

The Thirties

1930-With the fall out still being felt from the general strike of 1926 the cricket club was not exempt from the financial difficulties being experienced across Wales. The 1930 season got off to a bad start following the death in October 1929 of Mr W Lloyd Thomas Aged 83 years of Tredilion who had been President of the club since 1907. This necessitated a change of President for the start of the thirties, with J.R.Jacob taking over, Mr AP Jones continued as both Secretary and Treasurer, Col W.R.Lewis took over the first X1 captaincy from Mr CH Tait, ET Bowen took over as 2nd X1 captain from C.Dunkley and END Williams was re-elected captain of the Thursday X1. The season was described as one where there was noticeable friction within the first team. Generally the standard of cricket declining and morale was low and the first X1 only won four matches all season. The 1st X1 Played eighteen (18) matches winning only four(4) Losing seven (7) and Drawing seven (7)

1931-Following the loss last year of WL Thomas the club were saddened again with the loss of Col. W.D. Steel, a long standing supporter and Mr W.Williams. The financial and economic situation came to a head in 1931 when the AGM was held with just a small number in attendance, they were informed by the treasurer of the disastrous state of the club's finances with debts of £150. This he said was a problem that had been gradually getting worse since 1925. AP Jones indicated that he did not wish to stand for re-election. They decided to adjourn the AGM without appointing any of the officers and re-convene another meeting with hopefully a larger attendance where it could be decided whether or not to disband the club. At the re convened meeting six days later it was unanimously decided to continue, in no small part due to an impassioned plea from JR Jacob. The three captains were re-elected, as was the President for which 1931 was his first full year. AP Jones having resigned the club required both a Secretary and treasurer C.O.Marsh and W.R Lewis respectively filled those posts. 1931 saw poor cricket and poor cricketing weather with 15 games abandoned. The first X1 won just seven games, the second X1 won six, while the Thursday X1 managed to win ten of their fixtures. ET Bowen the 2nd X1 captain had a good season taking 33 wickets and scoring 242 runs.

1932- Two Patrons were elected, Lord Treowen and Sir Leolin Forestier-Walker MP, No change for President, Treasurer, first X1 Capt and thursday X1 captain, but RG Price took over the 2nd team captaincy and Mr G. Munachen joined CO Marsh as joint secretary. Mr Alfred Jackson offered a bat and ball for the best averages in the 1st X1, Mr RG Price a bat
Compiled by Paul DW Sussex-Club Archivist

for the 2nd X1 and Mr Max Beveridge a bat for the Thursday X1. The best thing apart from the results was the weather this season losing only 8 of 61 games arranged to rain and most of them in the early part of the season. At the closure of the first quarter of the season both the first and second eleven's had not suffered defeat. By the end of the season the 1st X1 had lost five games. Ivor Cook fast left arm bowler topped both the batting and bowling for the Thursday X1 as well as being the leading wicket taker in the 1st X1. There were plenty of fifties scored but no centuries. The bat winners were First X1 WR Lewis, Thursday X1-Ivor Cook and the 2nd X1 – Ewart Wesley, who took 59 wickets and was second in the batting averages. Each of these players finished the season with excellent averages. Wesley will leave the club as the season ends to take a course at Carmarthen Training College.

1933- In February the club lost another of its stalwarts from years gone by, with the death of Mr Walter Phillips aged 70 years. Walter was an ex Captain of Tredegar, he played for Monmouthshire for 3 or 4 years. He had always taken a keen interest in Abergavenny CC, was a member of the Committee for a number of years and rendered excellent service Superintending the ground. At the AGM three Patrons were elected, Vicount Combermere, Lord Tredegar and Sir Leolin Forestier-Walker to these three Major J.R.Jacob and Mr J.Paton were added. The President remained in post as did treasurer and first X1 captain, E.Bowen was elected captain of the 2nd X1 and Frank Lewis thursday X1 captain. Ivor Cook (pictured below) took 105 wickets in the 1933 Season 55 on Saturdays and 50 on Thursdays. He also topped the Thursday X1 Batting averages. This season saw the first move in a financial re-shuffle which took some years to complete. The club at this time was actually a tenant using grounds possessed by certain of its members. It now acquired a one eighth in the ownership of the ground

The First X1 played 16, Won 7, Lost 3, Drew 6. Col.WR Lewis topped the Batting Averages scoring 232 runs at 38.66. Ivor Cook topped the bowling averages with 55 wickets at 5.83.

