Centenary Souvenir

WATERLOO FC

1882 1982

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British TELECOM

WATERLOO FC

1882  **1982**

An historical perspective
by

Ian Hamilton Fazey

Written and designed by Ian Hamilton Fazey, published by Waterloo FC, photoset by Lloyd Williams of Southport, and printed by C & D Printers of Liverpool L21 2PY.

About the author: Ian Hamilton Fazey was born in 1942 and educated at Aston University, where he played for the Cobras RFC. After a nine-year gap pursuing an award-winning career in journalism, he returned to the game as a player, gravitating to Waterloo's Sixth XV, of which he became captain. He retired in 1976 to become the First XV's touch judge and, apart from a break in 1977-79, has carried Waterloo's flag since. He is a former general manager of the Liverpool Daily Post & Echo, managing director of Wirral Newspapers, and deputy editor of the Liverpool Echo. Since 1980 he has been a freelance writer and broadcaster.

(2019 update) Sadly, Ian died in April 2004

IT WAS A bright, moonlit night in the autumn of 1884 that really decided Waterloo's name. The club had been formed two years before to keep together the nucleus of a highly successful Merchant Taylors' School team. Its colours were navy blue with dark red hoops and it called itself after the nearest road to its pitch, the Serpentine. It might have stayed that way but for the events of that Autumn night.

In those days not a single building stood between Blundellsands station and the West Lancashire Golf Club House, and the fields teemed with game. Colonel Blundell, who owned the land, told the Serpentine's founder, young Sidney Hall, that the new club could use a field for rugby on one condition: the posts had to be taken down as soon as any match finished in case they scared the game, an enjoinder which suggested that the gamekeeping staff were not happy about the venture.

The officers were to be responsible and thus it fell to Sidney Hall, who was the honorary secretary, his brother Harry, the captain, and the treasurer, George Abercrombie, to get the pitch ready each week and then to ensure that it was left the way Colonel Blundell and his gamekeepers wanted it afterwards.

Unfortunately, it was not as simple as erecting goalposts and marking

Sidney Hall, Waterloo's founder. This photograph was taken in 1923.

out the field of play. The land was thick with rabbits. As Sidney Hall remarked later, the great pity was that myxomatosis did not exist in those distant days, for rabbits meant rabbit holes and Sidney's most time-consuming task - he called it "hard labour" - was to go to the Serpentine early every Saturday and fill them all in.

So when he saw the bright full moon in a cloudless sky that fateful Friday night, he seized the chance to get ahead with the more laborious of his secretarial duties. George Abercrombie went with him and the two friends, armed with spades, took Sidney's dog along for company. Little did they think that their actions would be misinterpreted.

Colonel Blundell's gamekeeper just did not believe their story when he stole up on them and accused them of poaching. The two young men protested but got nowhere. The gamekeeper went off to tell the Colonel that he had caught the rugby club secretary and treasurer red-handed with traps and a coursing dog. Sidney Hall was furious but powerless. "My dog was a mastiff," he protested later. Understandably, however, Colonel Blundell believed his gamekeeper. So, wrote Sidney Hall 71years later: His lies meant that we were given notice to quit within three days."

Fortunately, the Hall brothers' father was a close friend of Manley Foster, who owned a field off Manley Road, about a mile-and-a-half to the south on the seaward side of the railway and across the line from what is now Victoria Park. He agreed to let the new club use the ground free of rent. It was now inappropriate for the club to call itself after the Serpentine, so it took the name of the district into which it had been forced by false witness under a bright, full moon - Waterloo. And so it remains today, even though, with that touch of irony that so often spices our history books, Waterloo's home since the 1920s has been in Blundellsands, only a full back's punt away from where the club began as the Serpentine all those many years ago.

Sidney Hall told his story in a letter written in 1955, less than three months before his death. Ken Wilson, then president, had asked him for reminiscences of the old days as the club looked two years ahead to its 75th

anniversary. The letter provides the most important information in existence about Waterloo's early history and clears up several mysteries.

The first is the very date of the club's foundation. In April 1932, as Waterloo planned its half-century celebrations, the Liverpool Post and Mercury reported "some divergence of opinion" as to whether 1882 or 1883 was the correct year. In fact, the decision to form the club was taken in 1882-83, a season when the Merchant Taylors' team had triumphed unbeaten.
According to Sidney Hall: "George Abercrombie, my brother Harry and self considered it a pity that they should all vanish and we organised the formation of a new club. We secured about 25 old boys and started playing in 1883-84." In that season, incidentally, Harry Hall was still at school, doubling as captain of the Serpentine and the Merchant Taylors' team. So, foundation was in 1882-83and with fixtures and the ground taking time to arrange, actual games began in the following season after most of the Merchant Taylors' boys had left school.

Unfortunately Sidney Hall's letter does not confirm a popular story about Waterloo's foundation, one that has been reported so often as to have become regarded as the truth. The story is that one of the headmasters forbade the playing of a match between Merchant Taylors' and Waterloo High School to decide which team was better. Sidney Hall, then captain of his school team, is said to have formed an embryonic Waterloo and gone ahead with the game. The story appears to have been first reported by W.B. Croxford, the eminent rugby writer of the 1940s and 50s. Significantly, it was described by other journalists in the 1960s only as Croxford's "theory" about Waterloo's foundation, which suggests that they had some difficulty in confirming it. Croxford, who was born when Waterloo was in its infancy, must have picked it up from somewhere, but it is, on balance, unlikely that Sidney Hall himself would have forgotten such a causative set of
circumstances. It is also unlikely that such a story would have been missed out of the newspaper reports of the club's golden jubilee in 1932-33, when so many of Sidney Hall's contemporaries were also alive. It appears, in fact, decades later in Waterloo's history, which suggests there might have been some "embroidery" in the oral tradition of the club.

The other mystery is that there was a "Waterloo" team before 1882, whose name appears on the odd ancient fixture card of other old established clubs. This was most probably the Waterloo Football Club which was run for part of the 1860s and 70s by the old boys and friends of Cambridge House School, Seaforth. Its colours were white with narrow light blue hoops and the club played 20-a-side football. That particular Waterloo appears not to have survived and certainly when the Serpentine took its new name after moving to Manley Road in 1884, there was no other Waterloo in being. Sidney Hall's Serpentine-Waterloo, then, was the true ancestor of today's club. Its existence has been continuous from its conception in 1882-83 and it is its story that is Waterloo's.

JUST AS the move to Manley Road prompted a change of name, so the club's next change of venue was followed by a change of colours. It was in the 1892-93 season that Waterloo started playing at the Old Crosby Cricket Club ground near Blundellsands Station and shortly afterwards it changed its colours to the present green, red and white broad hoops. The reason why is lost in the obscurity of times past, unlike the reason why a new ground had to be found at all. Again, there was no small element of trauma involved, with the protestations of worthy people again being disbelieved.

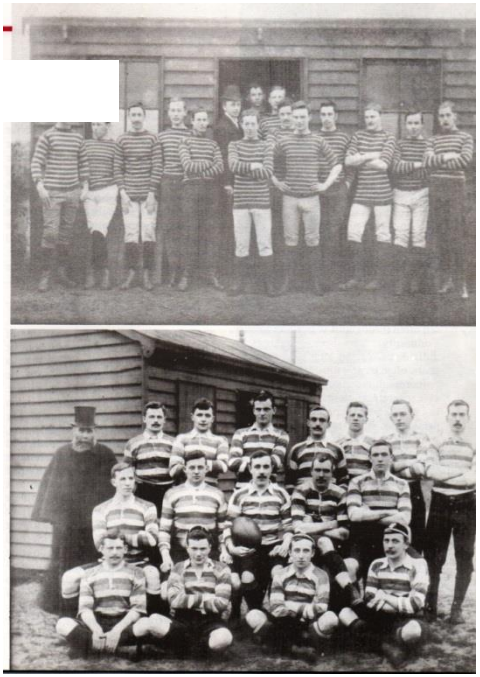
Waterloo paid no rent for the Manley Road ground and took no gate. The owner, Manley Foster, was therefore astonished when the Inland Revenue assessed him for income from the club's use of his land. Sidney Hall again: "They sent Foster a demand note. It wasn't a big amount but Foster was so indignant that his denial of any rent was rejected, he turned us off."

The club continued at the cricket ground for six seasons until Foster's differences with the Inland Revenue were resolved. This enabled a return to Manley Road in 1898-99, where Waterloo stayed for another eight years. By then, with its silver jubilee approaching and its status as a club growing, it needed to look for opportunities to grow and break through into county standards of both play and playing surface. That opportunity came in 1906-07, of which more in a moment.

Up till then, however, the story, according to Sidney Hall, was one of ups and downs, with the formation of the Rugby League in 1895 appearing to have provided a bit of both. The division that split the rugby world and which remains to this day left Waterloo unhesitatingly in the Union camp but with its fixtures list in tatters. The strength and attitudes within the club at that time must have helped it in surviving at all. Perhaps the continuing presence of many of its founders reminded everyone that what Sidney Hall called "good old rugby" was what it had been formed to play. The effect of the schism was certainly felt much more keenly elsewhere in the area, for two other well-known local clubs, Bootle Wasps and Walton, closed down altogether as players opted for one code or the other. It was, in fact, to Waterloo's gain for the union adherents, in what at the time must have been the sporting equivalent of civil war, joined Waterloo.

