

GRFC AGM 1936

From The Citizen, Saturday 11th July 1936:

GLO'STER RUGBY CLUB'S GREAT SEASON

TRIBUTES AT MEETING

ONE CHANGE IN COMMITTEE

The remarkable season enjoyed by the Gloucester Rugby Football Club in 1935-6, both from the playing and financial points of view, gave the greatest gratification and satisfaction at the annual general meeting of members, held at the Corn Exchange, last evening.

The Financial statement, details of which have already been published in "The Citizen," showed a profit on the season's working of £508 5s 5d, after having taken into account a sum of £141 17s 6d allocated to local charities, while the present assets of the club total £9,562 8s 7d.

The President (Dr Arnold Alcock) presided over a large attendance of members, and was immediately supported by Mr J T Brookes (vice-president and chairman of committee), Mr A T Voyce (representative on the English Rugby Union), and other retiring members of the committee.

"We look forward to the coming season with confidence and pleasure." This was the optimistic note struck by the Committee in their annual report, in the course of which they congratulated the players upon a very successful season and upon having upheld the best traditions and spirit of the Rugby game. Grateful thanks were accorded to J C Brooks and T Hiam, the captains; both of whom it was stated, had rendered splendid service to the club for several seasons, and the former, by his genial disposition and his excellent example as a player and sportsman, had added much to the general welfare of the club. Congratulations were extended to P C Hordern and J G A'Bear on taking part in the British Rugby tour to the Argentine, and the committee noted with pleasure the growing enthusiasm and support of the Rugby game in Gloucester, as shown by the increased membership. The Committee recorded their appreciation of the services of the secretary, who had again served the club in a splendid manner, and of Dr Alcock for his unfailing support, and expressed thanks to Dr Greene, the St John Ambulance Association, the Supporters' Club, referees, local clubs, Schools' Union, the Press for their invaluable help, and to all those who had supported the Rugby game in Gloucester.

Reasons for Success

The Chairman, in his opening remarks, remarked that he thought one might say that they were all extremely sorry to see the end of last season, which was most enjoyable and notable one in every respect. First of all, after 38 years they managed to beat their old friend, Llanelli, down in the far corners of Wales – a wonderful performance. The other notable achievement was that Boughton completed a record of having scored

over 1,000 points. Whether that was absolutely a record he would like “The Citizen” to find out, but, in any case, it was a wonderful achievement.

Personally – and he thought this would probably be the opinion of the members generally – his view was that some of the games seen at Kingsholm last season were among the finest exhibitions of football that had ever been witnessed. The Llanelly game at Kingsholm, for instance, was one of the finest he had ever seen, although Gloucester were beaten. What was the reason for the success achieved on the playing field:- First of all, the team was magnificently captained by Mr Brooks, who was extremely popular with all the players, and that was what mattered in Rugby. He led the team well, and brought them through with flying colours. Of the team itself, one must have realised that it was a real team in which he did not think there was a single weak spot last season. The players combined together as a team. That was brought about by the committee and officers, and he thought they would like to join in congratulating Mr Brookes, the chairman of the committee, upon the way the Club was run last season. The one idea of committee and officers had always been to foster the game, to help the players and to give the supporters the very best for their money. It had always been the greatest joy to him to mix with the players and members of the Committee in the changing room, where the atmosphere had always been bright and cheerful, never a discordant note of any sort.

“Envy of Most Clubs”

That differed very much from the outside atmosphere last season, commented the president. But in spite of the terrible weather experienced, they had already read in The Citizen of the club’s wonderful financial position. It was extraordinary to find that, although the weather was bad and there was every reason for poor “gates,” and although less matches were played, they finished the season with a balance in hand of over £500. For that they must, in a way, give credit to the committee and particularly to the secretary. No one knew what the club owed to Mr Hudson, as secretary, for looking after the expenses and keeping them down. That was the reason why the balance sheet had come out as well as it had done.

“We are undoubtedly the envy of most clubs in the country” said Dr Alcock, “and as long as we give an exhibition of football such as was given last season and in past seasons, I am perfectly certain we shall merit that support, and this club will continue to be the great asset to the city it has been for the last 60 years.”

It was a great thing to know that now the aim of every rugby club in the country was to get Gloucester on their fixture lists, and they had the greatest difficulty in giving fixtures to all the first-class clubs who applied for them. It was wonderful, too, to know that on top of a balance of over £500 they had been able to help local charities to the extent they had done, and, in addition to the usual subscription to the Royal Infirmary, to hand over £21 to the Special Appeal Fund.

They had several things to regret as they entered upon the coming season, said Dr Alcock. First and foremost was the fact that Mr Brooks, last season’s captain, would no longer be able to play for Gloucester. They wished him good fortune in his new sphere of work. They also observed from The Citizen that the club were likely to lose the services of Edwards, who had been such a mainstay to the side. His home was in

Gloucester, however, so that he would not be leaving them altogether, and they wished him all good luck in the future.