The Second X1 played 17, Won8, Lost 5 and Drew 4. AL Pragnall topped the batting averages with 325 runs at 27.08. WH Robinson topped the bowling averages with 36 wickets at 7.61.

The Thursday X1 Played 16, Won 10. Drew 5 and Lost 1. Ivor Cook topped the batting averages with 255 runs at 36.42. AL Pragnall topped the bowling averages with 17 wickets at 7.41. Ivor Cook took 50 wickets at an average of 10.54

Compiled by Paul DW Sussex-Club Archivist

Two players who did well and would contribute for years to come were AL Pragnell and Cook. CFR Price who like R.Floyd came up by steady application. R.Honeywell [Bob] was to join Cyril in getting runs and taking wickets. Neville Lewis Umpired for the Season and Mr Nash acted as Scorer.

1934- Centenary Year President- JR Jacob Hon Secretary- GR Munachen/WR Lewis Hon Treasurer- WR Lewis Captain 1st X1- WR Lewis Vice Captain 1st X1- H.Sharpe 2nd X1 Captain- Mr CFR Price 2nd X1 Vice Capt- ET Bowen Thursday Capt-GR Munachen Thursday Vice Captain- F.Lewis. WR Lewis took over as Secretary when Mr G.R.Munachen left the town.

At an anniversary dinner held in the Greyhound Hotel, J.R. Jacob was presented with a silver salver to commemorate his 50 years service to the club. He guest speaker was Mr F.A.Badham, of Cheltenham, who wrote 'Fifty years of cricket in Abergavenny' 1892-1922. WR Lewis who served as Captain, Secretary and Treasurer, reported that the record of the first X1 was entirely due to the support the players had given him. They played 22 matches winning 11 and drawing 11, he didn't think any other team could have gone through the season and put three teams in the field with just 29 players. The 2nd X 1 only lost two (2) matches and those only narrowly by (1) and (9) runs respectively. The Thursday X1 lost only one (1) match all season. So in the whole centenary year only three (3) matches had been lost by the Club. Col WR Lewis topped the batting averages with an average of 56-8, although leading run scorer with 554 runs was W.Robinson. Ivor Cook was again the leading wicket taker with 54 wickets for the 1st X1. A.L.Pragnell topped the 2nd X1 batting and bowling averages. Ivor Cook took 40 wickets for the Thursday X1 as well as topping the batting averages. Tom Adams also had a good all round season for the Thursday X1. The club were indebted to Mr R.Nash and Mr F.Didcote for scoring and umpiring respectively.

1935- In 1935 just after the start of the season the Club suffered a severe blow with the death of Col.WR Lewis aged 44 years. Born in 1891. He died at home in Llangattock Park. When he died, it was the pre penicillin days and he fell victim to pneumonia. Not only had he been responsible for the Club's success in cricket, but he had also been responsible for much of the secretarial work for fixtures and Treasurer looking after the finances of the Club. He took over the Captaincy in 1927 and for the last few years he had also been Treasurer and more recently Secretary, thus holding three crucial roles within the club. All of which needed to be filled following his sad passing. Fortunately for the club WR Lewis had once again

Compiled by Paul DW Sussex-Club Archivist

organised a really substantial fixture list. With fixtures home and away from May 4th until September 14th, including Newport, Lydney, Leominster, Hereford as well as the staples, Usk, Panteg, Brecon and Monmouth. Harold Sharpe carried on the captaincy for the remainder of the season. They say every cloud has a silver lining and during such dark days for the club following the untimely death of WR Lewis, the 'silver lining' towards the end of the season came in the person of Guy N.O'Daly, a 27 year old Englishman right handed bat and right arm medium pace bowler. His impact was immediate signalling his ability with a century [109] against Newport, he also took several wickets. It was clear that having already played for Glamorgan 2nd X1 against a Middlesex 2nd X1 that included one Denis Compton, it may be difficult for the club to hold on to him. The 1st X1 played 21 matches winning ten, losing ten and one draw.

