

The Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Co., Ltd. - Minutes Book

Contents

- a) a Certificate of Incorporation, dated 12th August 1891
- b) Notice of Change of Registered Office dated 10 July 1922
- c) a voluminous study of some 11,000 words entitled '*The Gloucester Rugby Club - A Retrospect*' collated by author(s) unknown. The manuscript is augmented by a number of related newspaper extracts (unidentified), and a copy of the joint letter by Hubert J. Boughton and A. W. Vears dated 20th July 1891 in which is outlined the aims of the Company to be set up; specifically for the securing of "...a permanent and suitable Ground for the use of the Football Club."
- d) Minutes of General Meetings dating from 5 August 1891 to 6 December 1990; including, in part, Notices calling, Directors' Reports, and Balance Sheets.

The first recorded General Meeting took place on 5 August 1891, and was held at the Rams Hotel, with "...about 75 present." Mr. A. W. Vears was voted to the Chair. At the meeting the following eight Shareholders were elected to serve as Directors:-

Messrs. A. W. Vears, L. H. Priday,¹ A. Woodward, S. Davies, G. Cummings, T. Gurney, C. H. Dancey, and A. V. Hatton.

Apart from the initial General Meeting of 5 August 1891, the Statutory Meeting of 9 December 1891, and the two Special General Meetings (14 June 1905, and 15 June 1909) the notices calling Annual General Meetings were initially numbered in sequence; dating from 12 October 1892 (the 1st), up to and including the meeting of 19 November 1943 (the 52nd). Thereafter, the method of numbering general meetings on notices calling such, ceased. A total of 44 further annual meetings are minuted, the last one recorded in these pages being that of 6 December 1990.

The information in the Minutes is, in the main, routine in nature, although the inclusion with earlier records of Notices calling [the] Meetings, Directors' Reports, and Balance Sheets have helped provide a broader perspective of the business, and a clearer picture of proceedings.

¹ Lewis Henry PRIDAY: born 1849. Birth registered JQ, Gloucester district. Died 1893. Death registered JQ, Gloucester district. He was 43 years old. Priday's death was referred to in the Minutes of the 2nd AGM, 11 October 1893, and in the 'Citizen' report of the same meeting.

Having a press presence at those earlier meetings also proved to be a bonus. Attaching newspaper cuttings in these pages have certainly added to the wider picture. Sadly this practice appears to have ceased by the early 1920s; the last newspaper cuttings to appear (in this volume) are the *Citizen* and *Echo* reports of the Annual General Meeting of 15 December 1922.

The inclusion of Notices calling the Meetings, Directors' Reports, and Balance Sheets continued for some years further; with just one or two exceptions (lost? - some are glued; others are loose) up to the AGM of 10 August 1950. Thereafter, for the next 40 years the Minutes are reduced to the basics required of such meetings; repetitive in nature and limited interest, apart from naming names. Any business that had taken place in a given year between AGMs (changes of Boardroom personnel, Auditors, Solicitors, deaths, plagues, famine, and the like) are rarely if ever mentioned.¹

Over the 100 years of meetings recorded, there had been just four Secretaries of the Company; the first, Mr. H. S. Simpson, lasting for less than two years. He recorded the Minutes of the General Meetings of 1891 and 1892, but by the time of the second AGM on October 11th 1893, Sidney S. Starr had taken over. Extract from the Minutes of that meeting reads, in part:

"Since the last General Meeting preferment (on which we congratulate him) has taken from Gloucester our esteemed and genial Secretary, Mr. H. S. Simpson, but in Mr. Sidney S. Starr the Company have secured the Services of one well qualified to succeed him."

Thereafter, Sidney S. Starr served for some 50 years in the post, from season 1892-93 up to his resignation at the AGM of 19 November 1943 (see below).

Following Starr's resignation, R. N. Loveridge assumed the role, and probably remained in post up to c.1964. The minutes don't specify who was acting as Secretary between years 1954 and 1964, although Loveridge was a presence on the Board during that time. By the time of the AGM of 10 December 1964, K. Jackson had assumed the role. Jackson is known to have served as Secretary through to December 1990 (the last AGM recorded in the volume).