Last year, added the President, many suggestions were brought forward from the body of the hall at the annual meeting, and he promised they would receive the attention of the committee. He was glad to know that everyone of those suggestions had been seen to, and he thought everyone would agree that in the coming season Kingsholm, with the further extension of the covered stand at Dean's Walk end, would make a very fine show. To think that anyone could pay 6d per match or 5/- per year to watch under cover a club of the standing of Gloucester was worthy of note.

Increased Membership

For the sixteenth occasion, the report and balance sheet were presented by Mr Hudson, who, in some general remarks, emphasised the interest of the Gloucester public in Rugby, and mentioned that last season the membership advanced by 200 to a total of 2,123. He also referred to the extension of the covered stand at Dean's Walk end, and said that he was sure that extra comfort would be appreciated.

A member raised the question of grants to local clubs, and Mr Hudson said it was only for local clubs to tell them of their difficulties, and they would do their best to meet them.

The President said he thought it most important that they should encourage local clubs. The Supporters' Club was doing its very best to further the interests of junior clubs, and the Football Club was equally prepared to assist.

On the proposition of Mr F James, seconded by Mr Jordan, the report and balance sheet were unanimously adopted. The latter appealed for greater support of United matches.

Election of Officers

Mr A Brown moved the re-election of Dr Alcock as president; Mr A P Fielding and Mr J T Brookes as vice-presidents; and Mr A Hudson as general secretary. He referred to Dr Alcock as a very hard-working president; to Mr Hudson as one of the best secretaries in the country; and to the vice-presidents as having ably played their part in the success achieved.

Mr C Whyham seconded the proposition, which was unanimously and cordially agreed to.

Dr Alcock, who first acknowledged his re-election for the fourteenth occasion, said nothing gave him more pleasure in life than to do all he could for Rugby, and particularly for the Gloucester Club. It was no labour; it was sheer enjoyment.

Mr Brookes, replying on behalf of Mr Fielding and himself, said that they would be sorry to hear that Mr Fielding had not been well during the past four or five weeks, and he was sure they would like to join in wishing him a speedy recovery. Mr Fielding had rendered wonderful service to the Gloucester Club, particularly at the

end of the war, when he certainly placed the club upon a very sound footing, and even now whenever they desired his help or services they were always very readily given. Having referred to Gloucester's enthusiasm for Rugby, Mr Brookes, speaking as chairman of committee, thanked all the players for their loyal support, and extended similar thanks to the President, Mr Hudson, and his fellow members of the committee, on whose behalf he gave an assurance that they would do all they possibly could for the club during the coming season.

Mr Hudson, in his reply, was in reminiscent mood, and coming down to present times referred to the Gloucester Club as the best to be found in Rugby within a radius of 90 miles. He expressed appreciation of Dr Alcock as a really "live" President; and having paid tribute to the loyalty of the players, touched upon the bright prospects for the coming season, when, he mentioned, there would be 23 home matches.

One Change in Committee

The President announced the election of Mr Don Meadows as First Team captain, and of Mr T Stephens as captain of the United. Regarding Mr Meadows, he said that they were proud that a player born and bred in Gloucester should have reached the top of the tree of Rugby in the city, and they wished him a successful season. It was the privilege of the captain to select his vice-captain, but Mr Meadows had not yet decided who his vice would be. In the case of Mr Stephens, too, he was a really good footballer, and the honour was richly deserved. The players' representative on the committee would again be Mr I Williams.

There was a heavy poll for the election of committee. There were 14 candidates for 11 seats, and with one exception (Mr R N Loveridge) all the retiring members were re-elected, the new member being Mr J H A'Bear. For the third year in succession Mr H J Balchin headed the poll, which resulted as follows: Elected, H J Balchin 178 votes, S T Davies 152, E T James 151, F W Ayliffe 149, J F Scoon 149, S Smart 147, H H Berry 139, T Millington 135, F Abbey 130, A T Voyce 124, J H A'Bear 115; not elected R N Loveridge 114, Wally Reed 60, T Hiam 56. The President expressed thanks to Mr Loveridge for his work as member of the committee during the past season.

As the representative upon the English Rugby Union, Mr A T Voyce touched upon suggested changes in the rules of the game, and said that many of the suggestions which frequently appeared in the Press for the so-called improvement of Rugby had time and again been discussed by the ERU who would be prepared to make any alteration if they thought it to be beneficial to the game. There were no keener body of men than the members of the ERU to look after the interest of Rugby, which was on the increase in the country, 58 additional clubs having joined the ERU at the last annual meeting.

A vote of thanks to Dr Alcock for presiding concluded the meeting.