Waterloo's stability in the period was undoubtedly due to the strong continuity of club policy both on and off the field. In the first 25 years of the club's life it had only five presidents, one of them, H. Kyrke Smith, holding the office for two periods, one of three and the other of 10 years. The latter spanned the critical period between 1896 and 1905. In addition, the Hall family was ever-present, and on the field the first of the club's longest-serving captains, Rex Schofield, led the team for four of the five years between 1893 and 1898. The influence of Kyrke Smith, the Halls and Schofield was critical in laying Waterloo's foundations, though in Schofield's case his contribution as captain was in itself overshadowed by the greater and more significantly lasting role he was to play later as president at a time when the world was picking up the pieces in the wake of world war. He was, in fact, the second of the ten captains so far in the history of the club to have continued to be deeply involved long after retiring from play and have gone to be elected president. As might be expected, Sidney Hall was the first, serving as president from 1910 to 1912.

Indeed, the point is one that repeats itself often throughout Waterloo's history. Continuity has been ensured by individuals serving long periods in



TOP: The Waterloo team soon after the move to Manley Road in 1884. The colours were then blue and red hoops. Sidney Hall is in the doorway, wearing the bowler. George Abercrombie (dark hair and moustache) is by the other doorpost.
BOTTOM: The team that survived the split of 1895. The captain, with the ball, is Rex Schofield, whose influence on the club for the next 30 years was to be critical. The bearded figure on the left is the president of 1891-96, the Rev. C. de B. Winslow

key posts, often largely unsung, or moving on to increasingly senior, elective office, or, as in several notable instances, doing both in a lifetime's progression to the presidency. The seeds of this tradition

were undoubtedly sown in the last years of the 19th century with the succession of crises over the grounds and the national trauma of the 1895 schism giving people good reason to pull together for the common good. As in everything, can there be true, worthwhile life without the vicissitudes of struggle and strife?

Life in those days was not always so serious, however. The club ran two teams and at one stage each started becoming an entity in itself, sticking to the same players and with members of the Second XV refusing to be promoted to the Firsts. Almost inevitably, things came to a rather unpleasant head when the Seconds refused to supply substitutes for what was described by one writer of the time as a "damaged" First XV. The grounds for refusal were that the Seconds were the better side and being "dropped" to the Firsts was no promotion! The captains of the Fifth and Sixth XVs of the 1974-76 era, who inflicted similar problems on each other, will no doubt reflect that there is nothing new under the sun, but in those days there was no chairman of a football committee to bang heads together. Neither side would give way and the result was chaos and cancelled matches.

Once again, it was the Hall brothers' father who stepped in to resolve a crisis. This time his good offices consisted of offering to pay all expenses of a hot-pot supper for both teams so that a reconciliatory "discussion" could be held. Sidney Hall takes up the story: "The First team captain asked permission to provide two bowls of punch. My heavens, what a punch! Of 34 attending, 29 were considerably indisposed and incurred the expense of 17 cabs to remove the corpses. Both teams' matches had consequently to be cancelled for that weekend, but there was a complete reconciliation." This begs an important question: is Waterloo alone in having cancelled matches at First and Second XV level for the official reason that players were suffering from hangovers? The incident, however, testifies not so much to their being an ale-house team of the 1890s as to the camaraderie of rugby and the extraordinary bond it can induce among its players, both on and off the field. Only out of such bonds of loyalty between friends and players can successful clubs and teams emerge in amateur sport. So as the century turned, and the first decade of the new one advanced, Waterloo moved inexorably towards what its members, both on and off the field, were to turn into something great in Lancashire, Northern, National and International rugby.

ONE OF THE critical steps in this transition was made possible in 1906 by Northern Cricket Club when it moved to its present home off Moor Lane and vacated its ground in Haig Road, Waterloo Park. Waterloo's members dug deeply into their own pockets and took on a heavy financial burden in getting the ground up to scratch and building a stand in which to seat 50 dignitaries and VIPs, if no one else. It paid off almost immediately, however, for in 1907 the club was allocated its first county match, Northumberland playing Lancashire at the new ground. Waterloo was now firmly established as a gate-taking club.

On the field, county honours had already been won by Bobby Glass the captain from 1900 to 1903, who played at halfback for Lancashire in 1902, and soon afterwards F.K. Rogers became the county full-back. Glass eventually became president and then trustee of the club and held that position at the time of the golden jubilee. One of his fellow trustees of the time was the man who was Waterloo's most outstanding player of the era before the First World War, R.P. Heywood.

"Dicky" Heywood was, in fact, one of the greatest uncapped players in the history of the game. For that view we have no less an authority than Sammy McQueen, Waterloo's first international, who rates him ahead of even Jack Heaton and Roy Leyland as a three-quarter. McQueen admits, however, that his view might have been slightly coloured by youth, for Heywood, who won his first county cap in 1909 when McQueen was only 11 years old, was a sporting hero to local youngsters of the period. As Heaton was to do a generation later, his playing career spanned the

dislocative trauma of world war, linking two eras, so that when young McQueen was ready to take his own place behind the Waterloo scrum in 1919, it was Heywood who was there, captaining the side and running a three-quarter line that Lancashire later lifted wholesale for the county championship.

Two things probably prevented Heywood becoming Waterloo's first international. The Great War itself, as his contemporary, "Spider" Quiggin, has pointed out, came at a time when Heywood was approaching his peak as a back, but also telling was Waterloo's relatively lowly status as a club in those days. The fashionable Lancashire club in the area was Liverpool, which fielded a very strong side throughout the Edwardian epoch. For Cheshire, it was Birkenhead Park. Then, as now, good players gravitated to established clubs with impressive fixture lists, good grounds and good facilities. Waterloo was still emerging from the chrysalis of the Serpentine, Manley Road, and the ups and downs of its first 25 years of life.

Its roll of representative honours was short, its fixture list was mainly with local sides or those with which members or Merchant Taylors' old boys had special connections. Some of the prestigious clubs spurned pleas for matches. So when Heywood started his career he was merely the rising star of an emergent club that commanded only limited attention. The Haig Road ground was a start in fulfilling the ambitions of the members -nearly all of whom were players - for greater things, but it was, as later events were to prove, merely a stepping stone from the obscurity of an improvised field to the purpose-made playing surface, ground and facilities that remain the club's base today.

The great Joe Periton, Waterloo's first giant of the game, played 21 times for England between 1924 and 1930 and captained club, county and country. Periton's influence in developing Waterloo's open style was immense. As a player he was famed for his skilful handling and running in an age when forwards were often more known for what they did with their feet. Under his leadership Waterloo confirmed its growing reputation as a major club during the 1920s. He also led a resurgent Lancashire to a standing in county rugby which successors from Waterloo built upon and from which the county has never fallen. He was president of Lancashire in 1949-51 and was a trustee at Waterloo for 41 years to his death in 1980.

A Sunday work party takes a break at the Memorial Ground, with Rex Schofield at the back of the group and a young George Key at the front. Members worked every weekend and every suitable moonlit night to convert part of an old golf course into the Blundellsands pitches.

The event that was to accelerate the full transition more than anything else left the club deeply scarred - the Great War. Almost the entire playing strength of Waterloo volunteered within a month of hostilities breaking out, with most joining the 7th King's. A steady stream of other young men joined them as they came of sufficient age and the conflict progressed.

Fifty-one of them never returned.

LIKE NEARLY everything else, rugby at Waterloo was suspended for the duration of the War, though members did manage to play in scratch matches while in the forces. Sammy McQueen even had a problem of choice, though not between different sides wanting his services, but different sports. Initially, it was his prowess as an inside left that brought him to Army selectors' attention and the result was his playing soccer in a side that included professionals from Leicester City, Millwall, Exeter City and Chelsea. "I was torn between the games," he confessed, "and might well have gone on playing soccer." The issue was, however, decided when he joined the 51st Highland Division's machine gun battalion, which had several Scottish rugby internationals and trialists in its ranks. McQueen, who had learnt his rugby at Merchant Taylors' was drafted in and took his place alongside five internationals in a challenge match against a similarly star-studded London Division. On a pitch fashioned from a levelled coal tip at Mons, the Scots thrashed the Sassenachs. The match made a lasting impression on McQueen, born in Liverpool to Scots parents who had moved from Wigton to ship granite used for the building of the Mersey docks. Five years later, when he was offered trials with both England and Scotland, he had no problem with the choice. "I'm a Scot," he said. "And I was a Scottish soldier."

Before that could happen, of course, Waterloo had to resume its own progress. So it was, in the spring of 1919 that a meeting was called at the venue that was almost the club's administrative and social headquarters, the Exchange Hotel in Liverpool. The idea was first to assess what playing strength the club was likely to have, and second to discuss the best way of honouring its fallen players.

That meeting was probably the most crucial in Waterloo's history, for it led, eventually, to the purchase of the land to create Waterloo's present Blundellsands home. The scheme was ambitious and was to cost ,£10,000, a massive sum in 1919. Two people present, Sammy McQueen and C. Dawson Hayward, recalled the meeting separately 62 years later but were of one mind about its significance. The meeting decided that the new ground should be the memorial to Waterloo's war dead and that it would be second to none in the North. The hope was that from it Waterloo would spring anew, reborn, and grow more quickly and more strongly than it could ever have done at Haig Road. The Memorial Ground would help establish the club in the very top flight and also help in getting those elusive, prestigious fixtures, especially if the new facilities attracted good players.

