading the procession, approaching Cardiff Castle.

There were large numbers of people present. For example, 2,000 choristers, delegates from the eleven founder member clubs, representatives from the schools and youth organisations, the Welsh National Squad, and most terrifying of all, hundreds of referees. Colour was added to the occasion by military bands from the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the Royal Regiment of Wales and the Welsh Guards. The latter were accompanied by a platoon of men with rifles and fixed bayonets.

The time came to assemble for the march through the streets of Cardiff, and Bangor, because of their alphabetic advantage, were to lead the procession, behind the band of the Royal Welch Fusiliers. An extremely attractive young woman carried the Bangor plaque, and the thirty Bangor representatives quickly donned their green pullovers, with the club motif on the top left hand side, a sight most resplendent. Favourable comment was made about Bangor’s appearance and three of the club’s stalwarts formed the first rank, namely Stuart Waters, Allan Davies and Jimmy James.

There was an air of suppressed excitement as the time came to move off, and the band of the R.W.F’. in their scarlet uniforms commenced with some stirring music. Bangor R.F.C. followed (most of the participants being in step), and the march through the streets of Cardiff was an experience not many will forget, as the club were the recipients of much cheering—after all, we were the only ones from the north. Eventually, we entered the Arms Park, and trod on the hallowed turf, and once again there was a tumultuous reception. The club, with others, marched the length of the
ground in front of the North Stand, and then moved down the middle of the field to the River Taff end, where we could survey the rest of the procession. It was a very stirring experience, especially when "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau" was sung.

Thousands of balloons were released at the northern end of the ground, and everyone retired to his seat in the North Enclosure to view the interesting programme provided by the W.R.U. There was a match played under the rules of the 1870's, when teams consisted of twenty players each. The combined choirs, gathered in the South Stand, gave an impressive performance of traditional male voice pieces; the various regimental bands marched and countermarched in the arena, and youngsters showed their paces in the skills of the game, reflecting great credit on their coaches. The climax of this pageant was the descent of members of the Red Devils (The Parachute Regiment) from 2,000 feet up, into the middle of the arena.

Finally, Jeff Squire, the Welsh XV Captain, came into the ground, escorted by schoolboy and youth representatives. He carried the ball which contained the message from the Queen. This ball had started its journey from Buckingham Palace and had been carried through the Midlands, to North Wales and then down to Cardiff. Cliff Jones, the President of the W.R.U. read a number of messages from the other Unions in Ireland, Scotland, France and England and finally, the message from the Queen. The new W.R.U. flag was unfurled and the centenary was truly launched.

The Bangor club then dispersed, with the other thousands. That Saturday evening, there was a dinner at the Hotel Water’s Edge, Barry, followed by a sing song which everyone enjoyed.

An historic occasion indeed. How will the Bangor Club celebrate its second centenary? Let us hope that by then, the game in Bangor at all levels, will have achieved greater things, and that many more players will have worn the scarlet of Wales.

To mark the centenary of the Welsh Rugby Union the Queen wrote a message on a rugby ball, which was relayed all the way from London, and handled by various rugby clubs in Wales before the ball eventually landed up in Cardiff.

The ball is seen here at Bangor, where it was received by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs. Glenda Jones. Friars schoolboys, Martin Jones, Dewi Griffiths Ralph Taylor, on the left of the picture, passed the ball to the Mayor who in turn passed it on to Les Pritchard of Bangor R.F.C. who relayed it into Anglesey.

This civic reception was held at Glynne Road, near the site of Bangor's first ground at Maes-y-Dref. On the Mayor's right hand side is club Chairman, Jimmy James and on her left hand side is Gwyn Roblin, former President of the W.R.U, and now President of the Bangor Rugby Club.

Other local rugby clubs who took part in relaying the ball were from Bethesda, Llangefni, Menai Bridge, Normal College, R.A.F. Valley, Holyhead and Caernarfon and some of their representatives can be seen here.
Bangor Normal College 1979 – 80
Standing: H. Powell; I. Morris; W. Sanderson; H. Lewis; B. Lewis; M. Walker; D. Owen; J. O’Neil, R. Douglas
Seated: C. Saunders; G. Green; T. Davies; J. B. Davies; K. Donovan; A. Roberts; A. Jones.

