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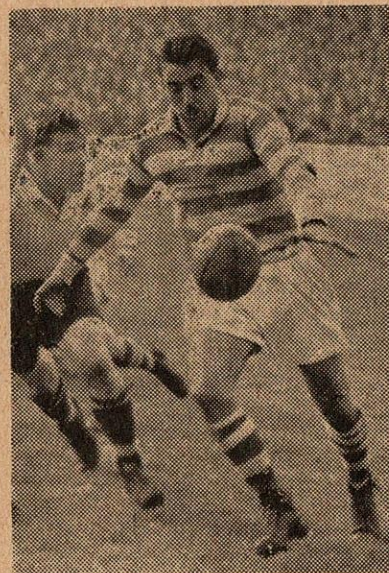
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MY LIFE



by

B. V. GOLDSWAIN

OLDHAM, WALES & OTHER NATIONALITIES

The Sunday Graphic wishes

BRYN GOLDSWAIN

every success during his
benefit year

Read

BRYN GOLDSWAIN'S

notes and comments on
Rugby League every Sunday
in the

SUNDAY
GRAPHIC

The Sunday paper with the lively sports service

EDITOR'S NOTE

I am sure that this small booklet will be welcomed by the sportsmen (and women) of Oldham, for it gives an insight into the life of a personage of the town whose name—both nationally and internationally—is an household word in the field of Rugby League.

It is not my duty to eulogize the author, that has come from abler pens than mine—but I would like to express my appreciation for the assistance the Oldham Football Club Testimonial Fund Committee has received from the O.F.C. Committee and the various Sports Writers in the compilation of the booklet.

Whilst no attempt has been made to offset the cost of production by the inclusion of advertisements, we have nevertheless included three, and to these advertisers may I say “thank you” for the financial help so readily given.

The tale is told, the job is done, it now only remains for the booklet to be read by our friends and supporters, and another milestone in the O.F.C. history will be passed, and the supporters and members will know something of the life and struggles of one of the keymen in the modern development of the O.F.C. as a “fighting machine.”

—W.D.C.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is most certainly with much pleasure that I write these words of praise for one who has done so much for our club.

Bryn Vernon Goldswain came to Oldham in 1949, at a time when our team was undergoing a very lean period.

Very quickly his enthusiasm fired the team to renewed efforts and his leadership seemed to instil confidence in every player.

It is of course not claimed that he did all this alone, for it must be admitted that there was plenty of good young material already on the club's playing register.

Yet a great measure of the improved form and football shown by the team was very largely due to his coaching, captaincy, and inspiration.

His abilities have also been recognised by higher authority, as his number of International appearances prove, and also his choice to coach at Butlin's camp last summer.

Other clubs also have appreciated his coaching abilities and quite recently his services in this respect were sought, but we prevailed upon him to remain with us, for we also can find a use for his coaching services with the younger boys now taking up the game.

Off the field, Bryn has proved a most popular member of the playing staff, retaining a "boyish" enthusiasm that has prevented the training schedule seeming irksome, and helping to allay the nervousness that precedes important matches.

That, briefly, is his record of achievement for our club and the game.

I appeal to all members, and the public of Oldham, to make this testimonial worthy of the man, and show the followers of our game that we do appreciate those who do not spare themselves to give us the best that they are capable of.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOWARD, M.B.E., J.P.



MY LIFE STORY

I was born on August 3rd, 1922, in the industrial town of Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. When I was only 4 years old the family moved to the little mining village of Abercrave, nestling in the black mountains, 18 miles from Swansea.

It was in this remote spot that I spent a very happy boyhood, playing and learning to appreciate what we believed to be the finest game in the world, Rugby Union. Little did I realise that later I would find one even better. I think there was a soccer ball somewhere in the village, but the owner was too ashamed to bring it out.

At the Grammar School, some 5 or 6 miles away, the serious teaching of the finer points of the game began, and although in the 1st year I played as a hooker, I eventually found my true position—stand-off or centre. Looking back on those 5 years at the school I realise how important good teaching helps one along in sport. The enjoyment of practice after school, and the excitement of a big match in Swansea on a Saturday morning. With the extra treat of seeing the "All Whites" play in the afternoon—whose fast open play was a feature of their rugby in the years before the War. Like every other schoolboy my ambition was to gain a Welsh Cap, now I have over twenty, but at the "other game."

As a youth I played with the village team, Abercrave, in the 2nd class league, gaining experience with every game. It certainly was an experience playing in those mining villages of West Wales, having to drop on a loose ball with the opposing forwards in full cry shouting "Trad, Trad," meaning "Feet, Feet."