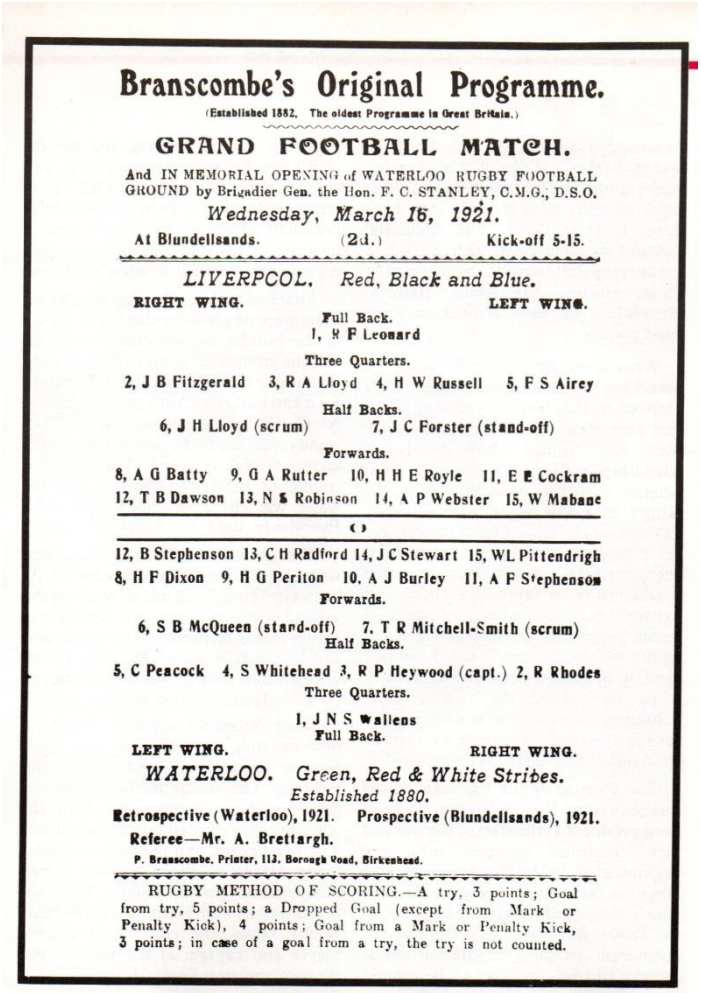
What more fitting tribute could be found for the fallen than to make their club, where they had enjoyed happy days and were remembered for them, where they had formed deep bonds of friendship and team spirit, and from whence they had gone as pals in the King's to die, a major force in rugby throughout the land? Out of the carnage of Flanders, men would turn their energies towards creating something that would testify to supreme sacrifice and live for ever as succeeding generations of young people played the game. Indeed, "They played the game" was the phrase used by Brigadier-General F.C. Stanley when he opened the new ground. "Nothing," he said, "can more effectively sum up the conduct of those who served and fell than these simple words."

The meeting at the Exchange Hotel was chaired by Roscoe Harpin, who had been president at the start of the war and then continued in post until the beginning of 1921. The key influence, however, was none other than the man who had captained Waterloo for much of the 1890s, Rex Schofield. His was the inspiration to buy the Blundellsands ground and he was later to be elected president for its opening and for the club's first full season playing on it. Ten years later, he was recalled from retirement in Jersey to be golden jubilee president in the club's fiftieth year, a measure of his standing, influence and regard in the decisive decade of the 1920s.

Attached as the club was to Haig Road, there were no great ties there. The march of the builder was becoming insistent, and the ground left so much to be desired that no one thought it worthwhile to fight for it and build the club's memorial there. As C. Dawson Hayward put it: "The stand could hardly be called that and the facilities were minimal. There were a couple of makeshift showers but the water was either too hot or too cold. Everybody used to change at home."

The ground left Sammy McQueen with a legacy that troubled him for life. As he put it: "Haig Road was all right but the ground was very sandy and hard. I was always falling on my left hip when tackled and knocking it about. It's why I have arthritis in it now. It was much softer to be tackled onto the Blundellsands grass."

When Schofield suggested buying a new ground, some thought him mad. But he argued well and carried the meeting. The senior members present determined to carry the project through, whatever the financial burdens involved. The key figures, and the two remaining living witnesses agreed on their names independently when looking back six decades later, were Harpin and Schofield, Bobby Glass, the club's first county player and captain at the turn of the century, the great Dicky Heywood, P.M. "Spider" Quiggin, Billy Woodward, Frank Fontannaz, Tom Brakell, Tommy Roddick, Dick Annersley, and a back-room boy whose role was vital in making Waterloo a "national" club, Alan Stenhouse, later to be secretary, then fixtures secretary, whose war injuries prevented him playing again. Glass, Heywood Quiggin, Woodward, Brakell, Roddick and Stenhouse all lived to become presidents of Waterloo, no small indicator of their central roles in getting the club going again and building towards



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GRAND FOOTBALL MATCH.

And IN MEMORIAL OPENING of WATERLOO RUGBY FOOTBALL GROUND by Brigadier Gen. the Hon. F. C. STANLEY, C.M.G., D.S.O.

Wednesday, March 16, 1921.

At Blundellsands. (2d.) Kick-off 5-15.

LIVERPCOL. Red, Black and Blue.

RIGHT WING. LEFT WING.

Full Back.
1, R F Leonard

Three Quarters.
2, J B Fitzgerald 3, R A Lloyd 4, H W Russell 5, F S Airey

Half Backs.
6, J H Lloyd (scrum) 7, J C Forster (stand-off)

Forwards.
8, A G Batty 9, G A Rutter 10, H H E Royle 11, E E Cockram
12, T B Dawson 13, N S Robinson 14, A P Webster 15, W Mabane

( )

12, B Stephenson 13, C H Radford 14, J C Stewart 15, W L Pittendrigh
8, H F Dixon 9, H G Periton 10, A J Burley 11, A F Stephenson

Forwards.
6, S B McQueen (stand-off) 7, T R Mitchell-Smith (scrum)

Half Backs.
5, C Peacock 4, S Whitehead 3, R P Heywood (capt.) 2, R Rhodes

Three Quarters.
1, J N S Wallens

Full Back.

LEFT WING. RIGHT WING.

WATERLOO. Green, Red & White Stripes.

Established 1880.

Retrospective (Waterloo), 1921. Prospective (Blundellsands), 1921.

Referee—Mr. A. Brettargh.

P. Branscombe, Printer, 113, Borough Road, Birkenhead.

RUGBY METHOD OF SCORING.—A try, 3 points; Goal from try, 5 points; a Dropped Goal (except from Mark or Penalty Kick), 4 points; Goal from a Mark or Penalty Kick, 3 points; in case of a goal from a try, the try is not counted.

The new ground opened in March 1921 with a game against Liverpool, which Waterloo won. Waterloo's captain, Dicky Heywood, put in a match-winning performance that underlined how the twin factors of war and the club's then relatively low status had prevented his becoming Waterloo's first international.

what most regard as its golden age in the 1930s and 1940s.

So history came full circle as the club moved back to Blundellsands, not far from its original home by the Serpentine. Now it was Captain Blundell who owned the land and who sold it so it could be turned into a two-pitch permanent rugby ground. No one was going to have to take the posts down after no-side this time.

The only problem was that the site was pan of a nine-hole course forming part of the West Lancashire links. Although attached to the golf club it was open to the public and was known as Hunt's golf course after the people who ran it. Sammy McQueen remembers that it cost 1s a round to play on it, a fee which in those days was considerable enough to ensure that its clientele was confined to a relatively small number who could afford it.

Why being part of the links was a problem arose from the uneven terrain, which was dotted with numerous bunkers. Levelling it to create two flat pitches was going to take a lot of time and money. As it was, the club was borrowing from the Rugby Football Union, and Lancashire. Its own members were putting up a great deal of money too, but membership was small, mainly players and ex-players, and there were few supporters to tap for finance. A policy of do-it-yourself towards the work was the only one the club could afford.

Dawson Hay ward, who was to become secretary for a time after the move to Blundellsands, served his apprenticeship as an organiser and club workhorse in the work parties that had to be formed to do the job. He recalled, more than 60 years later: "Tom Brakell did an enormous amount of work on the project. There were so many bunkers to level off. Every Sunday afternoon there was a major work party. If there was a moonlit night we would also work then."

Heywood's post-war team of 1919-20 won 19 matches out of 23. Periton is third from the right in the back row. The first international, Sammy McQueen, is seated on the ground, front right.

How ironic it seems now that teams of moonlit diggers and fillers-in of holes in the Blundellsands ground should again be on the centre stage in the Waterloo story. Nearly four decades had passed since Sidney Hall had been turfed off the Serpentine ground for doing what a new generation was now repeating on a much mightier scale to make a pitch fit to play on. This time, however, there were no vexatious gamekeepers to worry about. The adjoining land was already built upon and so would more be soon. In any case, the rugby land was now Waterloo's own. From now on, people would be coming to Blundellsands in search of a different kind of game.

The work took 14 months and the ground opened in March 1921. Waterloo had its Memorial Ground and it was to be known as that for years to come, though sadly, perhaps, the use of the name has gradually receded in recent decades, with Waterloo's home known universally simply as "Blundellsands". In 1921, the ground, the stand and the pavilion were among the best anywhere. The playing surface in particular was envied everywhere. Waterloo had the Rolls-Royce of grounds. What it needed now was the Rolls-Royce of teams to do it proud.

