

From The Citizen, Friday 14th November 1924:

FOOTBALL JUBILEE

Gloucester Club's Commemoration

Speeches at the Dinner

An Interesting Gathering

In celebration of the jubilee of the Gloucester Rugby Football Club, a dinner was held at the New Inn Hotel, on Thursday evening, after the match in which the City XV had proved victorious over the side brought by Capt W S Donne (President of the English Rugby Union) to the city. The chair was taken by Dr Arnold Alcock, president of the club, and he was supported by Capt W S Donne, Sir James Bruton (ex-president), Messrs J T Brookes (vice-president), Charles E Gardener (ex-Mayor of the city), A T Voyce (captain of the Club), E S Bostock-Smith (Chairman of the Bristol Club), W A Pearce and J B Minahan (Executive Committee of the English Rugby Union), and A Hudson (secretary of the Club). The company numbered about 120, and included the two teams and reserves, the Gloucester Club officials and the Committee, representatives of the Gloucester A team, life members, ex-captains, ex-officials, international players, original members, the Football Ground Co Ltd, the Gloucester Rugby Supporters' Club, the Gloucester Referees' Society (North), the Gloucester Schools Rugby Union, the North Gloucester Rugby Combination, the County Rugby Union, the English Rugby Union, club representatives of all the Gloucestershire teams and others, the President of the Chamber of Trade (Mr G F Baker), the Deputy Chief Constable (Mr A W Hopkins), and others. The room had been very prettily decorated in the Gloucester colours (cherry and white), and each guest was provided with a hat in the colours, whilst the ball which had been used in the match was on view. Apologies were received from, amongst others, the Mayor (Mr F W Duart-Smith), and the City High Sheriff (Mr W H Madge).

At the conclusion of an excellent dinner, served by Host Berry, the Chairman gave the loyal toast was suitably honoured.

The Chairman said there were many who would have been present had it not been for the fact that they had made the supreme sacrifice. Their names were inscribed on the tablet in the Club gymnasium, and he asked those present to honour them in silence. - This was done in fitting fashion.

Proceeding, the President asked Mr Hudson to come forward to take some medals which he had had prepared to present to the officials and team of that day, and also the one which had been successful against Oxford University. (Applause.) He had the greatest pleasure in presenting the medals – which were inscribed “Gloucester Rugby Football Club, 1874-1924” – to Mr Hudson. (Applause.)

Mr Hudson, replying, thanked Dr Alcock for recognising the jubilee in so fitting a manner. He (Mr Hudson) wished to express his appreciation of the officials in past years since the inauguration of the club, and said that in consequence of their efforts they had one of the most wonderful teams in the country. (Applause.) He wished to

take that opportunity of thanking all the past officers, players and members of the Club who had helped to make Gloucester a first-class club for the past 50 years. (Hear, hear.) They had had good presidents in the past, and they had a worthy successor in Dr Alcock, who had presented them with mementoes which they would treasure all their lives. (Applause.) Mr Hudson also thanked Capt Donne for the time and trouble he had taken in bringing such a good team to the city. (Applause.)

“The English Rugby Football Union” was given by the President, who said that everyone realised what sport, especially the Rugby game, had done for the city, the country, and the Empire. (Hear, hear.) Wherever Rugby thrived they would find good fellows and sportsmen. His life had always been spent where Rugby thrived, and much of his time had been spent at Guy’s Hospital, who, formed in the 60’s, was one of the earliest clubs established. (Hear, hear.) In Gloucester during the last 50 years they had had some of the finest men who had ever played football. (Hear, hear.) Gloucester had made enormous strides during the last 50 years, and it was an extraordinary coincidence that the Gloucester RFC had done likewise. He expressed a hearty welcome to Capt Donne, and thanked him for the team he had brought to Gloucester, and said that the events recently had shown that the Gloucester Club was still alive and kicking very strongly. (Applause.)

The toast was accorded musical honours, and Capt Donne, replying, said that at times the English Rugby Union was abused, and accused of being a very old, slow moving, and conservative body. The policy of the ERU, which he heartily endorsed, was that the great game was one essentially first for the players, and secondly for the spectators. (Applause.) It was often suggested that they should tinker with the laws, but the game was quite fast enough for those for whom the Union legislated, namely, those who worked all the week and who played on Saturday afternoons. (Hear, hear.) That was what they ought to maintain, for they did not wish to see the game degenerate into a gladiatorial exhibition that necessitated the players going into strict training from Saturday to Saturday. (Hear, hear.) He heartily congratulated the Gloucester Club on having achieved its jubilee, for there was no club which had carried on its work with more success during the past 50 years than the Gloucester RFC. (Applause.) The Club had maintained a degree of excellence which had not been bettered by any club, and their record was second to none. (Hear, hear.) Captain Donne referred to the fact that the members of his fifteen travelled great distances that day to play against the City, and said the fact that they lost by a narrow margin did not matter in the least. (Hear, hear.) Proceeding, he alluded to the close rivalry and friendship between Gloucestershire and Somerset. He hoped that good spirit would always exist. He was indebted to Mr Graves Smith for the following figures with regard to the City Club:- Played 1,212 games, won 769, lost 329, drawn 114. (Applause.) He sincerely trusted that throughout this season and through many others, the good record of the Gloucester Club would continue. (Applause.)