Photo; Baxters

U.C.N.W. 1st XV 1979 – 80
Top: P. Dixon; R. Jolly; D. Martin; R. Owen; R. Lomax; C. Bealey; S. Webster; G. Whitehall; T. Suedley; G. Jones; J. Erskine.
Sitting: D. Robson; T. Clay; D. Bexon; (Vice Captain) J. Tewson (Captain); R. Pickup; S. Evalas; P. Evans
Guests at the dinner given in honour of Gwyn Roblin, President of the Welsh Rugby Union, at the Castle Hotel, Bangor in March, 1980.

Left to Right: Davied Leadbeater (Mold Rugby Club); Jimmy James (Chairman, Bangor R.F.C.); Myrddin Jones (W.R.U.); Cliff W. Jones (President Elect W.R.U.); Gwyn Roblin (President, W.R.U.); Tom Bellis (President, N.W.R.U.); Professor Emeritus D. Seaborne-Davies, (Pwllheli Rugby Club); R. I. Davies (Ex-President N.W.R.U.); George Workman (President, Dolgellau R.F.C.).
THE AUTHOR

This booklet provides most absorbing reading, and is the result research. As well as being of interest to the game’s enthusiast it also contributes to the social history of the district.

Mr. R. Wendell Edwards is a former pupil of Friars School and a graduate of U.C.N.W., Bangor. During his national Service he played in the front row for various Royal Air Force units and later in the midlands, where he took up teaching appointments. After returning to the Bangor area he became actively engaged in coaching Rugby Football at Caernarfon and Penygroes, and for several years he was Secretary of the North Wales Schools Rugby Union. Mr. Edwards is at present a Senior Lecturer at the Gwynedd Technical College where he teaches Economic and Social History.

YR AWDUR

Mae'r stori yn ddiddorol dros ben ac yn dangos oriau o waith ymchwil: Yn ogystal a bod o ddiddordeb i ddiynwyr y campau mae hwn yn gyfraniad hefyd i hanes cymdeithasol y cylch. Mae Mr. R. Wendell Edwards yn gyn ddisgybl o Ysgol Friars ac wedi graddio yn y Brifysgol ym Mangor. Yn ystod ei gyfnod ei gyfnod oedd yn y rheng flaen i nifer o dimau ac eto pan yn athro yng Nghaernarfon. Ar ol dychwelyd i'w gynfynau bu'n hyfforddi Rygbi yn ysgolion Caernarfon a Phenygroes, ac am flynyddoedd roedd yn Ysgrifennod gweithgar i Undeb Rygbi Ysgolion y Gogledd. Yn bresennol mae Mr. Edwards yn Uwch Darlithydd yng Ngholeg y Gogledd a mae yn dysgu Hanes Cymdeithasol ac Economaidd.

J. Brynmor Davies
Hon Sec. N.W.R.U./Ysg. U.R.G.C.


Left to Right: Stuart Waters (Hon. Sec.); Jimmy James (Chairman); Peter Brown (Vice-President); Allan Davies (Centenary Committee Chairman); R. I. Davies (Ex-President N.W.R.U.) and Gwyn Roblin (President, W.R.U.).
INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS FROM THE AREA AND OTHER LEADING PERSONALITIES.

GODFFREY DARBYSHIRE 1853-1889
A member of the family who developed the granite quarries at Penmaenmawr. Went to Rugby School where he played for the lst. XV. Received some higher education at Balliol College, Oxford. Rowed for his College Eight. After eighteen months at college, his father "took him away". In 1881 he was selected to play for Wales against England as a back row forward. The details of his selection are rather obscure, but a solicitor friend of his in Bangor was on very friendly terms with Richard Mullock, the first Honorary Secretary of the W.R.U. He eventually became a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, and he did some very important geographical surveys in Florida, where he also had an orange farm. He died, at a comparatively early age, tragically, from exposure at sea, in a small boat off Key West in Florida.