¹ Extract from AGM 8 Oct. 1898 recording that *"...the directors had only held eight meeting during the year..."*

Extracts taken from the Minutes Book of General Meetings of the Gloucester Football & Athletic Ground Co., Ltd.; 1891 - 1990

Statutory meeting of Shareholders December 9 1891

I can imagine the Chairman's face when, at this momentous time in the history of GRFC, Mr. Vears called for questions from the floor...

"The Chairman having invited any shareholder present to ask any questions relating to the Company's business, Mr. Pickford enquired if any steps were being taken to stop the gap at the bottom of the fence in Deans Walk..."

The record states "...a satisfactory assurance in the affirmative was given."

AGM 11 October 1895. 4th Annual Report.

Extract taken from the Directors' Report;

"... the level area of the Field has been appreciably increased since last year, and a further development in this direction is contemplated by the Directors."

IAGM 9 October 1896. 5th Annual Report.

Extract from the Directors' Report;

"The Directors would call attention to the fact that the earnings of the Company have been very seriously curtailed during the past year, owing to the regrettable epidemic through which the City has passed. Several valuable engagements of the Ground previously entered into had to be cancelled, and several contemplated events had to be abandoned."

AGM 11 October 1901. 10th Annual Report.

Citizen press report of the above meeting quotes a reference to the change of venue for Annual General Meetings from Oddfellows' Hall to the New Inn Hotel;

"On the item of £2 for office rent, Mr. Boughton asked why they were meeting at the New Inn Hotel, and the Chairman explained that last year they only had three or four meetings at the Oddfellows' Hall, as most of their meetings were held on the football ground, and the charge for £2 worked out at a cost of 13s. or 14s. a time. Mr. Berry had offered them the use of a room free of charge, and it was proposed to remove the registered office of the Company from the Oddfellows' Hall to the Secretary's premises at 92, Northgate-street."

AGM 10 October 1902. 11th Annual Report.

A poignant reference from the Minutes reads, in part;

'The Late Mr. Hubert J. Boughton

The Chairman, Mr. C. H. Dancey, Mr. Grant and Mr. Grimes alluded to sad loss the Company had sustained by the lamented death of our much esteemed friend and Solicitor Mr. Hubert J. Boughton. The Chairman said although the matter had been many times mentioned in public in Gloucester yet he thought that as this was the first annual general meeting since the sad event he considered it his painful duty to move that the follow[ing] resolution be entered on the minutes. This was seconded by Mr. C. H. Dancey and carried.

“That this meeting places on record in its Minutes the profound and sincere regret the loss this Company and not only this Company but many of the athletic bodies in the City and County have sustained, by the lamented death of Hubert James Boughton. His kindly genial manner and his thorough knowledge of sports generally, his ever ready assistance, made it a source of pleasure to all those with whom he came in contact.”

Probably too late now, but how about the “Boughton Bar” for a name at Kingsholm?

Reference is also made to the above in the two attached press reports covering the same meeting.

The Financial Statement presented at this same meeting includes a reference equine in nature. The account below is taken from Revenue Account of the Balance Sheet.

	£	s	d	£	s.	d.
By Balance from 1901	171	14	7			
Less Dividends paid to Aug 31 st , 1901	150	0	0			
Less Amt. C/F to Dep. Acc.	<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>7</u>			
	171	14	7			
Sundry Rents, Football, Athletic Training, Circus, Flower Show, Advertising Stations, Grazing, Drilling, Hill's, Studt's and Symonds' Fairs				403	6	0
Sale of old Horse (dead)				0	10	0
Transfer Fees				<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>
				£ 404	5	0

Later, in moving the adoption of the Directors' Report and Balance Sheet, the Chairman made further reference to the above;

"...Rates and taxes had considerably increased, they always did, somehow or other, every year, but the two Councillors on the Board said they ought to be thankful they were not higher. (Laughter). They tried to economise in every way, and there was not a penny spent in any way that could possibly be avoided. The old horse had died, and another had been bought for £4. It was worth £6, and one gentleman in the room had said it was worth £10."

Was this the start of the Stow Fair?

AGM 9th October 1903. 12th Annual Report.