The effect of the Memorial Ground was quite dramatic. According to Dawson Hayward: "There was a terrific influx of new, non-playing members. You have to remember that life was so very different in those days. There was no radio or television and if you wanted to watch sport you had to go there and see it as it happened. It gave me a lot of work as secretary."

The public, eager perhaps for diversion as the country struggled back to its feet after the war, now had a decent ground at which to see their rugby, and one situated on a major railway line in a burgeoning suburb filling with increasingly better-off people. Waterloo's gates started to grow to figures beyond the wildest fancies of its founding fathers, particularly as representative honours started falling to the team's star players. Derby matches against Birkenhead Park regularly attracted more than 8,000 spectators and, says Dawson Hayward, one crowd even broke the 10,000 mark. With Birkenhead Park supported by thousands of Cammell Laird workers, a trip to Blundellsands on the railway was a good afternoon out after work finished at Saturday lunchtime. Many of the games, however, were far from friendly. Sammy McQueen cannot recall one that was not "very tough indeed" with a great deal of uncompromising physical contact. He himself was one of the rugby geniuses of his era and was a marked man in most matches. Significantly, and perhaps salutarily to people who think that rugby was never dirty in the old days, McQueen considered the game too dangerous to go on playing after he married at the age of 26. "I had responsibilities," he said. "I couldn't afford to go taking the risk."

McQueen, whose nose was broken deliberately at Cardiff in the 1923 Wales v. Scotland match, thinks that the game has not altered materially in the 60 years since. The basics, he says, are the same.

Eugene Billac and George Key at the return match between Waterloo and Stade Bordelaise at Blundellsands. The fitter French showed up deficiencies at Waterloo that Key was to put to rights in a dramatic manner over the next quarter of a century.

The laws may have been altered to improve flow and "the game may have quickened up a bit" but he still feels that running rugby *is* what good rugby should be built from. It was upon this philosophy that Waterloo made its name and reputation and it was from its skill in passing and running that the reputations of many of its "greats" were to be made.

H.G. "Joe" Periton, although a loose forward in an age when such skills were not widespread up front, was famed for his handling. So was one of his wing-forward partners, George Taylor, who, incidentally, would probably have played for England with Periton had Taylor's Army career not taken him abroad as he approached his peak. (He had to be content with "only" playing for the Barbarians.) Periton was slightly behind McQueen at Merchant Taylors' and played for Waterloo under McQueen's captaincy in 1924-25.

Tactics in those days were straight-forward. Dawson Hayward: "The technique of the forwards centred on the forward rush. Backs fell on the ball and you were not penalised for staying there while the scrum formed round as you lay on the ground and waited for the ball to

be heeled out. The cry of 'Feet! Feet! Feet!' would go up from the crowd when the forwards charged. When the ball did come back it was moved straight along the three-quarters. Joe Periton was such a good handler. He always made sure the ball went quickly back so it could be moved to the wing as speedily as possible. Nevertheless, I think that play today is much superior to our day. The main reason is that although the principles are the same the game is harder and the fellows have to be given their due for being so fit. Our fellows were never fit like that."

In the early 1920s Waterloo's training was, in fact, non-existent by modern standards. There was no training with the ball at all. Regular midweek training only came in with floodlights a decade later. Sammy McQueen: "Joe Periton lived in College Road and I lived in Cambridge Road. Once or twice a week I used to call for him at 6.30 p.m. and we ran along a cinder trail by the railway and the golf course for a couple of miles."

Dawson Hayward: "You might get a couple of enthusiasts, usually the internationals, who would go for a run at night, but there was no real training to speak of. We did some just before the first full season at the Memorial Ground but I don't remember anything else being organised. Apart from there being no floodlights, you have to remember that people worked longer hours and many did not automatically get Saturday afternoons off."

The deficiencies of fitness showed when Waterloo made its first foreign tour in 1923. It was to Bordeaux and guests from Birkenhead Park were included to make up the party, touring being beyond many players' means in those days. Dawson Hayward remembers the long train journey as a result of being in agony all the way back with an ankle injury. Stade Bordelaise thrashed their visitors, then played a return at Blundellsands some months later to triumph again. There was only one real reason for the disparity between the teams, according to Hayward: "They were much fitter than we were."

The captain of 1923-24 took the lesson to heart. He had definite ideas about how rugby, and a first-class team, should be developed, even though the club's only international of the time, Sammy McQueen, thought him something of a know-all. His name was George L. Key and his captaincy will never be remembered as the outstanding part of his contribution to Waterloo. This was not because it was deficient - it wasn't -but because it was completely overshadowed by his work as Waterloo's secretary, a post he filled for a quarter of a century. His was the influence that eventually brought in the floodlights to make possible, among other things, Thursday night training with the ball. In 1923, the Waterloo team may have been well and truly on their way, but it was the exposure of inferior fitness at the hands of Stade Bordelaise that made George Key realise just how much further there was to go.

WATERLOO was now growing in size. Whereas space had usually restricted the club to two teams before the First World War and, consequently, few members, the new ground opened up the chance to increase the playing strength to a greater depth than was ever possible before. This too was to be an important factor in the club's rise, for the junior teams provided the chance for up-and-coming young players to gain experience along- side older men whose first-class days were over. The club ran two Third teams throughout the 1920s, added an "Extra" XV in 1932 and then, five years later, a "Schools" side — the latter move partly to aid recruitment through playing schools with a good rugby name. These teams formed the basis for the club's six XVs of today, though there have been times when seven sides have been fielded, apart from the new addition of the 1970s, the Colts.

The two pitches at Blundellsands enabled the club to support four teams in the 1920s and the two new Third teams were never short of players. Early junior captains included George Key and, during the 1920s, one family made one of the Thirds almost its own property — the Pinningtons. George, Bob and Joe between them captained the side for half the decade. These Pinningtons were, in fact, only three of a long line who have served Waterloo. Their sister Molly married Gordon Macintosh, the well-known referee and rugby's first regional coach, who was treasurer of Waterloo for ' 23 years and who later became president of the club and then of Lancashire. The

youngest of the Pinnington brothers, Jim, has held several offices and on one memorable occasion in 1979 all five of Jim's sons — Jim, Paul, John, Mike and Hugh — played for Waterloo Sixth XV, together with their cousin Jamie Goodier, against St. Mary's Old Boys.

The Pinningtons were also in at the birth of a Waterloo social tradition. According to Dawson Hayward: "Junior football was all a bit casual for several years. I had given up playing to become secretary but I went back to playing as captain of one of the Thirds. I moved from stand-off to full-back and my lads always considered themselves to be the superior of the two teams."

In 1924-25 George Pinnington's team would have none of Dawson Hayward's men's boasts. So, in the spring of 1925, Waterloo's first hot-pot match took place between Hayward's Thirds and Pinnington's Thirds, with the meal held afterwards at the Hightown Hotel. Much to his astonishment, Dawson Hayward's team was well beaten. The match, however, started the club's tradition of end-of-season hot-pot confrontations between the junior sides. Dawson Hayward's contribution in arranging it was recognised by the players, who presented him with an engraved silver cigarette box.

Socially and administratively the club's headquarters was the Exchange Hotel at the end of the railway line in Liverpool. This was where selection took place, where committee meetings were held, and where the Firsts and Seconds met up on Saturday nights, with the away side coming late. At the ground, the bar did a good trade straight after a match but there were then no means by which players could get a hot meal. The bar also opened on Sundays, when players would meet at the club to play pontoon in the secretary's office.

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Facilities for women were non-existent, with wives and girlfriends left to fend for themselves. As Molly Macintosh recalls, women had to be very dedicated to watching their menfolk, or the game, to put up with being constantly and literally left out in the cold. They tried to minimise the problem by going to each other's homes for tea after matches. Many members were very happy with this situation: indeed, when Waterloo finally breached its strictly men-only policies by opening a ladies' tea room, there were an appreciable number of resignations. The vestiges of the policy still remain today, with Waterloo's main bar confined to men only when it is opened on match days, and ladies restricted to the cocktail bar.

Before away derby matches with Birkenhead Park, players and supporters met at Fuller's Cafe in Dale Street. Sainsbury's and Anderson's were also used for teas and, apart from the expensive, up-market grill-room at the Exchange, the State Cafe, also in Dale Street and next door to the Angel Hotel, provided a "nice" dinner at more moderate prices. According to Gordon Macintosh, the last train to Blundellsands on Saturday nights in the years between the wars was usually "uproarious, good fun and very amusing."

Waterloo, in fact, became much more than a rugby club; it became a social institution. Crosby was growing continuously and the club was a principal point of focus in the community. Probably something such was necessary as the township burgeoned, so Waterloo filled a need. The fact that on the field the club was already becoming one of the foremost in the land contributed to its roll of membership and its social success.

