

JUBILEE SOUVENIR



GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

1873-4

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FIFTY YEARS'
HISTORY
of the
GLOUCESTER
RUGBY
FOOTBALL CLUB

By W. BAILEY

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Rugby Football Club.
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*"By sports like these are all our cares beguiled.
—Goldsmith.*

September 15th, 1873.

*A*T a Meeting at the Spread Eagle Hotel, Gloucester, for the purpose of enrolling Members of a Football Club for the City, about forty-five gentlemen joined. Mr. Frank Hartley was elected Captain, and Mr. J. P. Riddiford, Hon. Sec.—

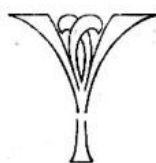
Gloucester Journal.

*"Strip lads, and to it, though sharp be the weather,
And if by mischance you should happen to fall,
There are worse things in life than a tumble on heather,
And Life itself is but a game of football."*

THEN AND NOW

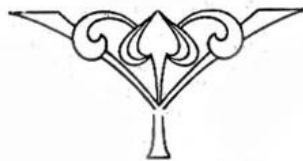
It is on record that the first balance sheet of the Gloucester Football Club showed a total income of £11 from all sources ! Contrast this with the financial statement 50 years later. In 1923 the Club had a membership of 2,504 ; gate receipts totalled £3,296 7s. 6d. ; £926 was paid in Amusement Tax ; and a balance in hand was shown of £2,188 ! In addition the Club held 2,099 shares in the Football Ground Co. No wonder Gloucester is proud of its Football Club and its achievements. To emphasise this fact, there is the story of the local schoolboy, who on being asked the question, " What is Gloucester famous for ? " promptly replied : " Its Football team and the Cathedral ! " That lad must have been a keen Rugby enthusiast. The schoolboys of to-day—the players of to-morrow—have a splendid tradition to maintain, but they are being admirably coached in the true spirit of Amateur Rugby Football, and should prove worthy of the trust when called upon to uphold the honour of the City on the playing field.

PUBLISHERS' THANKS.



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are due to many Kind Friends
for loan of Photographs,
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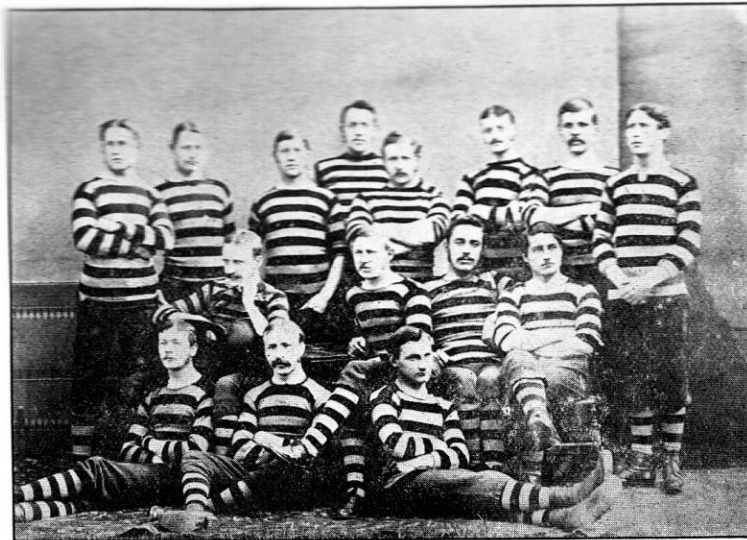


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ONE OF THE EARLIEST TEAMS (about 1876-7).



J. W. Bayley, J. Bennett, W. A. Boughton, P. B. Cooke, ———, H. J. Berry, F. Billett, H. J. Boughton.
J. F. Brown (Capt.), W. Snushall, F. Tandy, L. Bubb.
G. J. Dewey, W. Brown, J. F. Grimes.



THE OPENING MATCH.