Balance Sheet - Revenue Account records on the Cr. Side;

'Sundry Rents; Football, Athletic Training, Circuses, Advertising Stations, Grazing, Drilling, "Wild West," Sale of Soil, etc.'

An accompanying press clipping from an unknown newspaper (but probably the Citizen) gives an account of the meeting, quoting an appreciation by C. H. Dancey for the work of the secretary Sidney S. Starr, who *"...carried out [the] duties of Secretary to the Company, and the extra work which devolved on him owing to the visit of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show."*

Comment in similar vein appeared in another newspaper;

"...several of the directors and shareholders spoke of the excellent services rendered the company by the secretary, special reference being made to his energy in getting Buffalo Bill to "pitch his tent" at Kingsholm."

Mr. Starr was granted an honorarium of £5 for this extra workload. The meeting must have been impressed since this was later doubled to £10.

SGM 14 June 1905.

Special General Meeting called to consider the proposal to erect a Gymnasium, Training Quarters, Football Club Office, Committee Room, etc., at Kingsholm.

Extract from the minutes: Divisions as to whether Gas or new fangled Electricity?

'...The Notice convening the meeting having been read by the Secretary, the Chairman explained to the Shareholders the object for which they had been called together, viz. the consideration of a scheme to build a Gymnasium, Training Quarters, Football Club office, Committee Room, etc., on the Kingsholm Ground, the estimated cost being about £1,100.'

'Mr. H. Moffatt raised the question of lighting the buildings with Gas rather than Electric light and after a discussion on the matter it was left as a detail to be dealt with by the Directors as to which light should be used.'

The local press, in their report of the proceedings, added a little more detail...

'There was one matter, however, he (Mr. Moffatt) dissented from, and that was the proposal to have the electric light. He strongly advocated incandescent gas as an illuminant, remarking that it was far superior, very much cheaper, and very much better.'

'Mr. Robinson supported Mr. Moffatt, and said in his opinion electric light was a thing of the past. (Laughter). He gave instances where the electric light was being supplanted by the incandescent light, mentioning especially the case of the Strand improvement in London.'

At which point, Mr Jennings stepped in;

'...the scheme was a step in the right direction. With regard to the remarks made by Mr. Moffatt as to electric light v. gas, he altogether differed from him. He absolutely contradicted the statement that electric lighting cost four times as much as gas, and could prove it. He would not go as far as to say that electric light was cheaper than gas, but there were other matters to consider. He strongly deprecated the decrying of one of their municipal enterprises, and asserted that the Gloucester streets were lighted quite as well as scores of other towns.'

Mr. C. H. Dancey "...could not see how they were going to gain anything by substituting gas for electric light...'

'...Mr. Grant strongly supported the Directors' recommendation, and spoke in favour of the electric light. He gave his experience of the two lights at his house, which showed results in favour of electric light.'

AGM 11 October 1907. 16th Annual Report.

First mention of possible land sale in AGM minutes.

i) Extract from Minutes of the Meeting:

'The Chairman, in acknowledging the vote referred to the fact that the Directors were seriously considering the advisability of selling some portion of the unused parts of the Field and although' no resolution was submitted to the meeting it was expressed by all present, that as far as possible it would be to the best interest of the Company and the Football Club if by sale of the unused portion of the Field the Mortgage might be reduced thereby reducing the liability of the Company.'

ii) Extract taken from Citizen press report of the same meeting:

'Mr. Vears said it had got abroad that it was contemplated to offer a portion of the Kingsholm Ground for sale. The matter certainly had been talked over, but he should like it to be known that as far as the Football Club was concerned no portion of the ground would be sold that would in any way disturb football. The Company had power, if they so desired, to sell, and the directors would like to test the feeling of the shareholders on the matter.'

And, further on;

'Mr. Bretherton said he had given the matter great consideration, and as far as his judgment went it would be to the interest of the company to get rid of certainly a part, if not the whole of the frontage.'

AGM 12 October 1908. 17th Annual Report.