Sir Hugh Corbet Vincent, 1862-1931.
Born in 1862 of an old Welsh family; his father was Vicar of Caernarfon for many years. He was a pupil at Friars School, under the Headship of Bishop Lloyd, and then proceeded to Sherborne College. Later attended Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated with an arts degree. Entered the legal profession, and served his articles with Mr. Charles A. Jones, Caernarfon, and in 1886 started a practice at Caernarfon in partnership with H. Lloyd Carter. Later the firm acquired an extensive business in Bangor, and Hugh Vincent took charge of this branch. Appointed Clerk to the Bangor Magistrates Bench and was thrice Mayor of Bangor. A keen sportsman, and while at Trinity College, was selected to represent Wales against Ireland. This was his only cap. He was also a keen soccer player, at centre-half, and a playing member of St. Deiniol Golf Club, Bangor. Received a knighthood for much good public work. He was also closely associated with Bangor Cricket Club.

Charles Peter Allen. 1861-1930.
Born in Manchester, the son of Peter Allen, the manager of the Manchester Guardian. The family had a summer home in Beaumaris, where he spent many summer holidays. Went to Rugby School, and captained the lst. XV. Left the school in 1880, and went to Oxford where he won his "Blue". Often played cricket for Beaumaris, and sailed the family yacht at the events organised by the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club. In 1884, selected because of his residential qualifications at Beaumaris to play for Wales against England and Scotland. Credited with scoring the first ever Welsh try against England. After leaving Oxford he studied law and later joined the staff of the Manchester Guardian. Sent to Russia and Bulgaria as a correspondent. Eventually set up home in Stroud, Gloucester. Won the Mid-Gloucester Parliamentary Seat for the Liberals in 1900. Remained an M.P. until 1914, when he went over to France in the Army. Served as a Town Major. Became a Privy Councillor and Deputy Lieutenant of Gloucester.

Dewi Bebb. Born 1939.
A pupil at Friars School, son of the famous Welsh historian, Ambrose Bebb. When he left school, was called up to do his National Service in the Royal Navy. There he quickly distinguished himself as a very fast wing three-quarter. Soon he played for the Navy in Representative matches. Entered Trinity College, Carmarthen, to train as a teacher. He played for the College lst. XV, and he also turned out for Swansea, who quickly realised his potential. It was not long before he was chosen to play for Wales, and he represented his country on 34 occasions. He toured with the British Lions in 1962 and 1966. He taught for a number of years, but now he is Sports Editor with Harlech Television.

Tony Gray. Born in Bangor 1942.
A former pupil at Friars School. Trained as a teacher in Cardiff; played for Newbridge, and event"ually took up a post in London, where he soon achieved prominence as a back row forward with London Welsh. Played for Wales on two occasions, against England and Scotland in 1968. Captained the London Welsh Championship side in 1971-72. In 1973 he was appointed to the staff of the University College, Bangor, lecturing in Physical Education. In the 1979-80 season, he became one of the 'Big Five' 2 selectors for the Welsh Rugby Union.
Llewellyn Morgan Rees. 1913-1972.

Native of Rhigos, educated at Aberdare Grammar School. Played for Welsh Secondary Schools against French Schools in 1930. Entered University College, Cardiff and in 1933-34 was Captain of the College 1st XV. Graduated in Latin. His prowess as an athlete qualified him for admission to the Carnegie College, Leeds, then a comparatively new institution, training an elite corps of teachers for physical education. His first teaching post was at Fleetwood, then at Devonport High School. Played for Plymouth Albion and Devon County. In 1939 he enlisted in the R.A.F. and served with distinction throughout the war. He represented the R.A.F., and he was also a Welsh International Trialist. In 1946, he became lecturer in Physical Education at the Normal College, Bangor, and then on the retirement of Ifor Williams, Organiser of P.E. for intending teachers at the University College, Bangor, Llew Rees was appointed to succeed him in the Education Department. Under his watchful eye, the College Rugby Club became a force to be reckoned with in Inter-College football. He was a selector of the University of Wales Rugby team, and he was the Manager and Chief Selector of the British Universities team. A highly competent radio broadcaster in Welsh on Rugby.