Little data is available as to the early days of the City Club, but, as already stated, it was formed on Sept. 15th, 1873, and the first match was played in October against the College School, on the site of the present headquarters at Kingsholm. Only ten Gloucester players fielded, but they proved too weighty for the "boys" and won by 1 goal, 6 tries to nil. The City "team" was composed of F. Hartley (*Capt.*), J. P. Riddiford, W. A. Lucy, E. L. Blosse, A. King, John Boughton, W. A. Boughton, J. A. Balfour, R. Ping and McKenzie.

Of these players, it is interesting to record that Mr. Lucy is still in the district, and Mr. W. A. Boughton (who with his brother, the late Mr. H. J. Boughton, did so much for the Club in the earlier years) resides at Cardiff, where he was in business for many years.

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING.

At the first annual meeting (quoting from a report in the "*Gloucester Journal*") it was stated that the Club "was in a prosperous condition, but to ensure a successful season, and to enable the Club to cope with their neighbours at Hereford, Worcester and elsewhere," it was most important that the number of playing members should be increased. The entrance fee of 5/- was therefore abolished, and the future subscription of all playing members would be 5/-. Mr. Frank Hartley and Mr. J. P. Riddiford were re-elected Captain and Hon. Secretary respectively; Mr. Crawley appointed Hon. Treasurer; and the Committee was elected as follows: Messrs. E. Lynch Blosse, J. Bryan, H. Jewesbury, W. A. Lucy, W. G. Bosley, (who was afterwards Hon. Secretary), W. A. Boughton, E. T. Gardom, and A. Macdonald. The late

Mr. John Bryan will be remembered as Magistrates' Clerk for Gloucester for many years, and Mr. E. T. Gardom (who came to the city from Stoke, where he captained an Association team), is the present Clerk to the Gloucestershire County Council.

TWO POPULAR CAPTAINS.

Mr. Hartley, who was the prime mover in starting the Rugby game in Gloucester, held the captaincy for the first three years. He came to the City



J. F. BROWN.

(Capt. 1876-83.)

Mr. J. F. Brown did a great deal towards popularising the Rugby game in Gloucester, and held the captaincy for seven seasons. Photo of Mr. Brown is a reproduction from a group by Mr. H. Walwin.

from London, where he captained one of the best teams of the day—Flamingoes. His experience was therefore invaluable to the Club at the outset.

In 1876-7, Mr. J. F. Brown succeeded to the captaincy, and it was during his seven years' tenure of the office that the game made such rapid strides in popularity. The team was fortunate indeed in having such a splendid and inspiring leader, and it was mainly through his efforts the Club rose to such pre-eminence in the football world.

EARLY INCIDENTS.

From the time of the launching of the Club the matches were regularly played at the Spa until season 1890-1, when "notice to quit" was served under circumstances which will be detailed later. In 1876, a regrettable accident to the late Mr. Sydney Lane, who sustained a bad fracture of the thigh, had a serious effect on the attendance for some time, the ladies particularly absenting themselves from the matches; and in 1878 there was another incident which threatened disaster to the Club.

A match was arranged to be played by electric light against Rockleaze (Bristol). There were four lights—at least there should have been four—but one failed entirely, and one of the others was very uncertain. The result was that the crowd of spectators got out of hand and did a great deal of damage to the shrubs and walks. The Corporation gave the Club notice to leave, and ordered that no more matches should be played at the Spa. But the football public took exception to this arbitrary action; a petition was got up and signed by 3,000 citizens and presented to the Corporation. The Council relented, and unanimously voted in favour of allowing the Club to again enter into possession.

OLD RIVALS.