Similar to that at 10 October 1902. Abbreviated extract is taken from Revenue Account of the Balance Sheet. There are six entries on the Cr. Side;

	£	s	d	£	s.	d.
By Balance from 1907	220	2	4			
Less Dividend paid to Aug 31 st , 1907	157	10	0			
Less Amt. C/F to Dep. Acc.	<u>62</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>			
	220	2	4			
Sundry Rents, Football, Athletic Training, Advertising Stations, Grazing, Drilling, Sale of Soil, Entertainments, etc.				481	19	4
Sale of Old Horse (dead)				0	10	0
Transfer Fees				0	2	0
				<u>482</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>

Another horse was sold in 1897, for £4; presumably alive, since it doesn't specify "dead."

Extract from the Minutes of the same Meeting:

'Sale of Unused Land

In reply to Mr. W. J. Arnold the Chairman stated the Directors were still open to negotiate for sale of the unused parts and were in communication with the Local Education authority re. a site for a School.'

and from the press report of the same meeting;

'The Secretary having read the minutes of last year's annual general meeting, Mr. Arnold inquired what steps had been taken with regard to disposing of the unused portion of the Kingsholm ground. The Chairman, in reply, stated that the Directors had the matter still in hand. There was every probability that a new elementary school would have to be built in the district, and the Directors had been in communication with the Education Authority with a view to disposing of a portion of the site for the proposed school.'

AGM 12 October 1911. 20th Annual Report.

Extract taken from the Citizen report of the above meeting;

'...In proposing the adoption of the report and balance sheet (particulars of which have already appeared in the "Citizen") the Chairman said there was nothing abnormal this year in the working of the Company or the figures to comment upon. The Directors wished they could procure more remunerative sources of income during the summer months, but circuses, wild beast exhibitions, and Barton Fair had all left them and unfortunately they had not yet got a cinematograph show on the ground.'

AGM 10 October 1913. 22nd Annual Report.

Extract taken from Director's Report.

"...The Directors report the sale of a portion of the land to the amount of £144 12s., that sum being paid off the mortgage."

In the Balance Sheet of the same report, the relevant entry in the Capital Account reads, under the sub-heading Mortgage:

'...Less amount paid off August 31st, being purchase money received for land sold to Mrs. Hardacre..... £144 12s. 0d.'

AGM 5 March 1918. 26th Annual Report.

Extract from the Directors' Report (a bit brief, I would have thought, given the gushing eulogies of certain of his earlier, and later deceased boardroom colleagues. This was 'The Man!').

'... The Directors regret to report that since the last Annual General Meeting the Company has lost, by death, Mr. A. W. Vears, Chairman from the commencement of the Company, whose assistance was always readily given in the management of its affairs.'

just a couple of lines from the press report of the same meeting;

'...Mr. Lovesy feelingly alluded to the death of Mr. A. W. Vears, who for 25 years, as chairman, did all in his power in the interest of the Company and sports generally.'

... and no mention at all in the Minutes themselves! For comparison, see the tribute to Herbert J. Berry, AGM December 15th 1922.

AGM 13 December 1921. 30th Annual Report.

Probable first mention of the term 'Rugby Football' in these minutes. Previously referred to as, e.g. '...the Football Club'; 'The Gloucester Football Club.'

The following extract is taken from an undated newspaper report (possibly the Gloucester Citizen; possibly of December 14th 1921) of the proceedings:-

"...Mr. William Dancey, in proposing a vote of thanks to the directors, congratulated them upon the result of their efforts. He was sure the residents of Gloucester read with great interest and pride the appreciative accounts written in the London papers of the play of the Gloucester Rugby Football Team."

AGM 15 December 1922. 31st Annual Report.

Extract taken from Director's Report.

"...A small angular piece of land at the north-east corner of the Ground has been sold, with the consent of the Mortgagees, to the Vicar of St. Aldate's who owns the house adjoining, and it is intended to pay nearly all the purchase money to the holders of the Mortgage in part redemption. The transactions in connection with this are not yet quite complete, but full particulars will appear in next year's Balance Sheet." [My underlines]

But were they? Nope.

Extract taken from a 'Citizen' press report of the same meeting. Sidney S. continues to satisfy the Board; and there is a snippet on H. J. Berry and Son (H. H.).

