

AN OLD GUILDFORDIANS XV FROM THE '30's.

26/3.



H. R. Elliston, D. C. C. Walden, A. S. Lee, L. G. Farncombe, C. Farncombe, A. T. T. Street, A. R. Nicholson,
J. F. Beadle, G. C. F. Appleton, C. C. G. Rodd, H. M. G. Prior, J. R. McDonald. D. O. Appleton, C. A. Barnes.
J. Baker, W. R. Lympos.

OLD GUILDFORDIANS 1981.



Craig Jones, Allan Harding, Ian Batten, Peter Smith, Richard Bottomley, David Shaw, Colin Logan, Simon Smale,
John Allen, Neil Scott, John Wilson, Nicky Edwards, Lawrie Harris, Rob Ayling, Bob Middleton, Steve Haskell.



EA VI

**OLD GUILDFORDIANS
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB
1931-1981**

O.G.R.F.C. 1931-81

The season 1981/82 sees the 50th anniversary of Old Guildfordians' R.F.C., and the club extends its thanks to everybody, whether players or administrators, whether of today or earlier years, whether spectators, benefactors or even opponents, who has helped to make its existence possible. The last five or six seasons in particular have seen us playing as consistently well throughout the club as at any time in the last 50 years, and we look forward to a very enjoyable season and a bright future.

Although membership is open to all, the club still retains close connections with the Royal Grammar School in Guildford, and a considerable proportion of today's players are Old Boys of the school. In the early years though, teams were made up exclusively of Old Boys.

During its lifetime, the club has changed its headquarters from Wood Street, to Stoke Hill Park, to Woodbridge Road, to the present ground and pavilion at Stoke Park. More importantly, there was a time when a shortage of playing members during the war years led the club to combine with the Guildford town side, an arrangement which started informally in 1940 and ended in the season 1954/55. Today, Guildford and Godalming are our biggest local rivals.

Many of the opponents that we play today are teams that we have played for many years, with Old Surbitonians being one of the opponents of that first season. Tiffinians, Reigatians, Wandsworthians and Camberley were other very early rivals, particularly the latter, who were also founded in season 1931/32.

As with probably all clubs, to look back over the years is to find a story of ups and downs, of high hopes and disappointments, with often only a very few seasons separating one extreme from the other. What is pleasing though, is that the club's 1st XV's most recent playing record was a very creditable one of:

P 32 W 25 D 1 L 6 For 477 Agst 174

You can be assured that we will be doing our best to maintain and improve our playing standards during this season.

1980/81 certainly witnessed the highest number of victories in a season, but the 1962/63 season might well have produced more if the weather had not caused the cancellation of so many matches. For, in that season, under the captaincy of **Keith Hayes**, 20 matches were won out of 21, with 379 points for and only 54 against. Highlights were victories over Guildford and Godalming in both the 1st XV and 'A' XV fixtures, and some brilliant achievements, spearheaded by **Barry Copley**, then a master at the School, in several 7-a-side competitions. There seems little doubt, however, that the overall standard of the fixture list is higher now than it has ever been.

Today, we regularly field 5 sides and sometimes either a 6th XV and/or a Colts XV. Yet we owe so much to the people who kept the club going when there weren't so many players around. None more so, perhaps, than **C. E. Ives**, who was Honorary Secretary for many years right from the birth of the club, and **A.T.T. ('Tuggy') Street**, who put in a great deal of hard work both on and off the field. (Tuggy's services to county rugby were recognised by his being elected President of Surrey County R.F.U. in 1975/77). In the couple of years following the reforming of the club in 1953/54, there was great difficulty in running even two sides, and results were not good for a while. Yet, in the 25th year (overall) of the Club, a celebration match was arranged against Blackheath 'A' XV. A splendid game resulted in a 25-11 win for Guildfordians, and observers at the time hoped that in the future, the club would look upon that game as being 'the turn of the tide.' It was about this time that **'Digger' Brighton**, still now turning out most weekends for the 4th XV, took over as Captain.

Certainly things improved over the next 7 or 8 years, and a good team and club spirit developed, helped, in the 1958/59 season, by a return to the pre-war colours of green, white and red hoops, and, in 1962, by the first post-war Rugby Tour. The side had always prided itself on its fitness and on playing open rugby, and the high point was reached in that season of 1962/63. In 1965, a game against a Surrey Old Boys team was arranged to mark 10 years since the re-forming of the club. Before a big crowd, Guildfordians put on a very special display to win by 21 pts to 17. One of the players on the Surrey Old Boys side was in fact a genuine Old Guildfordian. This was **Jeremy Spencer**, who was capped once for England.

Broadly speaking, with the exception of a couple of seasons, there was a decline in the results over the next 12 or 13 years, with a couple of low-points around 1967-69 and around 1972-74. Nevertheless, from the start of this period, a lot of the people who have been great clubmen over the last 15-20 years began to appear, including **Keith Walker**, **Alan Blake**, **Mike Perry** and **'Willy' Walker**. Alan Blake was the outstanding player of the period, leaving for a period of several years to play for Richmond and Surrey.

But, although the results were nothing spectacular, the club began to organise a lot of social activities, particularly under the guidance of people like **Sandy McCall** (mentioned in 1966 as being possibly the slowest centre in the South of England), and **Ed Ram**, another person who worked tirelessly to improve playing facilities and playing standards. It was in the mid-sixties that the club's links with the Irish club Greystones were forged, which have led to many boisterous and highly enjoyable trips for members of both sides. Other rugby/social events were instituted, notably the 'Ash Can' kicking competition (devised by **Ken Ash**, who was Chairman for several years), and the Domestic 7-a-side Competition. There have also been several good rugby tours to various parts of Western Europe in recent years.

From the mid 1970s, the results throughout the club have become more consistently good as the club has gained strength in depth. The last 4 captains, **John Turley**, **Nicky Edwards**, **Ian Batten** and **Lawrie Harris**, have gradually worked the club to its present position of being one of the most consistent local clubs. John Turley was one of a succession of teachers from Wales who joined the club. He managed to get an old friend of his, a certain **Mervyn Davies**, to play several games for the club's lower sides before 'Merve' got it into his head that he could play at an even better standard elsewhere!

Perhaps the most gifted Old Guildfordian rugby player of recent years, but whose level of play also took him very quickly above local club level, has been **Nigel Gillingham**, who gained various representative honours, and played for England Under 23, for Loughborough Colleges in 2 UAU finals, and was in the East Midlands team which defeated the All Blacks. He now plays for Leicester, and is captain of the Combined Services.

We do like to feel that we maintain excellent relations with our neighbouring clubs, with whom we have such a keen and friendly rivalry. With petrol now so expensive, we consider ourselves fortunate to have such a number of teams of a good standard within such close reach.

And so we come to the present, and it seems likely that before too long more changes will take place. This is because the lease on the current pavilion expires in 4 years' time and it is probable that the Council will redevelop the site. In any case the club has just about outgrown the site, and new accommodation will have to be sought in the very near future. There is no doubt however that the Executive Committee, headed by Chairman **'Rocky' Allen** will be making every effort to find a satisfactory solution to the problem.

One final point worth making is that our 1st XV captain for this season, Lawrie Harris, has unfortunately had to resign the post as a result of accepting an overseas posting. We wish him and his family the very best of luck in his time abroad, and look forward to seeing him back in a couple of years' time. Meanwhile, we are pleased that Ian Batten has been able to take over, at least until Christmas.