The first record available is that of season 1876-7, when of eleven matches played, six were won, three lost and two drawn. Up to that time the principal fixtures were with Hereford, Ross, Rockleaze, Swindon Rangers, Cheltenham White Cross, and Clifton. The Clifton Club (started in 1872, a year before Gloucester), used always to beat the City, and it was not until 1882-3 that they received the first of those reverses which later became as regular as their previous victories, and a good deal more severe, especially at Kingsholm, where Gloucester have run up some mammoth scores against their old rivals. Newport, the oldest of the Welsh Clubs, was first met in 1878. The first match, at Newport, ended in a draw, and in the return at the Spa, W. Snushall, one of the Gloucester half-backs, sustained a broken ankle.



H. J. BERRY.

(Brilliant Full Back and Hon. Sec. for several years.)



*Some of the
all-Blacks stayed
here*

TWO VALUED SUPPORTERS.



A. W. VEARS.

(Chairman of Committee.)

H. J. BOUGHTON.

(Capt. 1883-5)

Both Mr. Vears and Mr. Boughton rendered signal service to the Club in many ways.

A complete table of results, with the exception of three seasons, will be found on another page, but it is interesting to refer briefly to the games contested by the City in those pioneer days. The 14 wins credited to the Club in 1879-80, were over Cheltenham White Cross, Swindon Rangers, Moseley, Cheltenham Training College, Rockleaze, Stroud, Ross, Cheltenham College and the R.A.C. Cirencester. Clifton won both the matches easily. The following season was not quite such a good one. Of the three defeats sustained, Moseley were responsible for two, Newport administering the other. T. G. Smith (who has done so much for Rugby football in the City and County, and still takes a keen interest in the doings of the Club,) made his appearance this season as a forward.

AN INVINCIBLE SEASON.

In the opening match of 1881-2, T. Bagwell appeared for the Colts, and distinguished himself by scoring, but he had to wait some time before gaining a permanent position in the side. During this season, Newport were beaten twice, but Cheltenham College (2), the Irish Rovers, Clifton and Moseley triumphed over the City.



Left to right:

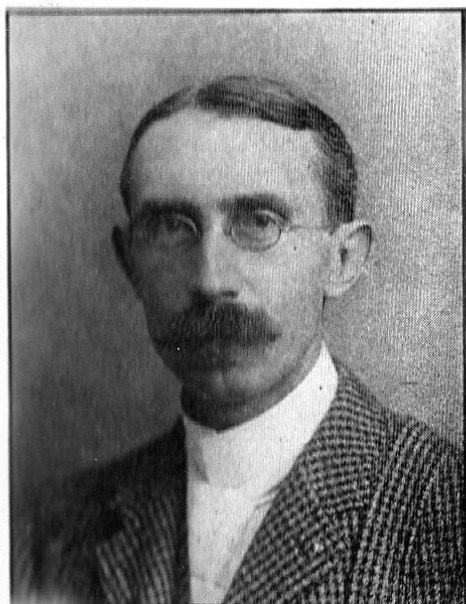
A W. Vears, H. J. Boughton, W. A. Boughton, G. Coates, H. J. Berry, J. F. Brown (Capt), H. E. Taylor, H. V. Jones.
 B. Sloman, T. G. Smith, P. B. Cooke, J. W. Bayley, A. C. Seymour, W. Brimmell, W. Brown,
 H. Fream, G. J. Dewey.

Season 1882-3 was a memorable one, by reason of the fact that Gloucester gained an unbroken record; matches with Stroud, Newent, Worcester, and Cheltenham White Cross disappeared from the card, and fixtures were only played with the strongest teams in the district, and Cardiff and Newport. Newport and Swindon Rangers made draws with the City, but were defeated once each. H. E. Taylor and G. Coates were first associated this season, though the former had proved a decided acquisition the previous year. And what a great-hearted player! In defence, Taylor was the best three-quarter Gloucester ever possessed, and his "galloping" runs will never be forgotten by those who remember the old Spa days.