Educated at Port Talbot County School, and the University College, Swansea, where he took a degree in Physics. Whilst at school represented Wales at the under 15 and under 19 age groups. Played rugby and cricket for the College, and he gained representative honours by playing for the University of Wales. Taught in London and eventually moved to Mold where he taught Physics and Games at Alun School. Joined the local rugby club in its first year of existence and helped to develop the local cricket team. Played rugby for North Wales. Moved to Bangor Normal College in 1949. Took an interest in the administration of the game, and in turn became a selector, referee, chairman and part-time secretary of the North Wales Rugby Union. In 1964 he was elected to represent District J on the W.R.U. and in 1979 became President of the Welsh Rugby Union, a tremendous honour for a local man, and for North Wales Rugby. In the summer of 1980, went with the Welsh XV on its tour of the United States and Canada, and also part of British Lions tour of South Africa. He is also President of Bangor R. F. C.


A native of Llandover, Gwent. Came to Bangor from Monmouth School in September, 1930. (This school, with Brecon College, was one of the nurseries of Welsh rugby, and had a long association with the Newport club). Started work in Bangor Town Hall and was soon approached by Cyril Powell, an official of the Treasurer's Department, about his rugby abilities. Gained an immediate place as full back with the Bangor R.F.C, and before long with the North Wales XV. Has been associated directly and indirectly with the Bangor club for fifty years. Moved to Birmingham to work in 1936, but returned to Bangor in 1954, and immediately involved himself with the Beaumaris club. Here he worked with a very active committee made up of such enterprising men as Gordon Owen, Gwyn Roblin, Llew Rees, Bill Roberts, David Price-White and Gerry Handforth. Was one of the instigators of the move back to Bangor. His work in this capacity was phenomenal. He has been completely dedicated in his concern for the club for the past twenty years, and his contribution to the club locally, and to North Wales rugby has been enormous. He is the very active Chairman of Bangor R. F. C. A Civil Engineer, he recently retired from the Gwynedd County Council.

David Price-White. 1906-1978.

Pupil at Friars School. Went to the University College, Bangor, and he distinguished himself in the College 1st XV, eventually becoming captain. Became a solicitor in Bangor. Played for the Bangor Town club from its early days in the 1930's, and was also the Chairman of the club. At one period was Secretary of the North Wales Rugby Union. When the war came in 1939, he enlisted in the Artillery, and he rose to the rank of Colonel. Stood as a Conservative for the old Caernarfon Boroughs seat in the General Election of 1945, and won with a substantial majority. He held this seat until 1951.

A native of Abercarn, Gwent. Came to University College, Bangor, where he took a degree in Mathematics. Between 1932-40 played for the University, North Wales, Newbridge and Bangor. During his war service with the R.A.F. played for a number of service sides. Taught Maths at Bethesda, and later became Head of the Maths Department at Caernarfon Grammar School (now Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen) in 1953. For over twenty years coached Rugby most successfully in that school. Chairman and Secretary of the North Wales Secondary Schools Rugby Union for many years, and was also a representative on the Welsh Secondary Schools Rugby Union, being a selector between 1968-75. For many years a committee member of Bangor R. F. C., and also helped in the establishment of Caernarfon R.F.C. In 1977 awarded the M.B.E. for his service to the A.T.C. Although he has now retired, still takes a very active part in all aspects of Rugby.