"Mr. Clutterbuck, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Directors, referred to the splendid work which Mr. Starr had done for the promotion of Rugby football in Gloucester, and the share he had taken in the satisfactory conduct of the Company. He wished also to endorse the remarks made by Mr. Brookes in reference to the late Mr. Berry. He remembered the time when Mr. Berry played for Gloucester in the full-back position, and did not think they had ever had a better or more sporting player. He also was glad that Mr. H. H. Berry had become one of the Directors. He thought the Ground Company were to be congratulated upon having provided one of the best Rugby grounds in the country; but he hoped the time was not far

distant when it would be possible for the ground to be made to accommodate 10,000 people even on a wet day.”

And, further on...

“...In returning thanks on behalf of the Directors, Mr. Brookes touched upon the question of the shares of the Company and the desire of the Football Club to take over the whole of them. The Committee of the Club had made an application to the shareholders to allow them to acquire the shares, and he felt there would be no difficulty placed in the way of their doing so. At the same time, the Club fully recognised the splendid work the Ground Company had done in the past and the valuable aid they had given to Rugby football in the city.”

NB. The General Meeting of 15 December 1922 was the last record in the Minutes Book to be accompanied by press reports of same.

Extract from the Minutes

“Football Club’s Shares

Mr. Brookes mentioned that the Football Club held now an increased number of shares in the Company, and stated the Committee of the Club had made an application to all Shareholders to allow them to acquire more and acknowledged the excellent services rendered in the matter by the Company Secretary.”

AGM - 3 December 1923. 32nd Annual Report. (Refers to above)

Extract taken from Director’s Report.

*“...The sale of the small angular piece of land at the north-east corner of the Ground has been completed, and £200 paid off the Mortgage, as shown in the Balance Sheet.”*¹

Note also that on Page One of the Notice calling the AGM, the Deputy Chairman, J. T._Brookes, temporarily became T. J._Brookes. Either an error at the printers, or originators’ typing mistake. Reverts to J. T. in time for the next AGM. Have copied as printed into these notes. Let’s see if anyone notices.

¹ Whether the sale of the plot of land realised £200 or some other figure is not known. Although the Director’s Report at the General Meeting of Shareholders held on 3rd December 1923 refers to a sum of £200 (ext. above), there doesn’t appear to be any further mention in either of the AGM reports of 1922 nor 1923 of how much was actually realised through the sale. It may well have been £200 but it doesn’t say so. The only reference to this transaction can be found in the Capital Account in the 1923 Balance Sheet. It reads, under ‘Mortgage’; “*Less Amount repaid, March 29th, 1923..... £200 0s. 0d.*”. Nor is there any mention in the General Meeting Minutes of the size of the plot sold, or its location.

AGM 14 December 1925. 34th Annual Report.

There appears to be no mention in the proceedings (neither the Director's Report nor in the Minutes) of the Election of Director(s), as there had been at every AGM since inception; although the Director's Report and the Minutes do refer to the re-election of the Auditor, Mr. J. E. Dutton. Messrs. Fielding (Chair), Brookes (Dep.-Chair), Ayliffe, Berry (H. H.), Harry Dancey, Arthur Hudson and Walter Warner would remain in situ until December 1927, although the minutes do declare H. H. Berry having retired automatically, and was re-elected. When Harry A. Dancey 'retired' during the 1926-27 f/year, it seems the Board of Directors simply reduced its number to six. By 1928 (AGM) the Board had apparently reduced its numbers even further; five names appearing on the Notice calling the Meeting (yet no mention in the AGM minutes).

AGM 13 December 1926. 35th Annual Report.

Revenue Account. Were there no Rates that year? No Groundsman's wages?

AGM 12 December 1927. 36th Annual Report.

Number of Directors reduced from seven to six.

Extract from Directors' Report:-

"... One of the Directors, Mr. Harry A. Dancey - his term having expired - automatically retires. He does not offer himself for re-election, therefore, in accordance with the Articles of Association, a resolution will be submitted to the effect that the number of Directors be reduced to six."

AGM 23 December 1929. 38th Annual Report.