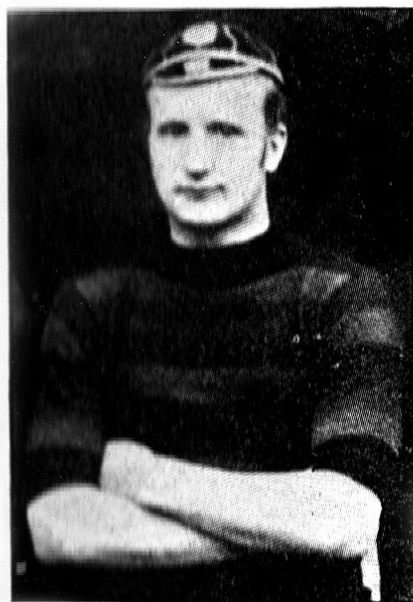
A RED LETTER DAY.

In the following season, H. J. Boughton took over the captaincy from J. F. Brown (who had left Gloucester) and he led the team through a very successful season. Only two reverses were sustained, to Cheltenham College and Newport. At this time fixtures with these teams were the hottest of the season and great rivalry existed. This was the year when the bad feeling engendered between the City and Newport came to a climax. The first match at Newport, resulted in a victory for Gloucester, by a goal to two tries, but every point was disputed, and the result was very unsatisfactory. In the return game at the Spa, Newport won by a try to nil. Swansea were also met this year and beaten by 3 tries to nil.

A red-letter day in 1883 was the first of the splendid contests between Gloucester and a London team. Mr. R. James, through the efforts of ex-Captain Brown, brought down a powerful fifteen which included A. E. Stoddart, the famous English International three-quarter, but Gloucester, as they often did before and since, rose to a great occasion and won an exciting game by a try to nil. The try-getter was T. Bagwell, after a marvellous individual effort, and one that was talked about for years afterwards. The day was made the occasion of a gratifying testimonial to Mr. J. F. Brown in the shape of a handsome gold watch



T. GRAVES SMITH.
(Capt, 1885-9.)



C. E. BROWN.
(Capt, 1889-90.)

Mr. Graves Smith and Mr. Brown rendered invaluable service both for the City Club and the County Rugby Union.
Photo of Mr. Brown is a reproduction from a group by Mr. H. Walwin.

and chain. Mr. W. C. Lucy made the presentation in front of the Spa Pump Rooms, and the proceedings were marked by the greatest enthusiasm. Altogether, this was a notable season.

MEMORABLE STRUGGLES WITH CARDIFF.

There was a falling off in 1884-5, when seven defeats were registered against the Club, but with T. G. Smith as captain the succeeding year, the victories numbered 13, as against three defeats. The next two years were not very distinguished, but in 1888-9, the Club fully regained their form, and only suffered three reverses. Swansea won at home by a try to nil, but at the end of the season, Gloucester turned the tables, and gained a handsome victory by 3 goals, 2 tries to a try. In the two matches with Llanelli, Gloucester were very unfortunate. Six of the regular fifteen were away in the first game, which was lost by a try, and in the return, both teams scored a try, and the Welshmen won by the place kick.

The ever friendly rivalry between Gloucester and Cardiff ran to its highest pitch the same season. Three matches were contested without a victory being recorded by either side, and then in the fourth at Cardiff (one of the finest witnessed in the history of the Club), Gloucester won by 3 goals (1 p.), 1 try to 1 goal, 2 tries. G. F. ("Dicky") Dore scored the final try of the match, and the captain (T. G. Smith) won a glorious triumph for Gloucester by adding the goal points.

T. BAGWELL'S WONDERFUL TEAM.

The team under C. E. Brown's leadership in 1889-90 was not very successful, and a tour in the North of England (Huddersfield, Swinton and Wigan), was signally disastrous. But the Club was up again the following year, with T. Bagwell as captain. Of 26 matches played, 21 were won, two lost, and three drawn—a record which stands out as the most successful in the Club's history, for the opposition met was far stronger than in the eighties. A great victory was obtained over Swansea. The Welshmen were previously unbeaten, but Gloucester proved the superior side

and won by 1 goal, 1 try to nil. Other notable triumphs were over Cardiff (twice), Llanelly and Hull, and a draw was played with Llanelly on the latter's ground, when S. A. Ball was badly injured. The two defeats were from Swansea and Penarth (both away).