Soon my rugby days were to come to a halt for a short period of time. I matriculated at school and went to London to learn accountancy with a big city firm.

The wage was very small, barely adequate to keep me going. I looked around for a game of rugby, but found the London clubs far too expensive. Rather than not play at all, I turned to soccer and played with a South London Y.M.C.A. team.

Then came the war, it altered the course of many lives. Little did I dream what it would do to mine.

I volunteered for the R.A.F. This had an immediate advantage, I could play rugby again. But in due course I became a member of a bomber crew and when on operations there was no time for rugby or football of any kind.

Then I smashed my arm and wrist in a crash in 1942. The injuries were complicated and left me with a weak wrist due to the bones not knitting properly. It seemed that rugby was out again. However, some good came out of the crash because I was married shortly afterwards to Muriel, my wife, and three weeks sick leave became my honeymoon.

Once again I turned to soccer for my sporting pleasure and while playing in the Stafford area was asked by one of Major Buckley's scouts for a trial at the Wolves. I was naturally thrilled and enjoyed the experience. I was shortly recalled to my squadron, having had my rest period, and again had to break with my sporting activities.

While on a course in Hereford I played my first game of rugby for two years. A P.T. instructor asked me to turn out for the unit team. The specialist's words ran through my head but I did not think twice about accepting, even when I heard whom we were playing—the Welsh Guards. I felt no ill effects, so you can imagine how grateful I was to that Sergeant. Later I learnt that he was Ted Bedford of Hull Kingston Rovers. He was to prove a greater friend the following year.

For a while I led a double life—soccer on Wednesday and rugby on Saturdays. I played for Bomber Command

regularly until D-Day, then back to the Squadron until the end of hostilities with Germany in 1945.

Demob. was approaching when I received a letter from Mr. Stan Adams, now a referee, but then manager of Hull Kingston Rovers. On Ted Bedford's recommendation he asked me to join the club.

I was thinking of going to college to become a teacher. I knew that colleges were crowded, and the waiting list long and grants small. So football pay would be more than useful.

I went to Hull to watch a game—I had never seen Rugby League. I turned out in the "A" team.

As well as enjoying myself I must have made an impression because I was invited to play in the 1st team the following week. I scored two tries in this game as loose forward. Some weeks later I signed as a professional.

I suppose it made me an exile in Wales with my Rugby Union friends. I was not worried unduly, because in my honest opinion I had found a better game of rugby to play.

The same season my schoolboy ambition was fulfilled, I played for Wales against France at St. Helens, Swansea. The ground where, as a schoolboy, I had watched so many sterling battles between England and Wales in Rugby Union. A few months later I was picked for my second international, again at Swansea. What a moment for me this was as I was presented with my international cap, together with another player from the same village, W. T. Davies of Huddersfield. I think all Abercrave were there to cheer us that day.

In 1948 I eventually got into college, but at Liverpool, too far to travel every week to Hull. I then got transferred from Hull to Oldham in July 1949. Oldham were having a lean time then, and a go ahead Committee were beginning to build up the club. I was their first big buy.

Gradually Oldham grew stronger, gradually we pushed our way up the table until in 1952 we narrowly missed the Top Four after a spell of twelve matches without defeat, and playing rugby of the finest quality.

Stirrup and Daley were doing great things at half-back with a continuous supply of the ball by Jack Keith, the young hooker from a Hunslet Junior Team who is destined for honours in the game. Laurie Platt was racing and diving tries in on the wing. Ganley was kicking goals galore, and the Davies—O'Grady wing was beginning to make itself felt.

In 1953 our hopes of honours were wrecked by a series of injuries. Laurie Platt and I had arm injuries. Harry Ogden broke his hand, and Keith and Stirrup had cartilage trouble. At one time we had seven players attending the hospital.

In this season I once again captained Wales against the French at Nantes—a sad moment, as it was the end of the Welsh Rugby League Team. However I then got chosen to play for the Other Nationalities this season.

Then in January 1954 I received a throat injury at Workington which threatened to end my playing and teaching career. It was the worst of many injuries received, and has affected my voice to a large extent. However, in less than two months I was back again in the team. Although by now out of the Cup we were all set for the play off at Maine Road. It was a great day for us—it was a pity we could not have brought the trophy back to Oldham so as to please the faithful supporters who had cheered us all season at home and away.

Let us hope as I write this that this year we will achieve the chance to show the people of the south what a great game Rugby League is, and how it should be played. One ambition of mine is to win Championship and Wembley medals with Oldham—so here's hoping.

LEADING OPINION

JIMMY BREEN

Manchester Evening Chronicle

Someone asked me the other day if I would class Bryn Goldswain among the leading half-dozen forwards in Rugby League history.