Extract from the Directors' Report, recording the death of W. G. Ayliffe;

"... Since the last Annual General Meeting of Shareholders the Directors regret having to record the death of Mr. W. G. Ayliffe, who was an original Shareholder, and for many years a Director. He was a most useful member of the Board, very regular in his attendance at all meetings of the Company until failing health prevented him."

AGM 5 January 1931. 39th Annual Report.

The first AGM to be held at 19 St. John's Lane, Gloucester; the Company's then registered office. See notes on AGM 18 Nov. 1943, below.

Extract from the Directors' Report of above Meeting;

"...Since the last Annual General Meeting of Shareholders Mr. F. W. Ayliffe has been elected a Director to fill the vacancy on the Board caused by the death of his father, Mr. W. G. Ayliffe."

AGM 30 December 1936. 45th Annual Report.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the following was recorded in the Minutes Book:

"Memo.

£1,300 Gloster [sic] Conservative Benefit Society Mortgage.

At the close of the meeting Mr. J. T. Brookes with Mr. Arthur Hudson instructed the Secretary to give provisional notice to the Secretary of the Gloster Conservative Benefit Society that the Company would pay off the Mortgage of £1300 on March 25th 1937, as on that date the Football Club would advance a further sum of £1300 on loan to the Company.

This will increase the loan from the Club from £2000 to £3300 on which the Club will accept 4½% interest as from December 25th, 1936. "

AGM 31 December 1937. 46th Annual Report.

The announcement below was recorded in the Director's Report:

"We regret the death of Mr. J. E. Dutton, who has for 34 years audited the Accounts, and rendered valuable service to the Company. "

Mr. Dutton's successor was R. N. Loveridge.

AGM 14 November 1939. 48th Annual Report.

The announcement below was recorded in the Director's Report:

"The Revenue Account, including the balance from last year of £52 2s. 2d., shows a disposal balance of £118 0s. 7d. The Directors however - as in 1914 - deem it wise to recommend that no dividend be paid, but carry the amount forward to meet any contingencies which may arise in consequence of the War.

And, further on;

The Directors sincerely regret to record the death of Mr. John T. Brookes, which occurred on January 17th last. For eighteen years he represented the Football Club on the Board, and his help and sound advice was greatly appreciated by all who had the pleasure of working with him.

To fill the vacancy the Football Club nominated Dr. Arnold Alcock and he has been duly elected. "

Note that the times of meeting(s) moved from the evening to day-time (12 noon) - Blackout.

AGM 28 November 1940. 49th Annual Report.

The statement below was recorded in the Directors' Report:

"In September, 1939, the Football Ground was commandeered by the Local Authority for Civil Defence purposes. The Football Club have paid no rent for Season 1939-40."

AGM 18 November 1943. 52nd Annual Report.

This AGM appears to have been something of a watershed for the Ground Company. The first inkling appears in the Calling Notice where the meeting is scheduled to take place at "The Secretary's Office, 19 St. John's Lane, Gloucester." For 22 years, since the AGM of 1930, the meetings had been held at the same address, but previously recorded as "the Company's Office, 19 St. John's Lane, Gloucester." (Prior to that, General Meetings had taken place - free of charge, courtesy of the landlord - at the New Inn Hotel, Northgate Street). The reason becomes clear when reading the Minutes of the Meeting, extracts of which state:

"Before dealing with the business of the Meeting, the Chairman feelingly alluded to [the] very sad time their Secretary had recently experienced through the death of his wife (Mrs. Starr) and his own indisposition. Mr. Starr thanked the Chairman for his kind remarks and gave notice that he wished to thereby tender his resignation, to take effect as soon as a new Secretary could be appointed.

Chairman's Reply

Dr. Alcock said he very much regretted to hear of Mr. Starr's decision to retire and he thanked him for the great services he had rendered to the Company for so many years. Mr. Hudson in associating himself to Dr. Alcock's remarks, said he realized the great wrench it must have been to Mr. Starr who was one of the promoters of the Company in 1891, and he (Mr. Hudson) personally knew the immense amount of work he had done over so many years."

The end of an era.

