

**T EXTRA... GEM SPORT EXTRA...**

*When play resumed after the Second World War*



*Cowbridge RFC - Season 1947-48 - Back row (left to right): A Edwards, G Punter, O Williams, ID Davies, DR Griffiths. Centre row: ED Lewis (chairman), W Bassett (referee), K Westcott, S Frederick, DE Jenkins, M Thomas, R Lougher, W Batchelor (trainer). Front row: CH Adams (hon secretary), REV Vaughan, NC Gauntlett (captain), A Thomas, E Llewellyn.*

**RUGBY** was restarted in Cowbridge in September 1946. A number of enthusiasts convened a meeting at the Horse and Crown.

They applied to the Cowbridge and District Athletic Club for the use of playing facilities and became a section of the latter Club.

Posts, 60ft high, were purchased from the Forestry Commission and under the direction of the well-known Mr Tom David were debarked, painted and then placed in position on the acquired Athletic Club's pitch. They became the envy of many other clubs.

Mr Tom Pratt then 'Mine Host' at the Duke of Wellington, gave permission for changing accommodation. Players contributed clothing

coupons in order to purchase a set of jerseys. Torn jerseys were replaced (out of the hat) by committeeman and life member, Mr Bill Hinton.

The team captain was Wyndham P Thomas, Mr Ted Lewis, was chairman and was ably assisted by Mr Perch Thomas. Mr Fred Dunn, president of the Athletic Club, kicked-off for their first match against Old Sandonians in September 1946.

Players Colin Adams, assisted by Don Griffiths was the RFC secretary. They both became life members of the RFC.

RFC captains from 1946-1959 were WP Thomas, NC Gauntlett (2), Wal Thomas (2), RV Vaughan (life member), M Saunders, TIN Thomas, D Robinson, T Jenkins, D

Davies, D Penn and T Grehan respectively.

Norman Gauntlett played for the RAF with the great Bleddyn Williams.

Roddy Evans, Welsh international forward played his first game for Cowbridge, while a pupil at the Grammar School, as did Garfield Owen.

Les Mansfield, Welsh international forward helped in a coaching capacity in the late 1940s, while a master at the Grammar School.

Haydn Davies also played at centre for Cambridge University, Aberavon RFC and Wales.

Cowbridge RFC were fortunate to have the English international forward Peter Wright playing for them for a couple of seasons in the late 1960s.

# Cowbridge RFC - the early days

VIVIENNE WHYTE'S letter in last week's GEM jogged my memory about the origins of the Cowbridge Rugby Club.

Three men played a great part in the early days - Perch Thomas, Ted Lewis and Harold Trotman. These three formed the committee,

and together with the captain and secretary, picked the team on the Monday evening for the following Saturday.

Their task was not difficult as we had a nucleus of 12-13 players and always had problems in finding 15 players. We often played with 14 men, and once with 13.

We did play one game with 16 players - I only noticed it when we went down for the first scrum and found nine people trying to pack down, despite that, we lost the match!

Most of us were ex-servicemen and were pleased to find an organisation we could join without any red tape. We never trained, we turned up on the day and played.

There were no pre-match talks on tactics. Our changing facilities were very primitive, an out-building behind the Duke of Wellington with only a cold shower. There were never any complaints, we just made the best of it.

Colin Adams played a big part in keeping the

club together. He was the secretary and the fixture secretary.

Because of the shortage of players, we often had 'guest' players who were invited with high expectations and our regular players had to play out of position to accommodate them. They usually vanished as quickly as they came.

When we played at home, it was easier to field a full team than when we played away. We had several farmers who could only play if they were able to get back home in time for milking.

We paid all our own expenses, and when we travelled away, we provided our own transport or hired a coach. A few of us had cars, the rest would use public transport.

Our first 'sponge man' was Bill Batchelor, who had played for Cowbridge

in the 1920s. Then Bill Hinton came along and became a stalwart member of our club, full of enthusiasm.

Most of our fixtures were with Cardiff and District clubs because we were members of that league. We did, however, play some club further afield.

One such fixture was with a team from Gloucester - the Crypt School Old Boys. This came about through a small group of Cowbridge girls, who were our regular and loyal supporters.

These girls went on holiday and they met some boys who turned out to be members of the Crypt OB team, so when they came back they gave Colin the details and this became a regular fixture for a number of years.

Alan Thomas  
(Captain 1948-49)

*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

21/4/05