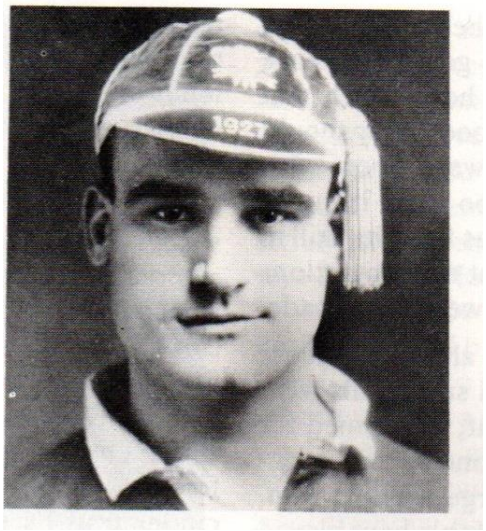
That fact, however, did not come about by accident. It came about because one man set out to make things happen that way, the man whom Sammy McQueen considered a bit of a know-all, George Key.

Giants of the Game:
WATCYN THOMAS

joined Waterloo in 1929 when he moved North to teach at Cowley School. He came from a hothouse of Welsh rugby, where the game was somewhat more serious than life or death, and he never ceased to marvel at the almost casual, enjoyable amateurism that was the ethos of rugby in Lancashire and at Waterloo.

He was a big man, well over six feet tall and weighing 15 stone, and he was broad with it. Proportionally, his body was long and his legs short, so that his centre of gravity was relatively low. This meant that he was murder to tackle - he also had a devastating hand-off -and almost impossible to knock off his feet unless three men were appointed to the task. His line-out technique was so outstanding in its timing that some say none have matched it since. He was also one of the best back-row forwards in the history of the game.

One ploy he developed often shocked opponents into defencelessness. The codeword was "Jackie!" and on hearing it the Waterloo or Lancashire midfield would compress sideways and shuffle slightly towards the line-out. With impeccable timing, Thomas would leap to catch the ball, swivel, holding it high above his head out of the reach of the opposition, and then propel it, bullet-like, straight to Jack Heaton, even though he might be up to 30 yards away. The ruse usually gave Heaton and Leyland a clear 30 yards to run before anyone could get close enough to lay a hand on them. Waterloo had seen nothing like it since Joe Periton had perfected a bowling, one-armed overhead pass to send the ball halfway across the field directly to the winger in open play.



Thomas was known as "Wattie" to some but more often to his team-mates by the appellation bestowed by his Waterloo captain for several years, Edric Weld. He pronounced Watcyn as "Whatsign" and it was as Whatsign that Thomas is still referred to by Jack Heaton and his contemporaries.

The true measure of Watcyn Thomas's class was shown in 1935 when the touring All Blacks met a combined Lancashire and Cheshire XV at Waterloo. The rugby writer, J.B.G. Thomas, described what happened: "At first he was marked by one player in the normal manner but he was so successful in the line-out that the All Blacks double banked to block his efforts. When this failed to quell the power and skill of the Welshman, they brought up two more. There followed a series of fierce, heaving mauls, with Thomas first jumping to catch the ball, then falling down to earth before the encircling black jerseys were shaken off by sheer strength for him to get the ball back to his halves."

The All Blacks were not only impressed: they were fearful of how they would cope with this giant when they met Wales at Cardiff. But there was no need for them to worry. The Welsh selectors solved their problem by not selecting him.

There were two reasons for Thomas's fall from grace with the selectors. The first was his exile in Lancashire. Thomas, who won his first four caps in 1927, had a strong base of popular support when he played for Llanelli and Swansea. He was watched and supported by thousands for week after week and it would have been a brave selector who kept him out for long. Once away from Wales in exile, however, his base of popular support gradually faded and this left the selectors free to assert themselves against him. Why they should want to do this provided the second reason why he fell from favour. He regarded selectors as ordinary mortals and was not afraid to give them a piece of his mind.

He won 14 caps in all and would have won many more had he not been forcibly "retired" from international rugby by the selectors after a major row in 1933 when he was his country's captain. His apprenticeship as an international had seen him dropped for 1928, recalled for 1929, dropped for 1930, and then recalled again in 1931 to play in Wales's draw at Twickenham.

The next international game, however, is always regarded as his finest, for he played 70 minutes of it with a broken collar-bone, and even scored the try that turned the game. He returned from the injury the next season with his international place assured and then succeeded to the Welsh captaincy in 1933.

Despite his exile, and the fact that selectors rarely saw him at club and county level, it seemed he was set to hold the post for as long as he was fit for international play. This was because he displayed brilliant tactical and team leadership in his first match by leading Wales to their first victory at Twickenham for 25 years. For some unaccountable reason, however, the Welsh selectors then started messing around with their winning side, so that Wales lost to Scotland, much to Thomas's exasperation. The last straw came when Wales went to Ireland with a prop selected for the back-row and a loose-forward in his place up front. Thomas would have none of it and, on the field, ordered the two players to play in their proper positions. The "Big Five" of the time, already fed up with Thomas's outspokenness, were so offended that they sacked him. He never played for Wales again.

For Waterloo and Lancashire, however, he continued to delight. Club and county styles suited his own play and temperament and with Toft winning the ball in the tight and Thomas in the line-out, Heaton and Leyland were never short of runnable possession. As a schools coach, first at Cowley and then in Birmingham, Thomas always emphasised positive, attacking football. He hated negative play and detested any tactics designed to bottle up a game. He even disliked knocking back the ball from the line-out, urging specialists to perfect the means of swivelling while jumping so as $_f$ to emulate his massive two-handed throws direct to the centres. Why go through the half-backs, he reasoned, when the direct route cut out several seconds of potentially troublesome opposition?

This sort of approach to the game, in a side already blessed with the genius of Heaton, undoubtedly contributed massively to Waterloo's golden age. Lancashire, too, used his talents well. The pity was that he had to go without so much honour in his own country.

Percy the Pike

Percy the Pike was bequeathed by a rich uncle to a Major Turk, who was treasurer of Northern Cricket Club many years ago. This caused some disgruntlement in the Turk household, which had been expecting better things from the will. It was consigned to an outhouse to get in everyone's way and remind the family of what might have been.
Major Turk then had a brainwave: wouldn't the Pike look well over the mantlepiece in the Northern billiard room? Alas, some Northern members had other plans and a new game developed of secretly stuffing Percy with things he wasn't supposed to be stuffed with. Thus one day a lemon appeared in his mouth. On another occasion a beautiful feather was found protruding from a delicate part of his anatomy. Other desecrations included sticks of celery, old potatoes and even, no doubt to remind sportsmen that there are other things to do with fish than stuff them, a tin of middle cut salmon.

Much amusement was caused although some club members thought the hoaxes distasteful, embarrassing as they often were to the stewardess. Then one day the club's senior vice-president awoke to find Percy tied to the front door knocker of his home. It was the last straw. Percy had to go.

It so happened that Waterloo and Wanderers were holding their 1934 post-match dinner at Northern that weekend. Waterloo's captain, the famed and fabled hell-raiser Edric Weld, presented Percy to Wanderers for burial at sea on their journey home to Dublin. But Wanderers did no such thing. When the teams next met, Waterloo discovered a rejuvenated Percy, re-stuffed, re-mounted and magnificent. He is now the trophy Waterloo and Wanderers play for each year. In his own glassy-eyed way he is as important to Lansdowne Road and Blundellsands as the Calcutta Cup is to Twickenham and Murray-field.

And long may he be so.

The star-studded team of 1938-39 which Jack Heaton captained. The internationals were Humphrey Luya (standing, fifth from left), Allan Roy (standing, second from right), Harold Uren (seated, first left), Dicky Guest (seated, second left) and Bert Toft (on Heaton's right).

GEORGE KEY was secretary of Waterloo in 1922-23, handed the job over to Dawson Hayward the following season in order to captain the First XV, and then became secretary again in 1924-25. He stood down from the office 24 years later. His was one of the principal influences on Waterloo throughout the era commonly regarded as the club's greatest. He ran the club for the two-and-a-half decades that saw it served by some of the greatest players in the game's history, men like Joe Periton, J.W. Scott, Watcyn Thomas, Jack Heaton, Bert Toft and Dicky Guest.

Periton, of course, was a local lad and it was natural that he should have played at Waterloo; but Scott was from Scotland, working in the area; Thomas was from South Wales and moved North to teach at Cowley School; Bert Toft was from Manchester and taught at the Grammar School there; Jack Heaton was a Cowley schoolboy who played for Liverpool

University in the days when university rugby mattered; Dicky Guest, another Cowley product, was Jack Heaton's cousin. Waterloo had an outstanding ground and facilities. It also had a national fixtures list that improved steadily from 1924 onwards to acquire roughly most of its present constituents by 1935. There were many opportunities for any player regularly in the Firsts to be seen by the appropriate selectors. The prospects of a county cap or better undoubtedly attracted players but did all these factors give Waterloo sufficient edge over other clubs in the North West to attract the stars and rising stars?

George Key decided to leave nothing to chance. He made certain of Waterloo getting good players by straightforwardly recruiting them. In the case of Cowley School, he established a link that has proved as important to Waterloo over the last 50 years as its bond with Merchant Taylors'. Such an approach — nowadays people would probably class it as highly effective marketing — is not always smiled upon in rugby circles, as the team builders of Waterloo's present squad sometimes found in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In George Key's day the practice was regarded in many quarters as not entirely gentlemanly, which is why no one advertised it. Nevertheless, he made sure that any player likely to be available became available, in the case of Jack Heaton and Roy Leyland he spotted their absence from the St. Helens side during one academic vacation. Neither had wanted to see Old Cowley chums dropped to make room. Key asked them to play for Waterloo, dropped the club's centres, and thus recruited probably the best attacking pair of centres in the history of the game.