GLOUCESTER PIONEERS OF THE PASSING GAME.

It may be stated that the style of play generally changed during the eighteen years the Club played at the Spa, and Gloucester set the fashion in more than one instance. It is a well known fact that Gloucester were the pioneers of the passing game, and they gave Cardiff an object lesson on one occasion, winning by 1 goal, 6 tries to nil. Cardiff are rightly credited with introducing the four three-quarters, but years before F. E. Hancock adopted this system the City Club had played seven men behind the scrum. Originally there were two full backs, one three-quarter and two halves; then two men played in each of the positions; and then one back, three three-quarters and three halves—practically the same system played to-day.

OLD PLAYERS.

Reference must be made to the players who figured prominently for the Club at the Spa, but space will only permit a brief summary. The names of the original team have already been given; in addition mention should be made of J. F. Brown, F. B. Cooke (the present Clerk to the City Education Committee), E. T. Gardom, G. J. Dewey, H. J. Berry, L. and R. L. Grist, W. Hobbs (the late City Councillor and headmaster at Hatherley Rd. Schools), Frank Tandy, W. S. Beaumont, J. W. Bayley, J. Fisher, J. Bennett, W. Snushall, J. F. Grimes, W. Brown, and many others.

In 1880-1, H. J. Berry played brilliantly at full back, H. J. Boughton and R. L. Grist were the three-quarters, and W. A. Boughton, W. Snushall, and W. F. Evans the half-backs—a clever combination. In 1881-2, H. E. Taylor and P. C. Adams and H. V. Jones played among the backs

and G. Coates contributed in no small degree to the successes obtained in 1882-3, and the forwards included J. W. Bayley, W. Brown, P. B. Cooke, G. J. Dewey, H. Fream, B. Sloman, T. G. Smith and H. A. Sanders.

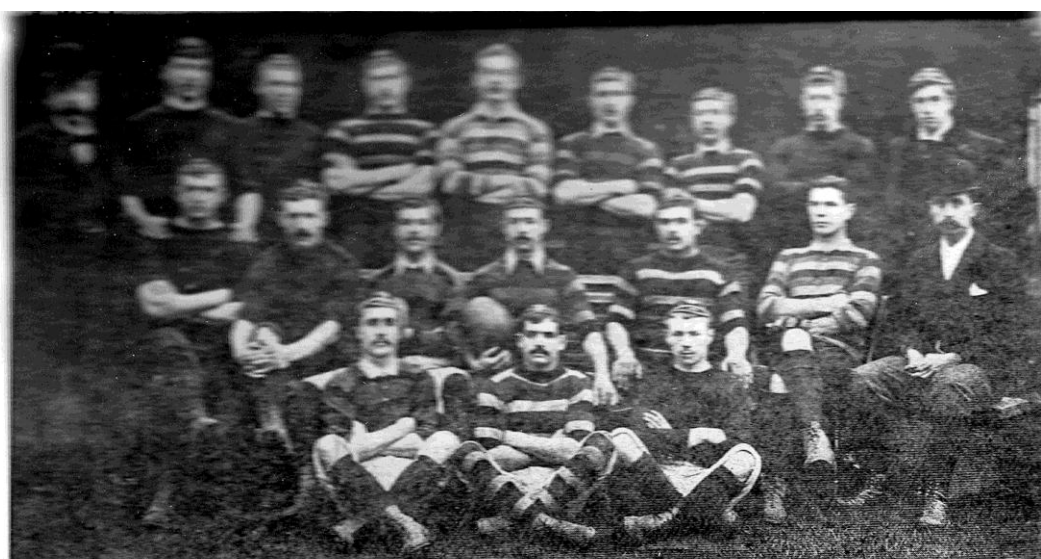
A BRILLIANT FULL-BACK.