J. Brynmor Davies, born 1929

A native of Llandovery, and has been Secretary of the North Wales Rugby Union since 1966. Whilst in the Forces he was attached to the Army Physical Training Corps, and not only represented his regiment at Rugby and Athletics but also won the Regimental welter-weight boxing championship. After studying at Bangor and Cardiff he attended the Physical Training College at Fredensborg, Denmark, under the legendary Svend Holtze. While teaching in the London area he played for London Welsh whose ground at that time was at Herne Hill. He was appointed to the Staff of the Normal College in 1960. For the past 12 years he has been in charge of the Welsh Colleges Rugby team and represents Wales on the British Colleges Committee. He was instrumental in acquiring fixtures for North Wales with National Touring Teams, and was responsible for organising the matches with Tonga and Romania. His present position is that of Senior Lecturer in Physical Education at the Normal College.

Terry Lewis. Born 1934.

A native of Pontyberem, South Wales. Went to Gwendraeth Grammar School, famous for its Rugby talent, such as Carwyn James and Barry John. Captained Welsh Secondary Schools in 1952, in their match against France. While in the R.A.F. played for Cheltenham. Became student at Bangor Normal College from 1954-56, captaining the 1st XV. Played for: a number of clubs - Llanelli, Neath and London Welsh. In 1962 was appointed as P.E. teacher at Friars School, and guided the school team most successfully for the next two decades. Played for Beaumaris and later Bangor. His present post is that of Deputy Head of Friars School on the Eithinog site.

Allan Wharton Davies. Born 1933.

Hails from Mumbles, near Swansea. Played in the 1st. XV for Swansea Grammar School, Mumbles R.F.C. and various sides during his R.A.F. service. Came to live in Bangor in 1960, being employed by the Royal Insurance, and since then has been energetically involved with rugby football in the area. Played for Beaumaris and later Bangor at full back. Captained the Bangor Club in 1963, when the side returned to the Wern Fields. Has been successively secretary and vice-chairman of the club. He is now a well-known referee with the North Wales Referee Society, and from 1970 onwards has been a Welsh Rugby Union referee. At present Chairman of the North Wales Referees Society.
David Gray. Born 1944
Born in Bangor in 1944. Attended Cae Top School and Friars School. Joined the Beaumaris club in 1960, and when the club moved to Bangor three years later, he became a regular first team player for the next seventeen ears, apart from one season with Ashton-on-Mersey. First capped by North Wales at Birkenhead Park in season 1963-64, and ever present in the side until 1977-78. Has now progressed from Captain of North Wales to team coach. He is Captain of Bangor in the 1980-81 season. Surveyor with the well-known builders, Watkin Jones and Son Ltd.

Stuart Waters. Born 1946.

Native of Ogmore Vale. Educated at Ogmore Grammar School, and Cardiff Technical College. Articled to Accountant in Cardiff up to outbreak of war in 1939. Served in the forces throughout the war, and on demobilisation in 1946, returned to professional accountancy practice in Loughborough until 1947. Then joined Saunders-Roe in Beaumaris as Chief Accountant, and later became Company Secretary. In 1966 transferred to British Aerospace in Bolton, where he is currently employed. Played rugby at school and in the Army, for whom he had two Representative Trials. After the war played for one season with Leicester and then joined the team at Saunders-Roe, later called Beaumaris. During his period in Anglesey, served at varying times as captain, chairman, and treasurer of the club, the latter duty for nearly twenty years. For many years on the committee of the North Wales Rugby Union, being its Vice-Chairman for six years. In addition, took up duties as a referee, and occupied the chair of the North Wales Referees Society. Is now a keen spectator at either Sale Rugby Club or Orrell R.F.C.

Space does not permit further details of many who helped Bangor R.F.C. over the past 50 years. There are people such as Eric Jones, former Deputy Headmaster of Friars School, and the late I. I. Edwards, who gave such service to the club before 1939. In the immediate post-war years there was Neville Matthews, and of course, that most intrepid of Chairmen, Gordon Owen, who steered the fortunes of the club for a long period of time. The late E. W. Jones, of Friars School, and J. S. Breen-Turner, were great workers for the club two decades ago, as was Howard Slade. And so the list goes on-there are many, many more, and if names have been left out, it has not been unintentional.
THE OPENING MATCH OF THE CENTENARY SEASON

Bangor R. F. C. opened its Centenary Season on Monday, September 8th, 1980 with a match against the South Wales touring side, Crawshays XV. The result of the match, played before a large crowd, was 40 points to nil in the tourists’ favour, but when we consider the strength of the side, it was not totally unexpected. The following match report appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post the following day.