Facilities, already among the best, were improved. Floodlights were put up in the 1930s. Training took place with the ball. Forwards would charge up and down the pitch, kicking and dribbling the ball ahead of them, perfecting the technique that would spark off the cry of "Feet! Feet! Feet!" from the crowd. It was, however, through open, fast-passing play in the backs that Waterloo really made its name for spectacular rugby football, although the bulk of its early international honours came in the back row, where the ball was won and secured for the backs, eventually, to run. The adage was as true then as now: you can only attack when you have the ball, so win it; good ball is when you have it.

All of George Key's early work took place against a steadily improving fixture list. Ted Bullen, a former captain, was fixtures secretary for five years after the First World War and then Alan Stenhouse, the captain of 1914-15 forced into becoming an official by war wounds, took over for seven years. Along with George Key they worked steadily to improve the list, despite continuous rebuffs from many major clubs. However, things undoubtedly became easier after Sammy McQueen's season as Scotland's stand-off and Joe Periton's six years in the England back row, part of them as captain. Any waverers could be in no real doubt about the likely quality of the opposition. The push was to secure matches against London and Midlands sides, then the cream of English rugby, and having great crowd-pulling capability. A hurriedly arranged match at Rosslyn Park - the first London fixture — at the end of the 1919-20 season had resulted in a Waterloo victory that hinted to all that Waterloo were up to playing the cream. The return fixture against Rosslyn Park at the Memorial Ground two seasons later proved that the result was no flash in the pan. The following year, away again, Waterloo won yet again. But breaking into established fixture lists of premier clubs was as hard then as it is now. Even Rosslyn Park were only sporadic opponents until after the Second World War. Bullen, then Key and Stenhouse kept chipping away.

Their success is told in the fixture cards. In 1921, teams on the card which Waterloo still play regularly today were Birkenhead Park, Bradford, Broughton Park, Liverpool, Manchester, New Brighton, Rosslyn Park, Sale, and Sheffield. Wakefield were added in 1922, followed within two years by Coventry, Headingley, North of Ireland, Nottingham and Wanderers. Northern, Fylde, Halifax and Leicester were added during the 1920s, with Moseley, Llanelli, Wasps, London Scottish and Northampton completing, by 1935, a fixtures backbone that has remained

substantially good for nearly 50 years, despite a few inevitable "ins and outs".

The team went from strength to strength. For one period, in 1931-32, Waterloo fielded a side in which every man was a Lancashire county player, bar one — and he played for Cheshire! The season previously, Waterloo's back row had been composed entirely of current internationals: Joe Periton and Roy Foulds of England and J.W. Scott of Scotland. For good measure, the England stand-off for that season was also a Waterloo man, the redoubtable Steve Meikle, who later succeeded Stenhouse as fixtures secretary, then reached the international referee's panel, and then went on to serve as president of both Waterloo and Lancashire.

As Waterloo surged ahead, so did Lancashire, usually half-crammed with Waterloo's stars. The club fixture list was planned years ahead with " 'A' Team Dates" clearly designated by little asterisks in the cards. Waterloo was announcing well in advance that on these occasions, county dates, the club would be fielding a weaker side than usual. Not that relations were always so happy with Lancashire. In January 1928, for instance, Waterloo were due to entertain Coventry at Blundellsands. The club was desperate to put up a good show to secure a fixture about which Coventry were somewhat lukewarm. The clubs had met first in 1925 at Blundellsands, the visitors winning 14-11. The following year at Coundon Road, Waterloo took a 36-11 thrashing and the teams did not play each other the following season. Key and Stenhouse, then, having struggled to get Coventry back in 1927-28, were horrified at what the county selectors wanted for the match against Northumberland on the same day: seven Waterloo players.

Of these, Jack Wallens and Joe Periton were already internationals, Steve Meikle, Roy Foulds and A.H. Rigby had been English triallists that season, Jackie
McArthur was to play for Scotland later and I.W. Calder had played regularly for the county the previous autumn.

The row simmered in the Press. Lancashire demanded that the best men must put county before club. Waterloo wanted Lancashire to have special regard for what the club had done for the county's resurgence and stretch a point by not selecting any Waterloo players on this one occasion. Lancashire argued that Northumberland and the spectators were entitled to the best side the county could muster. One suggestion was that the county should write to Coventry explaining why Waterloo would be below strength.

The county prevailed and Coventry won at Blundellsands 13-5. Fortunately for future relations with Coventry, Alan Stenhouse arranged a return at Coundon Road on the last day of the season. Waterloo went in strength and crossed the Coventry line four times to win 14-6. For good measure Waterloo then won 22-12 at Blundellsands the next Boxing Day. The fixture was secure.
Waterloo players spent the next 10 years contributing massively to Lancashire's success. Blundellsands was the regular county ground but this in itself led to an unfortunate breakdown in good relations between club and county. The issue was whether Waterloo members should have special privileges when Lancashire was playing at the Memorial Ground. Nowadays, of course, the form is that the ground is "handed over" for county games or cup finals or other representative matches, with the club glad of the bar profits. Then, a bitter row erupted which, in 1937, saw the county impose the only sanction it could by taking its matches elsewhere.

The *Liverpool Post* was fiercely with Waterloo. A contemporary report noted: "It is not without interest to put on record the part played by the club in the fortunes of the county team during the last brilliant nine years, dating from 1928-29, when Lancashire reached the final for the first time since the championship was won in 1890-91.

Giants of the Game: Jack Heaton

JACK HEATON had the misfortune to be an attacking general in an age when the England selectors were more interested in stolid, safe defence. The choice he posed the selectors in the 1930s was simple: either build a back division around him and attack, or make the pivotal player Moseley's Peter Cranmer, who had a basically defensive approach, and be certain of safety.
Most of the time England adopted the latter course. When Heaton did play for his country it was in an atmosphere alien to his genius at inspiring combination in the backs. In 1939, for example, it was his accuracy as a place-kicker that England put to greater use than anything else. When his talents were belatedly rewarded with the England captaincy after the war, it was too late. Heaton was by then in his mid-thirties, past his prime and on the brink of retirement.

It was a tragedy for rugby. While Wales were exploiting the comparable qualities of Wilfred Wooller, England were squandering the talents of a man who was considered the greatest attacking centre his nation had produced for years. The result was that despite 12 war-interrupted years of being in and out of the national side, Heaton ended up with only eight international caps, excluding the 1946 victory internationals. The measure of his greatness, then, can only be really taken from his play with Lancashire and Waterloo.

Heaton was a great leader on the field. He was used to captaincy from an early age, leading Cowley School and then Liverpool University. He encouraged and inspired others to follow his approach to the game, which revolved round the simply obvious fact that if you fail to attack your opponents' line, you will not score tries. He was strong on ensuring that the man with the ball was always supported, and believed that the one sure way to win was to attack, attack and attack again, probing for weakness that could be exploited. He was a master of counter attack and also believed that one of

the best ways to demoralise the opposition was to attack from your own line, gaining surprise, when safety first was uppermost in most players' minds. Inevitably, this approach had its risks and England selectors before the war were not prepared to take them.

It was Heaton's performances for Lancashire that first brought him national fame. Lancashire reached three county finals and two semi-finals in six seasons from 1929, then won the title in 1934-35. Heaton was the star of the final and, with Graham Meikle on one wing and Roy Leyland in the centre, was alongside Waterloo players with whom he had great rapport. Inevitably, he and Leyland were picked for England, though hardly in a manner which enabled them to be truly effective. This was because the selectors dithered appallingly. Cranmer was the other centre in contention and the resultant shuffles saw both he and Leyland capped on the wing in different games. This completely wasted Heaton's genius, which Leyland's understanding of his play (as well as his own considerable talents) accentuated. In combination, the pair played well beyond the sum of their individual abilities. The result of such selectorial incompetence in the 1935 internationals was, in effect, to isolate Heaton on the field. His style required backs to combine in support of each other in running play and he never got the chance to show this off. The isolation left him unsupported and ripe to be marked out of the game, which he then was, relentlessly.

When out of the England side during the period 1936-38, Heaton continued to give everyone lessons in attacking rugby. One of the best ploys he developed was to shout "Run left" at his stand-off, who then did exactly that, drawing the wing forwards while the ball was passed by the scrum-half to Heaton, breaking right, usually with his cousin Richie - Dicky Guest - in support. Waterloo were chalking up impressive victories and so were Lancashire, who won the county title again in 1937, beating Surrey 24-12 in a final where Heaton and Leyland attacked time after time. That year the Barbarians recognised his worth by picking him for a side that included two other world-class attackers, Cliff Jones of Wales and Louis Babrow of South Africa. How the Baa-Baas' style and approach must have suited Heaton's own.

Probably, it was such company that Heaton needed to completely fulfil his enormous potential. At club and county level, which were almost identical given Waterloo's contribution to Lancashire, he could be devastating. If he could have played alongside similarly great attackers of the period at the next level of the game, who knows what the world would have seen? Alas, he had just started work as an architect in 1938 and had to decline the invitation to tour South Africa with the Lions. War prevented the opportunity ever arising again.