The following season H. J. Berry's brilliant career as a footballer was brought to a close by a knee injury. He was a fine full back—a splendid kick and one of the fastest players who ever occupied the position. There were many changes in the back division during this year. Taylor, Coates and Cromwell; Taylor, Coates and Boughton; and Taylor, Coates and Bagwell, playing at different times at three-quarter. Jones and W. Boughton were the regular half-backs, the third being J. F. Brown in the early part of the season, and later Bagwell. Cromwell (who is still actively connected with the old Club as a Committee man) also played at full back, but this position was eventually taken by H. E. Cadenne. In 1885-6, J. N. Oswald (who later assisted Moseley) appeared at full back, and Jones figured at three-quarter. E. W. Urquhart had a short but brilliant connection with the Club this season.

In 1886-7, S. A. Ball and Bagwell were associated at half back, and R. W. Stoddart (brother of Councillor S. A. Stoddart) and C. E. Brown were requisitioned for the third line. In the next season A. F. Hughes began a long and distinguished connection with the Club, first appearing at three-quarter, and later to supersede Oswald at full back.

A SPLENDID FIFTEEN.

Gloucester were moderately represented the following season, but in 1890-91 the association of W. H. Taylor, T. Bagwell, W. Jackson and E. B. Powell (or A. Ward) at three-quarter, with Hughes at back; Ball and W. George at half, and a forward division selected from H. V. Page, A. E. Healing, G. J. Witcomb, R. C. Jenkins, A. Cromwell, T. Collins, A. Collins, J. Williams and C. Williams, brought back the Club its reputation as one of the best teams in the country.



S. S. Starr, A. Cromwell, R. C. Jenkins, G. J. Witcomb, A. E. Healing, C. Williams, J. Williams, A. Ward, T. B. Powell,
A. Collins, A. F. Hughes, W. H. Taylor, T. Bagwell (Capt.), T. Collins, H. V. Page, T. G. Smith,
W. George, S. A. Ball, W. Jackson.

Reproduction by Mr. H. K. Fox, Barton Street.

One necessarily associates the doings of the past with the backs, but in justice to the forwards, whose changes were too numerous to mention, it must be said that the success of the rear division depended a good deal on the brilliant play of those in front. And one of the finest forwards was G. J. Wileomb, who was hardly treated in not being "capped" for England.

FAREWELL TO THE SPA.

In connection with the memorable match with Swansea, already referred to, there was an unfortunate sequel, and one that severed the Club's connection with the Spa. The too liberal application of salt on the front-bound ground, in order to make the pitch playable, ruined the grass, and the Cricket Club served the footballers with a notice to quit. It was a big wrench to have to leave the old ground with its happy associations, but the Football Club accepted the inevitable, and a movement was set on foot for the formation of a Company to purchase a suitable ground.

After a few meetings, at which various sites were suggested, it was ultimately decided that the Castle Grim Estate at Kingsholm formed the most convenient, and negotiations were opened so successfully that the new Company closed the purchase of the property and at once got to work in preparing a portion of the estate for the ensuing season. Splendid progress was made, and the formal opening of the Kingsholm ground took place on October 10th, 1891. It was the ambition of the promoters that the new enclosure should become the home of athletics in the City, but this has not been realised. As a football ground, however, Kingsholm has served its purpose admirably, and to-day the Gloucester F.C. are in possession of one of the best appointed Rugby Union enclosures in the country. In recent years considerable improvements have been effected, and with the splendid new grand stand opened last season, covered accommodation is now provided for over 8,000 spectators.

First Match at Kingsholm

AN AUSPICIOUS OPENING.