I answered that he did not measure quite up to that standard, but that I considered him among the most entertaining I have seen in the past quarter of a century.

Bryn has many qualities that will leave a mark on Rugby League when finally he decides to hang up his boots. He has personality, the right attitude towards the game and ability for leadership which was quickly recognised at Oldham.

Just a few games in September, 1950, following his transfer from Hull Kingston Rovers, was sufficient for the then Oldham Committee to recognise these outstanding qualities and elect him captain of the team.

But it is as a skilful handler of the ball, as a player with a flair for spotting an opening and making the break himself, or turning it to advantage for a colleague, that I will remember Bryn long after he has quit.

He brought a technique to forward play that took us a long way from the realm of the bulldozing forward who, unhappily, has come to the fore in recent seasons and in many cases dictates the run of the play.



Goldswain's skill in the second row and at loose forward, where his flair for distribution of the ball was more noticeable, reminds me of the great Wigan forwards of the immediate post-war seasons, a pack that handled like backs.

I will leave his colleagues and others to tell of the qualities that have made him popular behind the scenes, sufficient for me to pay a tribute as a Rugby League writer.

I can happily record the many fine games I have watched Goldswain play and the entertainment he has given me. He has had his "off days"—what player hasn't. But his form days have been many, and the Oldham fans in particular, and the Rugby League supporters in general, owe him a debt of gratitude.

May he continue to give us this entertainment and may he later pass on the knowledge and skill gained over the years as a player at Craven Park, Hull, and Water-sheddings, to the youngsters who follow him.

In that way Rugby League will be doubly indebted to a fine player and a great sportsman.

JOE HUMPHREYS

The Daily Mirror



Bryn Goldswain . . . that is the name I give you, Gentlemen. Raise your glasses. Toast him by all means. But, far better, rally round to support his testimonial fund.

No need for me to remind you that he is another of those fine Welshmen, who have given their talents to help make Rugby League football the game it is.

Yet, if Bryn had been a better soccer player Hull Kingston Rovers, his former club, Oldham nor the Rugby League may not have had the pleasure of seeing him play.

But Bryn just could not have had the makings of being a success at soccer. If he had, then Major Buckley, that famous discoverer of soccer stars would probably have had him rolling off the assembly line long ago.

It was while Bryn was serving with the R.A.F. that he took to playing soccer temporarily. He could not play Rugby for his station because of a broken wrist.

So to keep fit for Rugby he took to playing inside left for the station's soccer team. One of the games was against Major Buckley's boys. But this famous sporting man was not impressed.

Still it was no real disappointment to Bryn. After all, his one sporting love has been Rugby. Unluckily for him his career in the Rugby League has not brought all the honours it might.

No Wembley Cup final to recall. A League Championship medal? Near enough, but not quite. But all through his career his commanding personality, his ability to lead and his keen sense of humour have played their part in the post-war history of Oldham and the Rugby League.

Now it is up to you, gentlemen. Make this testimonial a bumper one. He deserves it. Good luck, Bryn.

MY SCRAPBOOK

Wigan can be beaten. Oldham 19, Wigan 9

Goldswain warmed up the match to boiling point. Wigan were advancing on the right to the half-way line when Goldswain, the new Oldham Captain, pounced forward to intercept a pass and streak sole down the centre. They tried, but two Wigan men failed to stop him, and he could not be caught—scoring between the posts for Barraclough to convert. The cheering and applause was long and lusty for Goldswain.

—Oldham Chronicle, September 1949.

A Watersheddings Survey

Thank you, Bryn Goldswain! Your display warmed the hearts of loyal supporters and probably drew to Watersheddings a bagful of extroevous supporters, anxious to see rugby of a similar cut. Goldswain, now captain, harnessed his team together and inspired the correct line-outs while warding off Wigan attacks. There were shades of Bob Sloman in his leadership and those responsible for his elevation must have breathed a sigh of thanksgiving for picking the right man.

—By Northern, Oldham Chronicle.

Oldham win again. Goldswain: a great rallying force

Goldswain set the crowd cheering when he made Oldham's next try. He burst through the Hunslet defence, ran 20 yards and passed to Platt, who hustled over for a try.

—Oldham Chronicle, September 1949.

