

From "The Citizen" Wednesday 15 April 1891:

GLOUCESTER FOOTBALL CLUB

ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner of the Gloucester F.C. was held on Tuesday evening at the Ram Hotel, when Mr. John Fielding presided over a large attendance of members and friends. Amongst those present were Messrs. L. H. Priday, J. Allen, A. W. Vears, H. J. Boughton, T. G. Smith, hon. sec., S. S. Starr, C. E. Brown, J. W. Goddard, A. J. Barnes, J. Mills, H. A. Dancey, E. Pickford, N. Phelps, F. Jones, J. Jennings, F. Mansfield, A. Tanner, W. C. Owen, and others, including players of both teams. Host Knibbs put on a substantial dinner, and this having received due attention and the cloths having been cleared, the Chairman gave the loyal toast, and called upon the secretary to read his report.

Mr. Smith, after commenting on the excellent performances of the past season, read a list of the matches which he had arranged for next winter. He had succeeded in making fixtures with the following clubs:- Penarth (2), Stratford-upon-Avon (2), Burton (2), London Scottish (2), Coventry (2), St Helens Recreation (Lancashire) (1), Leicester (2), Old Edwardians (2), Cardiff (2), Moseley (2), Newport (2), Exeter (2), Swansea (2), Old Merchant Taylors (1), and Dewsbury (1). That, he thought, was the finest list the club had ever had to play. He mentioned with satisfaction the fact that he had been able to get home and home [sic-away] matches with the London Scottish club, which would give the team an opportunity they had wanted for many years, viz., to play in London, where their form could be seen by the "lights" of the Rugby Union, and be trusted they would make good use of it.

The Chairman then presented county caps to the following players: A. F. Hughes, T. Bagwell, W. J. Jackson, W. H. Taylor (city and county), S. A. Ball, W. George, G. J. Witcomb, C. Williams, A. Collins, A. Cromwell, and R. C. Jenkins. H. V. Page had also earned his cap, and A. E. Healing, but neither were able to be present, and the Chairman said the latter had provided himself with one.

The next toast was that of the "Gloucester Football Club," and this was proposed by the Chairman, who said the first team held the best record of any team in England, though it did not necessarily follow that they were the best XV. in England. The club's motto summed up pretty well the position of the first team. It was "Let him who has won it bear the palm," and the team had won the palm, and now had the pleasure and honour to bear it in the shape of the best record of the season. (Applause.) He commended the "A" team for their good form, and coupled with the toast the names of the captains, Messrs. T Bagwell and A. Gorin.

Mr. Bagwell, in reply, referred to some of the achievements which exceeded the highest attainments of former years and showed the improvement that had taken place in their play. He thanked the men for the way they had stuck to him through the season, and said they could not have won the matches they had if they had not done so. There was one thing he was sorry to have to tell them, and that was that he should have to give it up. ("No, no.") He had been playing football for twelve years, and for the Gloucester Club eight years, and he thought they ought to let him off now. He had considered the matter, and he could not see his way clear to continue it any longer. Considering his increasing home ties and advancing years, he thought he should have to make way for younger players, for there were plenty younger and better than

himself. (A voice: "Younger but not better, Tommy.") It was not because he had got tired of football, for he still loved the game, and few could say as he could, that he had not missed a single match for the city for two seasons. He concluded by thanking all them for their kindness to him during his connection with the club.

The Chairman remarked that perhaps their captain would defer his decision until the time came round for electing officers for another season, and then he might be in a different frame of mind, when the season was about to commence, from the present, when it had just closed.

Mr. Gorin also briefly responded, and Mr. A. J. Barnes submitted the health of the committee and officers of the club.

Mr. T. G. Smith, in responding, made a few observations upon the game, and was not afraid to say that the passing game as at present played was overdone, to the exclusion of kicking, which would often be more advantageous to the side.

Mr. S. S. Starr also replied, remarking that several records had been established during the season. Their membership was a record, being about double that of last year; they had an income of some £200 more than in any previous season; and, unfortunately, they had made a record in the spending line. He regretted to say that they would have to draw upon their last year's balance, but it was easily to be accounted for in the remarkably trying season they had experienced, and the great expense it had naturally entailed. He mentioned the question of providing a new ground which had been talked about, and regretted that there was very little hope at present of their being able to move their quarters. He quoted the amount of receipts at a single match on Saturday last in Yorkshire, which was the final tie in the county challenge cup, as £913, and expressed the belief that if they could make people pay to see the matches they could do the same sort of thing in Gloucester. In the case to which he referred, too, the whole of that money went to the charities of the county. (Applause.)

Mr. H. J. Boughton proposed the health of the Chairman, and presented him with a large framed photograph of the team. Speaking of the selection of the international team, he said he should very much have liked to see a local representative playing for England – (hear, hear) – and he believed that they had a forward who was as good as many men who got international honours. It was Mr. Witcomb's fault, he believed, that he was not chosen to represent his country this season, for had he gone to London to play for the western Counties when he was chosen, he (Mr. Boughton) thought he would have been selected just as readily as those men who lived in London. He expressed the hope that he would keep up his form, and play in the trial matches next season, in which case he believed his international cap was in store for him. (Applause.)

The Chairman having suitably responded, Mr. C. E. Brown proposed "The Visitors," to which Mr. L. H. Priday responded, and the remaining toasts were "The Host" and "The Press." Songs, etc., added to the enjoyment of the evening, Messrs. H. O. Jones and F. Jackson discharging the duties of accompanist.

Mr. Lawrence, of Cheltenham, who has often acted as referee for the Club, wrote expressing his inability to attend, and congratulating all concerned on the fine season's work.