Heaton and George Key kept rugby alive at Blundellsands during the war and, though ageing as a player, he carried on afterwards, leading Lancashire to the county final yet again in 1946-47. On the way, the county scored 171 points in eight games and then beat Gloucester in a replayed final after the first match had been drawn. Appointed England captain in all four matches, he missed one through injury. England won three and shared the title with Wales. It was the end of Heaton's international career, though two years later he was to turn down a request to train up for international rugby again. He told the selectors that the game at that level was too hard for a man of 36.

His county days were not yet over, however. He led Lancashire to the championship in 1947-48 and 1948-49 to complete a post-war hat-trick. He even captained a Combined Lancashire-Cheshire XV to victory over the Australian tourists. When he retired from serious representative rugby in 1949, a giant passed out of the game. The tragedy was that he might have been even greater.

"During those nine years the club has supplied 30 players to the county team, namely one full back, nine three-quarters, four half-backs, and sixteen forwards. Five of those 30 players have captained the county side and twelve of them won international caps. The internationals are:- J.N.S. Wallens, fullback; G.W.C. Meikle, J. Heaton and R. Leyland, three-quarters; S.S.C. Meikle and J.P. McArthur, half-backs; and H.G. Periton, R.T. Foulds, J.W. Scott, Watcyn Thomas, R. Bark-Jones and H.B. Toft, forwards.

"S.S.C. Meikle, A.H. Rigby, H.G. Periton, Watcyn Thomas and H.B. Toft have captained the county side."

The other Lancashire players from Waterloo were:- I.W. Calder, J.C. Benson, J.K. Atkinson, J.H. Savin, E.W.D. Gore, A.B. Laithwaite, three-quarters; F.W. Simpson and J.L. Lumby, half-backs; G. Taylor, E.H. Weld, A.N. Clint, A. Roy, A.M. Hore, J.H. Chubb, C.P. Brown, J.A. Cooper and A.J. Brock, forwards. The rugby correspondent did not even include H.A. Fry and R.H. Guest, both Waterloo players in the academic vacations, because they were not then "regulars" for Waterloo, although they were already that for Lancashire.

The correspondent went on: "The Waterloo club has been the backbone of the county team in the greatest period of Lancashire rugby history since the 'split' of 1895, and it is a matter of general regret that on a point of privilege for club members the difference of opinion between the county authorities and the officials of the club is so acute that the finely appointed ground at Blundellsands is no longer requisitioned for county football. In March of 1930, on the occasion of the Lancashire and Gloucestershire final, 11,400 people paid for admission to the ground and the receipts were £1,040."

Irrespective of the row, however, the *Post's* report is invaluable for its list of players. The list is, in fact, Waterloo's roll of honour for its golden age between the two world wars. Some of the players uncapped by England at that time were to go on to international honours. George Taylor, by then soldiering abroad, was a Barbarian. Some of the names became legendary in the game, though in the case of Edric Weld — a huge man who was a brilliant captain of a team of rugby giants for no less than four successive years — most people seem to recall best the larger-than-life, hell-raising exploits off the field that saw him banned from some of the best hostelries in Liverpool!

That Edric Weld was not always on his best behaviour adds a human element to what might otherwise be a boring chronicle of seemingly endless excellence, for the period concerned is the one that Waterloo players ever since have had to live in the shadow of— the club's golden age. Golden ages are, however, only golden in retrospect. People forget that players were just as much human young men then as they are now; that the limits of good behaviour are sometimes strained in even the most illustrious of rugby clubs; that there is sometimes a fine dividing line between good fellowship and boorish revelry. Then, as now, older members kept, on balance, a reasonable level of order (but probably still bemoaned what they saw as a lamentable deterioration in standards of behaviour compared with their own younger days). The politics of the game, as the clashes with Lancashire show, were also far from smooth.

As for performance, while it is true that Waterloo's feats included a 17-year period of never being beaten by a London club, there were times when even the club's star-studded Firsts played like a drain, and certainly the club's overall performance never approached the 31 victories in a season it achieved twice during the 1970s. Jack Heaton, genius though he was as a player, was mercurial and his games ranged from the brilliant to the less than perfect. Members would mutter among themselves about him over pint pots after bad games, some of them recalling that it had never been like this in Dicky Heywood's day.

Heaton and Guest are still there in the 1947-48 squad. The others who played for England are Jasper Bartlett (middle of standing row), Dick Uren (between Guest and Heaton) and Gordon Rimmer (on ground, left). Alistair Fisher (seated, far right) played for Scotland.

Nevertheless, it **was** a golden age in which Waterloo emerged from obscurity to greatness. Throughout it, George Key's was the great cohesive influence. The pity is that the momentum was interrupted by war in 1939, for this dislocated progress as much as the Great War had 25 years earlier. True, George Key and Jack Heaton kept rugby going throughout the war, offering a game to anyone who wanted to play and who found himself in Liverpool, but the "normal" activities, such as developing young players and operating a national fixtures list, obviously could not be sustained during hostilities.

Apart from that, those of the club's young players not employed in essential war work went off, like their fathers before them, to fight. This time, 58 of them were killed.

WHEN NORMAL rugby resumed after the Second World War, Waterloo picked up the pieces quickly. This was made possible because, thanks to George Key, the Blundellsands ground had stayed operational throughout the war, with Jack Heaton captaining some very fine teams and contributing greatly to local morale. Indeed, the ground became a rallying point for players in the services stationed on or near Merseyside or even just passing through. Wartime members included internationals Bob Weighill, now secretary of the Rugby Football Union, and F. Trott of Wales. There was always a game to play or see at Blundellsands on a Saturday and "we never closed" might well have been one of Waterloo's proudest boasts.

The club treasurer, Alistair Macfarlane went into the Navy and was succeeded by Gordon Macintosh. Whereas George Key's era of 1924-48 provided one strand of continuity for the club, Gordon Macintosh was now to provide another, holding office for 23 years and standing down only to follow Jack Heaton into the presidency in 1964. Recalling George Key's methods, Gordon Macintosh said: "Every day some of us involved with running the club would meet in Liverpool for lunch or tea during our breaks at work. We often came home on the train together. Very often I would see George three times in one day. Mind you, he was a bit of a dictator really and would often make decisions without telling anyone. No one complained though. He was the man behind Waterloo and he was the one who brought in all the players."

Giants of the Game: H.B.Toft

H.B. TOFT, rugby's first great "technical" hooker, was known as "Henry" by the Press in the South. This, said his supporters in the North, indicated how little they knew him, for his friends called him Bert. Indeed, whether you referred to Toft as Henry or Bert said a lot about your antecedents and rugby outlook. To Northerners, calling Bert Toft "Henry" was a straw in a wind that blew cold upon them from rugby bastions of Southern bias.

This bias was keenly felt in the North, whose players had to fight doggedly against what they saw as Southern prejudice in order to make the England side. Toft was passed over for year after year, despite Northern howls of protest. Yet when he got in the England side he ended up as captain.

Ironically, Toft never set out to be a hooker. He learnt the game at Manchester Grammar School, to where he later returned to teach. He began in the scrum, moved to centre, and then captained his school from full-back. At Manchester University he played at scrum-half and wing-forward and it was in the latter position he won his first county trial in 1930. Lancashire, however, were short of a good hooker and one of the selectors suggested to Toft that he try the position.

It was an inspiration. Later that season he was named as Lancashire's hooker and was ever-present there in the county side until his retirement from regular rugby in 1939. Indeed, he played 66 times for Lancashire and was county captain for the last five years of his career. In 1934-35 he led Lancashire to the county championship, the county's first title for 44 years, with a side that included Watcyn Thomas, Jack Heaton, Graham Meikle, Harry Fry and Roy Leyland from Waterloo.

Two years earlier, Lancashire had lost the final to Hampshire at Bournemouth. Several English selectors went to the match specifically to watch Toft, the English hooker's place for the Calcutta Cup having been deliberately left open in the meantime. Despite the pressure this created on him, Toft had a brilliant game. The selectors, however, were for some reason insufficiently impressed and decided to retain the incumbent in the English side.

Toft was reserve for England time after time and may well hold a record for bench appearances and trials. He is said to have 29 reserve cards for various matches. At one stage he
believed his chance had gone for good but suddenly, in 1936, he seems to have benefitted from selectorial dithering. After trying out two other hookers and not being happy with them, the selectors gave Toft, the perpetual reserve, his chance against Scotland at

Twickenham. One contemporary report summed up all the others: "He hooked like a master."

Toft then played in the next 10 internationals. Even then, some of the selectors did not really like him, so that as late as 1938-39 he was dropped to "The Rest" side for the final trial. Toft resolved the problem by out-hooking his rival so thoroughly that he was quickly reinstated in the England side as captain. He had first been appointed captain during the previous season after his predecessor, Peter Cranmer, had been dropped.

For Toft, hooking was a contest of individual skill between two men. Referees and rivals studied him closely to learn his technique. He was universally regarded as scrupulously fair and hooking against him was considered a means of measuring an opponent's skill. Throughout the 1930s controversy ranged about the scrum and there was constant tinkering with the law. At one stage the Rugby Football Union used a slow-motion instructional film - a novelty in those days being pioneered by Kodak - to prove to the International Board that even Toft could not hook the ball the way the law said that it should be hooked. The whole problem seemed to revolve round how to state that the ball could only be hooked (then) by the middle player of the front row with his furthest foot. Toft was so good at it that Waterloo, Lancashire and England were assured of a glut of possession. One contemporary correspondent even dared to ask where Heaton would be without Toft: "But for Toft's hooking, Heaton could not have had the chances he has put to such excellent account."