1936- JR Jacob continued in his Capacity as President a post he has held since 1930, the three roles previously held by the late WR Lewis saw Harold Sharpe as 1st X1 captain, SRC Thomas as Secretary and A.Lucas as Treasurer. ET Bowen and AL Pragnell took over the captaincy of the 2nd and Thursday X1's respectively. This year saw two key issues that negatively affected the club, firstly the fixtures which despite the best efforts of RSM. A.B.Nix were in disarray with only 31 wholly or partly arranged for the three teams, and secondly the shortage of playing members, Ivor Cook had been tempted away and some of the older players ceased to turn out for the club. Despite this there were some good performances especially from O'Daly who scored two centuries [103*] and [107] to support him others made useful contributions. Tom Adams scored a century [103] and there were good performances from R.Honeywell, W.Robinson as well as EG Nash who gave good all round performances for the 2nd X1. Fifteen of the Sixty one fixtures were lost to the weather, the results were good with just 2 games lost by the 1st X1. The 2nd and Thursday X1's fared quite well also. The season was probably best remembered for the feat of Bernard Hill playing for the 2nd X1 against the SWB Brecon, With SWB Brecon on 21-6 with WH Robinson and AL Pragnell bowling really well, ET Bowen the captain decided that to make a game of it he would bring on Bernard Hill in his first season with the club, who was not considered as deadly, however the move backfired, as his first over was a maiden, and the first ball of his second over did not concede a run he then took the last five wickets with the last five balls of his second over, it was generally believed to be the first time locally or anywhere in south Wales that this had happened. Guy O'Daly topped batting and bowling in

1st and Thursday X1's while EG Nash and AL Pragnell topped the batting and bowling respectively in the 2nd X1.

1937- President – JR Jacob Hon Secretary- SRC Thomas, Hon Treasurer- A.Lucas Captain 1st X1- HL Kendall taking over from H.Sharpe, 2nd X1 Captain- CFR.Price replacing E.T.Bowen Thursday Captain re-elected - AL Pragnell. Owing to fortunate weather conditions only three matches were cancelled. The season turned out to be a record breaking one. The good weather was supplemented by brilliance from G.O'Daly who completed the 'Double' another feat rarely achieved which became a reality this year as he scored 1,171 runs and took 138 wickets, not surprisingly he was 'head hunted' by other clubs. Off the field the catering side of the club was unique, the Stewardess Mrs Morris provided members and visiting teams with no fewer than 1,500 teas and lunches.

The first X1 played 24 matches winning 14, Losing 4 and drawing 6. The 2nd X1 played 21 matches winning 9 and losing 12, while the Thursday X1 played 15, won 11, lost 2 and two drawn. The Cricket week with its 'broadcast' commentaries proved very popular and did more to promote and popularise the Club than anything else for many years.

1938- President – JR Jacob, Hon Secretary- SRC Thomas/GA Roberts Hon Treasurer- A.Lucas Captain 1st X1- HL Kendall 2nd X1 Captain- CFR Price Thursday Capt- AL Pragnell. Sir Ernest Tate was elected Patron.The season would be remembered for a number of things not least the weather, but despite this and the injury to O'Daly, the tea under HL Kendall performed quite well.