Daily Graphic League Unit at Oldham v. Barrow

A 'new look' Oldham, whose performances over recent weeks suggest that the long awaited revival may soon become a reality, gave further evidence of their progress on Saturday at Watersheddings when they completely outplayed Barrow to win by 17 points to 3 points. It was not the mere fact that Oldham won—but the manner of accomplishment which was so impressive. It was team work rugby, and it paid dividends. Basis of the Oldham success was a sound pack, with plenty of strength in the front row and thrustful power behind—with loose forward, Bryn Goldswain, and prop, Harry Ogden, outstanding. I expect to see nothing better from a forward this season than the try which Goldswain scored. He broke through, ran to the full-back, kicked over, and took the ball at his feet for a try under the sticks, resisting the challenge of five Barrow players.

—David Nicholls, Daily Graphic, December 12th, 1949.

Goldswain will play for Wales

Bryn Goldswain, Oldham's latest signing, and the most powerful player on the team, has been selected for Wales against Other Nationalities in the match at Abertillery, on Saturday, October 22nd.

New spirit at Oldham

There is a new spirit in the Oldham team. Inferiority complex has been banished and in its place there is supreme confidence among the players. This was evident when they thrashed Barrow 17—3 on a snow covered ground. Captain inspired. Goldswain's try, after dribbling the ball from the half-way, was a superb effort. His example as a captain inspired the team to great efforts. There wasn't a man in the pack who did not pull his weight.

—Bob Pemberton, Sporting Chronicle, December 1949.

Oldham programme cutting, April 1950

We at Watersheddings are disappointed that we have not at least one representative making the trip, for on the form displayed at Wigan on Wednesday last, in the International match, our captain, B. V. Goldswain, was very much in the picture and completely outshone his opposite number. We at Oldham have our own opinion, as no doubt other club managements have regarding their players.

Wales will need the Goldswain touch

... however, the best open-field player in the game was Bryn Goldswain, the Rover's former loose-forward, now Oldham's captain. It was Goldswain who made the run and switched the attack to make the first Oldham try for Leyland, and all through the match he played football of the class that will be needed by Wales against France at Swansea next Saturday.

—Harry Sunderland.

R.L. Tour team surprises

In many instances it would seem that the selectors entirely ignored what they saw in the international match. To have chosen only four members of the Welsh side which put up such a magnificent show, and was so unlucky to lose, is not exactly justice. Take the case of Derek Howes of Wakefield, he played a 'blinder', and if Bryn Goldswain was not 'streets' ahead of Harry Street as a loose forward, I am no judge.

—Jim Sullivan, News of the World, April 1950.

HEADLINES FROM THE PRESS

"Warned: 'No more rugby'—He is now a star."

—Sporting Chronicle, October 27th, 1949.

"I must praise the efforts of Leyland and captain Bryn Goldswain, who played solidly throughout. It was their intelligent play that led to Oldham's first try."

—Arnold Evans, Sporting Chronicle, November 7th, 1949.

"The Welsh forwards, notably Osmond, Goldswain, and Gwyther, who had been taking a severe battering by their opponents, roused themselves to heights of fury and proceeded to hammer and harrass the hitherto sound French defence."

—Manchester Guardian, November 14th, 1949.

"He has staked Tour claim."

—Daily Mail, November 18th, 1949.

"Only Goldswain of the forwards measured up to the skirmishing standard of the Wigan set."

—Sunday Chronicle, January 8th, 1950.

"Clues and Hopper were outstanding in the storming Leeds pack, Goldswain being the only home forward to match them."

—Empire News, February 18th, 1951.

"Goldswain did best for Oldham."

—Empire News, March 18th, 1951.

"Goldswain was a clever loose-forward and Little showed much promise in the second row."

—Sunday Chronicle, March 23rd, 1952.

"In the Oldham pack Winslade, Little and Goldswain were outstanding."

—Sunday Chronicle, April 13th, 1952.

"Goldswain was a great leader, who had the satisfaction of scheming his side's second try when his fast, forceful run took him clean through the defence for Arthur Tomlinson to score near the posts." (Warrington 0, Oldham 28, at Wilderspool, October 18th, 1952).

—Sporting Chronicle, October 20th, 1952.

"Goldswain, Oldham's captain, was always a prominent raider."

—Sunday Chronicle, November 9th, 1952.

"Winslade and Goldswain showed up well in the home six."

—Empire News, December 7th, 1952

"Only Davies and Goldswain showed their true form for Oldham."

—Sunday Chronicle, February 14th, 1954.

"Goldswain and Winslade impressed in the home pack."

—Sunday Chronicle, February 14th, 1954.

"Cracknell and Goldswain were Oldham's best."

—Sunday Chronicle, October 31st, 1954.

"Good displays by Goldswain, O'Grady and Pitchford."

—Sunday Chronicle, November 21st, 1954.

"Oldham's forwards were cleverly led by Goldswain, who received strong backing from Winslade and Little."

—James Crowe, Sunday Chronicle, November 28th, 1954.

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