Despite the fact that the day was miserably wet for the first match at Kingsholm, great enthusiasm prevailed. Gloucester opened auspiciously by defeating Hurton by 2 goals 4 tries (18 pts.) to nil. Hurton were a strong side at that time, and the team included such fine exponents as the Brothers Frank and E. Evershed, G. A. Marsden, J. C. Gorton, W. B. Lowe, and other well-known Midland players. Mr. Rowland Hill, Hon. Sec. of the Rugby Union, refereed the match and the City member (the late Sir T. Robinson) kicked off. A. E. Henshaw (a former Newport player) had the distinction of scoring the first try on the new ground; other scorers being Bagwell, George Powell (2) and J. Williams. Jackson kicked the two goals. The full team was: A. F. Hughes; C. Bagwell (capt.), T. B. Powell, W. Jackson, W. H. Taylor, W. George and S. A. Ball; H. V. Page, A. Cromwell, A. E. Healing, C. Williams, A. Collins, J. Williams, A. E. Henshaw and T. Collins—practically the same fifteen which performed so brilliantly at the Spa the previous year. The gate receipts at the opening match were £46 7s. 3d.

IN PRAISE OF THE NEW ENCLOSURE.

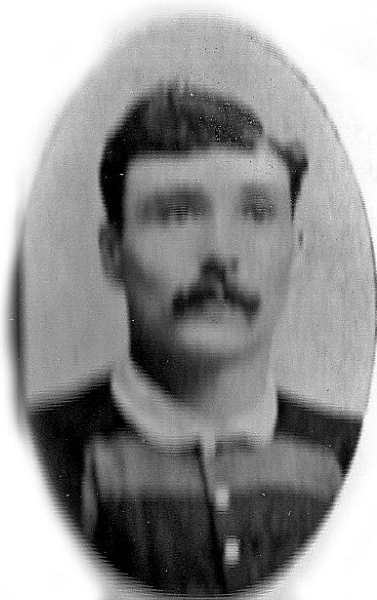
It is interesting to record that in spite of the wretched weather a good, fast game was witnessed, and the new ground stood the test well. The *Gloucester Journal* report the next week contained the following: "It is not pleasant to contemplate what would have been the state of the Spa had the match been played on its surface, but for the new ground it is as fit now for play as if both rain and the game of last Saturday had not taken place. The ground has this double advantage, that whereas a game in the wet does not injure

the prospects of future matches, the game is hardly less interesting than when played in dry weather." How often this has been proved since! After days of heavy rain matches have been played at Kingsholm under favourable conditions; whilst other Club grounds have been a perfect quagmire.

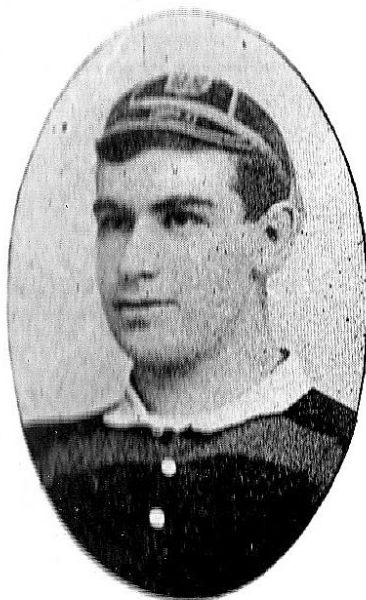
Following the Burton match a dinner was given in the evening at the Spread Eagle Hotel (the Club Headquarters at the time) by the Directors of the Ground Company (Messrs. A. W. Vears, Chairman, G. Cummings, C. H. Dancey, T. Gurney, J. Davis, A. V. Hatton, and S. S. Starr), the Solicitors (Messrs. Bretherton and Boughton) and the Secretary (Mr. H. S. Simpson) to the two teams, the Gloucester Club Committee, the City Member and Mr. Rowland Hill.

SOME NOTABLE VICTORIES.