Mr W T Pearce, in proposing the toast of “The Gloucester Football Club,” first apologised for the absence of the President of the County Union (Mr A J Gardner). Proceeding, he referred to the excellent history of the Club given by Mr W Bailey in the Jubilee book, and his work in the football edition of “The Citizen.” When the Bristol Club started, he said, they had to play up, as they had now, to the standard set by the Gloucester Club, a body which had been and was an inspiration to every club in the county. (Applause.) Mr Pearce touched briefly upon prominent players in

connection with the Club – W A Boughton and Snushall, Ball and George, Hall and Goddard, Gent and Stephens, Dix and Hall, and Dix and Millington (halves), Hubert Boughton, George Coates, Harry Taylor, Tommy Bagwell, Walter Taylor, Percy Stout, “Whacker” Smith, and Arthur Hudson (three-quarters), Berry, Hughes and Romans (full backs), and R C Jenkins, T Graves Smith, H V Page, A Cromwell, G J Witcomb, Charlie Hall, Frank Stout, Billy Johns, Holford, Smart, and the present captain Tommy Voyce (forwards). Gloucester should be immensely proud of such men, and they should be an inspiration to the young players of to-day. (Hear, hear.) There was no need for a sombre note in regard to the performances of the present team, and he could say that the County Match Committee had had extraordinary difficulties that day before they came to the conclusion to leave out two of the City’s youngest recruits. In Dr Taylor, too, the City had had a tremendous “find.” (Applause.) Mr Pearce also referred in glowing terms to the work of Mr J T Brookes and Mr A Fielding for the County Union. As Mr D Gent had so truly said in “The Citizen,” the Gloucester Club had never consisted of men of one class. (Applause.) What was needed was to preserve the town and county rivalries, and they needed Gloucester men playing for Gloucester. (Applause.) As long as the Rugby game maintained its present amateur basis, so long would they have such games as they had that day. (Applause.) The Gloucester tradition was wonderful one – they had always played a keen and vigorous game, to which players worthy of the name never had the slightest objection. (Applause.)

Mr Brookes, responding, said the Club was grateful to all the men who had helped during the past 50 years to make it what it was to-day. The reason why they had been so successful was that the men had loved the game. (Applause.) Gloucester had done so well because Rugby was born and bred in all the citizens. (Hear, hear.) They made footballers in the city and they endeavoured to see that every footballer should be a sportsman. (Hear, hear.) Perhaps the great secret for the success of the Club had been the great spirit of comradeship. Some of the best work the Club was now doing was in helping the School’s Rugby Union. (Hear, hear.) The local clubs too had rendered them every assistance. He eulogised the work of the ERU and the County Union. The city had had a glorious past and it could be relied upon to maintain the honour and integrity of the grand old game. (Applause.) He hoped they would do all that they could to preserve the splendid spirit of amateurism that existed. (Applause.)

Mr A T Voyce proposed the health of the visiting team, and said the City Club would never forget their kindness. He advocated the playing of local men in the City team and said they were one of the most self-contained clubs in the country. (Hear, hear.) Gloucester was more or less a working man’s side, and he hoped that would always continue. (Hear, hear.) He paid a tribute to the support given by the local sides. He advised players not to imagine that they knew all about the game for it was a truism that they had never finished learning. Proceeding Mr Voyce alluded to the lessons he gained from his recent tour in South Africa and in conclusion he asked referees to bear in mind the spirit in which the players took part in the game.

Dr J C R Buchanan, whose name was coupled with the toast, was accorded musical honours, and he paid a compliment to the City Club on being able to beat such a side as took the field against them that day. The visiting team had suffered under a serious handicap, for Myers had been hurt in the first ten minutes.

The health of "The Originals" was honoured on the call of Mr J B Minahan, who alluded to the excellent work of the men who founded the Club. The City had traditions, he said, which no club in England could equal, and they were built up from the earliest days. (Applause.) Without the original members there would have been no Club and no traditions to-day.

Mr E T Gardom, in replying, spoke of the excellent account given by Mr W Bailey in the jubilee book of the early days of the Club. He touched on the work of Francis Hartley in starting the game in Gloucester, and recalled the names of Bloss Lynch, Riddiford, Jewesbury, Weston, Wright, Walter Lucy, Cookson, W G Bosley, Frank Brown, W Brown, George Cook, and Sidney Lane, all early stalwarts in the Club's history. There were others, too, to whom they had reason to be thankful, and these included H J Berry, G Ward, Miller, and Castle. The Club motto in the early days had been "Palnam qui meruit ferat," or "Let the best team win" – (Applause) – and that really was still the motto of the Gloucester Club. (Hear, hear.) He hoped the Club would continue to prosper and remain one of the finest sides in the country. (Applause.)

The President welcomed Mr Dai Gent who had arrived during the course of the proceedings, and in response to calls for a speech, Mr Gent said he was exceedingly proud of the fact that he had been, at one time, a member of the Gloucester team. He delighted his audience with some reminiscences of his playing career, and alluded in sympathetic terms to the illness of his partner in the half-back position, "Jimmy" Stephens.

The toast of "The Visitors" was given by Sir James Bruton, and replied to by Mr Charles E Gardner and Mr Bostock-Smith.

Mr C A F Ridsdale gave "The Press," and mentioned that it was due to a remark by "W B" in the columns of the Football Edition of "The Citizen" which had brought about that jubilee celebration. (Applause.)

The last toast was that of the President, and the evening was brought to a close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and the National Anthem.

A musical programme was contributed to by Messrs W Wills, S Capener, and Tom Hay, Mr Charles E Shaw being the accompanist.