Glamorgan CCC arrived in June 1938 to play Abergavenny. Abergavenny 77 H.Sharpe (25) Glamorgan CCC 186-8 Guy O'Daly 5-62, on the strength of this display G.O'Daly was picked to play for Glamorgan against Cambridge University at Swansea a few days later, when after bowling 7 overs for 17 runs he dislocated his knee and remained out of action until August Week. Glamorgan Colts also visited the club and played out a draw with the cricket club. Guy O' Daly won the bat for the first X1, W.H. Robinson for the bowling in the 2nd X1 the Bats for batting and bowling were won by W.Adams and J.Kendall and in the Thursday X1 HL Kendall won the bats for both batting and bowling, but as no player can win two bats the bat for bowling went to AL Pragnell

1939- The AGM in April it was announced that J.Jonathon and J Wilcox had sadly passed away. Guy O'Daly was now fit again after his dislocation and would be re-engaged. The optimism at the outset of the season was not reflected in the days that followed. Wet weather set in and fixture after fixture was cancelled. Of the 67 fixtures that had been arranged only 43 were fulfilled. The breaking out of hostilities at the end of August, brought the season to a sudden and inglorious end. There was cricket played however with the 1st X1 played 17 won 8, drawn 6, lost 3. The 2nd X1 played 12 won 5, lost 6, drawn 1 and the Thursday X1 played 14, Won 7, lost 3, drawn 4. Mr WH Rumsey gave sterling service, his constant aid and supervision on the ground ensured the ground remained in good playing condition. Glamorgan Colts for the second year running visited Avenue Road.

The Forties

1940- Almost 10 years on from becoming President JR Jacob was still in that role as the forties decade began, he had been associated with the club since 1893. SRC Thomas was Secretary and very impressive he was in that role. HL Kendall captained the 1st X1 with CFR Price captain of the 2nd X1 and END Williams Thursday X1 Captain. The club agreed to carry on for a while with a reduced fixture list, but other more weighty matters intervened. The Committee decided to dispense with the services of a grounds man this year. The 1940 season opened in early May with a game between H.Sharpe's X1 and HL Kendall's X1. This was followed by a game against the 24th Regiment Brecon, when spectators saw Desmond Eager the 1939 Oxford Captain, make (84) runs and take (4) wickets. (His son Patrick would become a famous cricket photographer)

Scarcely had the season begun before the success of the German offensive in western Europe dashed all hopes of a cricket season of any substance. In August 1940 Abergavenny CC came to an end for 5 years (seasons) The ground was requisitioned by the army and not released until May 1946. Further sad news was the announcement of the death of one of the clubs faithful players/members WH Robinson.

1941-1946- No Club cricket in Abergavenny, sadly in August 1945 the death was announced of one of Abergavenny's all time great players, William Samson Tresawna (14 April 1880 – 21 August 1945)

1946- A meeting was held in May 1946 following the release of the ground by the Ministry of Defence, this coincided with the 50th anniversary of the club moving to their permanent ground at Avenue Road in 1896. At the meeting members stood in memory of the deceased in particular Mr Len Fraser one of the clubs most prominent players. One thing the war years did change was the acceptance of Sunday cricket, after an age long conformity with religious susceptibilities and social practice, the public was now prepared to accept and support Sunday cricket. The club approved of its inauguration at the first post war meeting in 1946 and fixtures would take place on both Saturdays and Sundays henceforth. Luckily throughout the requisitioned period the square had been preserved. The First Post War officials were- President – J.R.Jacob Chairman-L.Taylor, Joint Hon Sec-H.Roberts & S.R.C.Thomas,Treasurer- D.P.Scourfield Captain 1st X1 -Syd Stock, 2nd X1 Capt- 'Bert' Morris. Worcestershire CC visited and played the club X1 in June 1946 on a Sunday with a big crowd in attendance with no consciousness of guilt on their faces. We came across Lew
Compiled by Paul DW Sussex-Club Archivist

White this year playing for Ebbw Vale. The playing record for a shortened season for the 1st X1- Playing Record First X1- Played 19, Won 10, Drawn 2, Lost 7.