TOURISTS RUN RIOT AT BANGOR

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South Wales touring side Crawshays Welsh gave Bangor a hammering when they opened the club’s centenary season yesterday.

British Lion, Dave Burcher, of Newport, put Wynford Lewis of Aberavon over for the first try, after six minutes with stand-off Geoff Barker of Bridgend converting.

Barker then got a try of his own, in the corner, and then Llanelli’s Paul Ringer, with a good break in mid-field, put Lewis over near the post for Lewis to convert.

Burcher broke down the blind side for the next one. Barker converted and then Newport’s Robert Ackerman got the final try of the first half for Barker to convert.

In the second half Bangor defended more resolutely and on several occasions, right winger, John Bird, almost got clear.

In the scrum, North Wales coach David Gray, ably assisted by Sam Rucker, and guest players Gwyn Harries and Roger Bold, held the scrummage together with Stephen Harmes, last year’s UWIST captain having a good game at scrum half.

Late in the second half Ackerman got his second try which was again converted by Barker and then in the closing minutes the Crawshays forwards combined with the ball passing between eight pairs of hands before Peter Rawlings (Neath) went over and Ringer closed the scoring with the conversion.

After the match, the spectators availed themselves of plentiful refreshments provided both in the club-house, and in a large marquee situated at the western end of the ground. The Crawshays XV were staying at the George Hostel in the Normal College, and several Bangor officials and their friends were invited there later in the evening, which ended on a note of bon homie and song.
Bangor Rugby Club’s Captain David Grey (centre left) and British Lion Alan Martin of Crawshay’s touring rugby side along with Welsh International Paul Ringer (left) and Bob Walters (right) of Bangor.
The large party contained a number of interesting players and individuals. At the end on the right is Paul Ringer (Wales and Llanelli). Standing next to him is J. W. A. P. James, Chairman, Bangor R.F.C. Fourth from the left, second row is D. Burcher (Cardiff, Barbarians, Wales and British Lions). Seated in the centre, with ball at his feet, is Alan Martin (Aberavon, Barbarians, Wales, British Lions). Next to him on his right is Arthur Rees, Chairman Crawshays XV.
BANGOR PRESIDENTS XV v. CRAWSHAYS XV

Back Row: David Jones (Bangor); Sammy Tucker (Bangor); Keith Powell (Bangor); Rob Waiters (Bangor); Peter Dingley (Bangor); G. Roberts (Bangor); M. Ferguson (Mold); R. Bold (Mold); Iolo Dafydd (Bangor); Wyn Lewis (Bangor). Front Row: R. Jacob (Bangor); R. Hill (Bangor); R. Owen (Bangor); Jimmy James (Chairman); David Gray (Bangor); J. Bird (Bangor); S. Hermes (Delyn); Les Roberts (Bangor).

For the first time since the 1938-39 season, Bangor wore their old colours of Royal Blue and Scarlet.

BANGOR R.F.C. 1979-80

Standing, back row. Left to right: I. Jones; R. Beer; R. Hill; J. Williams; G. Roberts; Iolo Dafydd; R. Walters; P. Green; G. Alsop; A. Holden; A. Roberts; A. Pritchard; A. Jones; C. Leonard; R. Jacob; A. Williams; J. Lloyd; P. White. Front Row: Wendell Edwards (Centenary Committee); H. Jones; E. Williams; L. Pritchard; C. Hughes; P. Dingley; D. Gray; J. W. A. P. James (Chairman); J. Bird (Captain); L. Roberts; R. B. Jones; Stuart Waters (Hon. Sec.); N. Jones; A. Vaughan.
Bangor R. F. C., far right of picture, in the Arms Park Centenary Celebrations.