Further extracts recorded in the Directors' Report of the same meeting;

"Since the last Annual Meeting we have to record the lamented death of Mr. Francis W. Ayliffe, who has rendered great service to the Gloucester City and County Football Clubs, and, like his late father, Mr. W. G. Ayliffe, was a valued Director of this Company for some years."

And, further down,

"...Dr. Alcock will also nominate Mr. A. T. Voyce to fill the vacancy on the Board caused by the death of Mr. Francis W. Ayliffe. Mr. Arthur Hudson will second the nomination."

A couple of newspaper extracts, one of them dated February 16th 1944 and probably from the Citizen, the other unsourced and undated, are affixed to the above Minutes:

GLOUCESTER DAY BY DAY

Views and Gossip for the Tea Table

One of the main reasons for the severance of the Gloucester R.F.C.'s connection with the Spa as its playing ground is recalled by the resignation of Mr. Sidney S. Starr from the secretaryship of the Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Co. Ltd.

The club had a fixture with Swansea in 1891 and Gloucester were most keen to defeat the Welshmen.

About Christmas-time the ground was frost bound and it looked as if the match would not be played.

The enterprising footballers decided on the drastic method of using salt to thaw the ground, and about 80 tons were strewn over the Spa.

The match was played, but the ground was ruined for both football and cricket.

The description at the time was that instead of pasture land it looked like newly ploughed arable.

So the Football Club were given notice to quit the Spa, and the Cricket Club set about re-making their pitch by having 1,600 square yards dug up and re-planted.

The Football Club enthusiasts acted quickly and by the next season, 1891-92, had floated the company, bought Kingsholm, and started playing there on October 10, 1891.

FOOTBALL GROUND COMPANY CHANGES

After 51 years in the position, Mr. Sidney S. Starr has resigned as secretary of the Gloucester Athletic Ground Co. Ltd.

He is succeeded by Mr. R. N. Loveridge.

Mr. A. F. Fielding has resigned the chairmanship, a position he held since 1923, and Dr. A. Alcock is the new chairman.

Mr. Starr, who was treasurer of the Gloucester Rugby Football Club in the days when they played on the Spa, became secretary of the Ground Company about a year after it was floated. The Company was formed to purchase the Castle Grim Estate which is now known as the Kingsholm Football Ground. This was done in order that the Club should be able to use a ground over which football enthusiasts had control.

AGM 31 December 1947.

Venue for AGMs relocated to 1, Barton Street, Gloucester. The previous two general meetings had been held at 26 Clarence Street, Gloucester.

Copies of the Directors' Report and of the Accounts for this AGM not held as part of the documentation, and therefore have not been included in these notes.

AGM 3 December 1959.

Extract from the Minutes:

"...Dr. Alcock proposed that the Rev. H. M. Hughes be elected an additional Director of the Company and pointed out that he is the Chairman of the Gloucester R.F.C. Mr. Kingscott seconded the proposition and it was resolved that the Rev. H. M. Hughes be and he is elected a Director of the Company."

AGM 15 December 1960.

"...Hearty congratulations were extended to Mr. A. T. Voyce on his election as President of the Rugby Union. The Chairman wished him a very happy and successful year of office."

AGM 5 December 1963.

Changes on the Board of Directors.

Extract from the Minutes:

“Mr. Loveridge regretted that he was unable to continue in office as he was leaving the district. The Chairman thanked him for his past services to the Company and accepted his resignation with regret.

On the proposition of the Chairman, seconded by the Rev. Hughes, it was resolved that Mr. N. H. B. Duncalfe and Mr. A. G. Hudson be appointed additional members of the Board.”

AGM 10 December 1964.

Re-location of the Company's Registered Office; from 10 Parliament Street, to 59 Brunswick Road, Gloucester. Presumably on the change of Secretaryship.

AGM 11 December 1969.

Extracts from the Minutes:-

“The Meeting noted with regret the death of Mr. H. G. Kingscott since the last Annual General Meeting.”

and, further down;

“The retiring Directors, Mr. Arthur Hudson, who has reached the age of 86, and Mr. A. T. Voyce, who has reached the age of 72, offered themselves for re-election. Both Directors were re-elected individually on the propositions of the Rev. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Dawe.”