1947-All six key Officers of the Club were re-elected for the 1947 season. JR Jacob association going back to when he was a schoolboy in Llandovery prior to being appointed one of the youngest ever Captains of the club in the early 1890's. The clerk of the weather was not given a very cheerful welcome to the opening of summer sports. Nevertheless optimism and enthusiasm prevailed on the Avenue Road ground. Mead had got the cricket ground in good shape and some good sport should be seen with a strong team and excellent fixtures. Sadly this turned out to be the final season for Jacob and SRC Thomas. The club introduced a concrete wicket this was made possible by Glamorgan C.C.C. who were looking to the future and encouraging talent in south Wales. The engagement of Lew White as a Coach indicated the Club's commitment to developing future cricketers and some 25 youngsters regularly turned up for the junior practice/coaching sessions. Leading to Abergavenny running a Colts X1. An Annexe to the Pavilion in the shape of an Army Hut was put in place. Playing wise Lew White took 100 wickets in the season and Tom Adams just failed by 1 run to achieve a century when he was out for 99 against Merthyr Police Force. The Mid week eight – a –side competition saw GPO defeat Abergavenny Thursdays in the Final. Bill Kemmey the wicket keeper had an excellent season playing 28 matches, taking 52 victims 38 stumpings and 14 catches. The 1st X1 played 34 matches winning 15, drawing 6 and losing 13 and the 2nd X1 Played 13 matches, won 4 Drawn 2 and lost 7

1948- A change of President was required for the first time since 1931 as sadly John Reginald Jacob passed away. He had over 50 years connection with the Cricket Club. Successively Secretary and Captain and finally he was President of the club from the crisis period in 1931 through to the end of the war, quite remarkably although he was in his mid seventies he played for the Old Crocks against an Abergavenny X1 in 1946. He was 77 years old. The newly elected President was Jack Ruther, Chairman- L.Taylor, Captain 1st X1- Syd Stock, 2nd X1 –C.F.R. Price, Sec- Hedley Roberts and Treasurer F.O.Roch. SRC Thomas who had been Secretary since 1936 stood down but was honoured as the Clubs first ever Life member. Another first saw ladies in attendance at the AGM. With the club hosting a Minor Counties fixture between Glamorgan CCC 2nd X1 and Devon, some new seating, the levelling of the ground and improved accommodation were needed. Playing wise Syd Stock fell one wicket short of taking all ten wickets against Monmouthshire police taking 9-11. Glamorgan sent a

Compiled by Paul DW Sussex-Club Archivist

Club and Ground X1 to play the club their team included, Phil Clift, Jim Pleas, Alan Watkins and Willie Jones. The season finished with 15 wins from the 32 games played, 12 games were lost, three drawn and 2 abandoned. One of the stars of the season was youngster Eddie Sandford. One of the stalwarts of the side Harold Sadler through illness was unable to play after August. Some new members, Gwyn Williams, Shaw Jacques and Bill Barnes gave good accounts of themselves in the First X1. A feature of the season had been the fielding with Barnes, Jennings and Sandford all taking wonderful catches. Syd Stock and Lew White had really good all round batting and bowling statistics. The 2nd X1 under the captaincy of Charlie Price had an enjoyable season if a poor one from the results perspective. Winning only 3 of the 16 matches played.

1949- There was only one change in the top six key officers of the club with Raif Godfrey taking over as 2nd X1 Captain from CFR Price. Again the importance of Junior Cricket is emphasised by fixtures arranged for the Colts. The weather was kind this year and in fact water was required to be channelled from the nearby nurseries belonging to the President JK Ruther, other milestones this year-200 wickets pitched-Membership stood at 400. The Clubs matches in 1949 were watched by 40,000 people. One of the oldest and most efficient clubs in Wales There were 98 fixtures in total for 1st's, 2nd's and Colts X1. Lew White scored a century 101 not out against Builth Wells and Tommy Adams took 101 wickets. A couple of first class cricketers played at Avenue Road when JC Clay turned out for South Wales Hunt X1 and Stan Trick turned out for Neath Sphinx and a South Wales X1. H.Brain for the 2nd season running figures really highly in both the batting and bowling averages. Playing Record 1st X1-Played 42 matches, Won 17, Drawn 10, Lost 15. For the 2nd X1 Cliff Cox had a good season including claiming eight wickets against Lydney 2nd X1, and young Sandford continued to be an exciting prospect.

Index