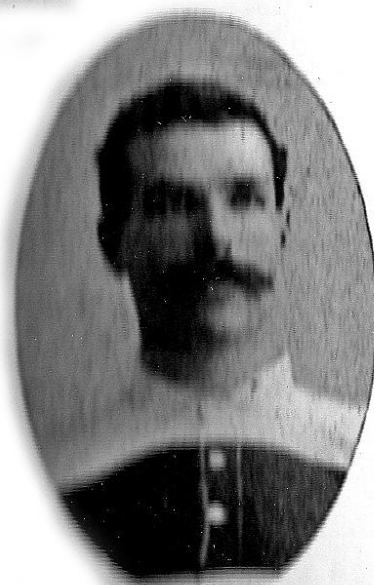
Captain Bagwell's second year of office was not attended with such brilliant results as in 1890-1, but of the six defeats three were by the narrowest margins—a solitary try. Coventry gained a surprising victory at Coventry; Cardiff also won at home by two tries to one; and Newport—the invincible team, led by T. C. Graham—gained a six victory at Kingsholm after a most exciting contest. But Gloucester followers stoutly contested that Walter Taylor scored an equalising try (disallowed) in this match, and the game should have been drawn. Notable triumphs were obtained over London Scottish, both at Richmond and at home—and the Scottish were a side to be feared in those days—the Barbarians, Leicester (twice), Exeter and Cardiff, and a draw was made with Oxford University. The City also defeated the Best of the County easily, A. Cromwell distinguishing himself by scoring five tries in this match—no ordinary feat for a forward. In addition to the players mentioned, C. A. Hooper (who played for Cambridge and England) gave valuable assistance at three quarter, and R. C. Jenkins, F. O. Poole (another International), J. Watts, G. J. Witcomb, J. Bartlett, A. C. James, W. Gough, J. R. Price, J. Clark, H. G. Brown, E. T. Huggins, G. F. Jones, G. Phelps, J. Mayo, and F. W. Mugliston, formed the side.



A. G. WILLIAMS.
(Capt. 1895-6.)



J. HANMAN.
(Capt. 1893-4-5.)



W. H. TAYLOR.
(Capt. 1896-7-8-9-1900.)

W. H. Taylor was one of the fastest three-quarters in the
country and on the track won numerous sprint races. He was
also a champion hammerman, and also competed in the A.A.A.
at Stamford Bridge.

Bagwell certainly had every reason to look back on his two years' captaincy of the city team with pride and satisfaction. He had a fine set of players under his command—a pair of half backs in Ball and George capable of holding their own with any combination in the country; clever and resourceful three quarters, a full back in Hughes who was in the first flight, and a powerful pack of forwards who challenged any set opposed to them for supremacy in all departments of the game. This team of Bagwell's certainly brought fame to the City Club.

LEAN YEARS.

The next four seasons saw a falling off in the number of victories, and the defeats showed double figures each year. W. George had charge of the team in 1892-3, but the personnel of the side was changed, and this led to a lack of effectiveness in combination. Hughes had a cricket engagement at Burton and assisted the Football Club there for a time, but came back to his old team. George lost his partner Ball, who retired, and had no settled position afterwards, the half backs being either Bagwell and Arthur Stephens or J. Watts and Cunningham. New forwards who were seen out were A. Williams, W. Collins and A. H. Click. The first match with Bristol ended favourably for Gloucester, but other good performances were wins over Leicester (2), Oxford University, Broughton Rangers and Tulseley. The City lost to Newport at home by a try to nil, and also suffered defeat from Bristol (the latter's only win at Kingsholm), by 4 points to 1.

A game at the close of the season which attracted a great deal of attention was a match arranged between J. Hanman's Gloucestershire Scratch and Yorkshire team. It was a wonderful display of football, and Gloucestershire scored a great victory by 11 points to 7.

FIRST GLOUCESTER-BORN INTERNATIONAL.

J. Hanman captained the side for two seasons with moderate success, the defeats being ten and eleven respectively. In the first year the backs