Toft joined Waterloo in 1934, hopeful that this would lead to his breakthrough into international rugby, a process which was to take another 18 months. His move, from Broughton Park, was unexpected, especially since he worked in Manchester, but George Key worked hard, and quietly, to recruit him. Toft himself put a great deal into the game off the field too, serving as honorary secretary of Lancashire while still a player.

He decided to retire from playing in 1939 after being appointed to a headmastership in the South. During the war, Toft was persuaded to return briefly to representative rugby as the RAF's hooker in 1943. He performed "triumphantly" against the Army, "getting repeated possession during the second stage and making the opening for one of the tries."

However, his England days were over. He was not tempted to resume after the ' war and went, acknowledged by even the Southern Press as "the best hooker England ever had." For many years afterwards he was rugby correspondent of *The Observer,* making an important contribution to the game through journalism. His great contribution, however, was the new plane to which he raised the hooker's art. Front-row play was never the same again.

There is no doubt that continuity of personnel and development of policy has been a major and vital in Waterloo's history and, indeed, survival and resurgence as a major club in recent decades. That continuity dates from the long involvement of the Hall family as players and officials, followed by similar commitment by Rex Schofield and George Key in succeeding generations. The tradition did not stop there, for

Gordon Macintosh's long service bridged the decades between the golden age and the present day. Others served in less exalted, but vital roles for year after year. In 1953, Jack Day became secretary and served for no less than 11 years. When he passed the torch in 1964 it was to John Carter, the president of 1980-82, who was secretary for 14 years to become the third longest holder of a single administrative post in the history of Waterloo.

TOP: Gordon Rimmer was captain in 1955-56, the first season that Alan Ashcroft (seated, second right) played for Waterloo. The other internationals in the squad were Reg Bazley (standing, second left) and Dick Uren (on president Ken Wilson's right)

BOTTOM: Jerry Simpson's squad included Ashcroft (sitting next to him) and one current international, Dick Greenwood (seated, third from right;. Gordon Macintosh was president.

The key job of fixtures secretary has also been an area of great stability, with the 1982-83 incumbent, former captain Dennis Bowman, serving longest with a ten-year stint. Before him, Wilf Newton-Jones was there for eight years, Alan Stenhouse for seven, and Steve Meikle for five years before the war

and two afterwards. Roy Eaton, George Lumby and Ted Bullen held the office for five years each.

Apart from Gordon Macintosh, long-serving treasurers are headed by the 1982-83 holder of the post, Colin Brennand, with 11 years from 1971, with Alistair Macfarlane having served five years.

Apart from the lifelong influence of each succeeding past-president, the trustees have also been there in the background. The trustees, appointed by the general committee are charged with safeguarding the aims, objectives, ethos and traditions envisaged both by the club's founders and the people who moved Waterloo to Blundellsands. They are watchdogs, eminent members who have served previously for long periods as players, or officials, or both. There have been only nine of them since the First World War, each holding the office for life. Past trustees, in order of appointment, are:- Billy Woodward (served 36 years), Bobby Glass, the club's first county player from the turn of the century (42 years), Dicky Heywood (19 years), Joe Periton (41 years), Ken Wilson (13 years) and Alistair Macfarlane (21 years). The present trustees are Mike Dawson (appointed 1968), Jack Heaton (1980) and Bert Crank (1982).

There was one near-dislocation in this progression of key and active office holders. It came in 1964 when the secretary, fixtures secretary and treasurer all finished long stints and stood down in the same year, in Gordon Macintosh's case to become president. It was unfortunate, but it was also one of those things that sometimes happens in even the best-regulated organisations. The wonder was, given the voluntary nature of the jobs and their huge demands on people's time, that it had not happened before. In its way, it marked the end of an era, for results on the field were suggesting that Waterloo was no longer the force it once was. It was probably time for a new generation of players and officials (nearly all of the latter ex-players) to emerge and start building again. Over the rest of the 1960s, the new men in the key positions found their feet, with John Carter the anchor man as secretary.

Just why it became necessary for Waterloo to re-launch itself in rugby is clear from studying the trends of the First XV's performance on the field between 1945 and 1971. The club was clearly in gradual decline from a playing point of view. This is vividly illustrated by examining results against the 16 clubs ever-present on Waterloo's fixture list for the 26 years concerned. The clubs are Birkenhead Park, Bradford, Coventry, Fylde, Halifax, Headingley, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Moseley, New Brighton, North of Ireland, Northampton, Nottingham, Sale and Wanderers. In 1948-49, when the team was a blend of ageing pre-war stars from the golden age and rising new ones, the record of success in these fixtures was 69 per cent. The following year it was 59 per cent but five years later it had dropped to 55 per cent.

The mid - and late 1950s saw a resurgence, with Alan Ashcroft approaching the height of his powers and Waterloo's side sometimes containing four other internationals, Dick Uren, Gordon Rimmer, Reg Bazley and Robin Godfrey. This led in 1956-57, to a success rate against the most regular 16 opponents of 65 per cent. But most of these stars were fading. Indeed, Alan Ashcroft, the greatest British No. 8 of his era, only began his international career the year after the last of the others had won his last cap and was, until Peter Thompson joined from Headingley towards the end of the decade, the only current international playing for Waterloo.

In 1965-66, Dick Greenwood's first year in an England jersey, the success rate only reached 50 per cent by virtue of a draw at Bradford. Two years later it was down to 43 per cent, with losses including home and away against New Brighton, and Liverpool at Blundellsands. But worse was to come: in 1970-71 the success rate against the 16 most-played opponents hit rock bottom at 22 per cent. Adding in other losses against "newer" clubs on the fixture card, such as Glasgow Academicals, St. Mary's Dublin, Harlequins, Northern, Melrose,

The squad that took Waterloo to the John Player Cup Final and a new club record of 31 victories in 1976-77. Jerry Simpson was by then president and the captain was the current Scottish hooker, Colin Fisher. Coach Phil Mahon, who appeared with rather more hair in the photograph at the bottom of Page 25, is kneeling, left.
The squad that took Waterloo to the John Player Cup Final and a new club record of 31 victories in 1976-77. Jerry Simpson was by then president and the captain was the current Scottish hooker, Colin Fisher. Coach Phil Mahon, who appeared with rather more hair in the photograph at the bottom of Page 25, is kneeling, left.

Richmond and Gosforth, one thing was very clear. Something had to be done if Waterloo was to survive to its century as a first-class club. The club was becoming a soft touch for points among senior opponents, and too much so: if the slide were not stopped, the fixture list was likely to be destroyed as Waterloo was dropped by others.

THE FIRST programme notes of the 1971-72 season stated simply: "Since the annual general meeting the club has been able to revise and carry out wholesale changes in its structure where committees of both the playing and social elements are concerned. This has resulted in greater emphasis on coaching and player-training which, it is hoped, will enable the teams to attain the eminence of former years."

Several new players had joined that summer, and the club had high hopes of them. They included the Chester College captain, Geoff Jackson, his student teammate Gareth Hopkin, and a promising former pupil of Cardinal Allen's grammar school named Laurie Connor. In the *Daily Post*, George Withy wrote: "This summer the club has been largely restructured with comparatively young men being brought in to look after coaching and a corporate team spirit at all levels."

Behind the words, a revolution had taken place. The instrument of revolution, if not its manifesto, was "The Richards Report."

John Richards was vice-president of Waterloo and due to succeed Dicky Guest in 1972. His was the task of looking at the club and recommending how it might reorganise to save itself. With hindsight, it is clear that the AGM that endorsed his report was as important to Waterloo as the one at the Exchange Hotel in 1919 that decided to move the club to Blundellsands.

The Richards Report recognised that the club had to change the way it ran itself. Its structure left too few with too much work. There was little discussion of rugby but much emphasis on social affairs. Although the team had its stars, its lack of coherence left it falling far short of potential, and reflected a wider incoherence and malaise in the club as a whole, which too few were able to find time enough to counter. It was a far cry from George Key's almost full-time efforts and the three meetings a day he might sometimes have with Gordon Macintosh. Central to Key's efforts had been rugby football. Everything turned on having a good team. The club had been able to capitalise on that but now it had to recognise that its structure must reflect the lesser availability of individual time, but wide range of exploitable talents, involving many more willing but frustrated people. The means of pulling together all their individual efforts was a rejuvenated structure of standing committees concerned with football, the house and social areas, the ladies, and general administration itself. A strong football committee was central to the philosophy. This recognised that without a solid successful rugby base, the club was nothing but a local social convenience.

What greater recognition could there be of the report's significance than John Richard's recall as president of Waterloo in the club's centenary season, an honour similar to that extended to the architect of the move to Blundellsands, Rex Schofield, 50 years earlier for the golden jubilee? With typical self-effacement, however, he himself gives the credit for resurgence to the man who made the football committee concept work, Rob Atlay.

After an initial hiccup, Rob Atlay, a newcomer to the club who had captained Wirralians and who had returned to Merseyside from Nottingham to work, became chairman of the football committee, supported by such stalwarts as Malcolm Roberts and Jerry Simpson and the captains of 1971-72 and 1972-73, Billy French and Mai Billingham. The club, however, had hit rock bottom and the way ahead looked grim. The fixture list was under the gravest threat and the fixtures secretary from 1972 onwards, Dennis Bowman, faced a tough battle to hold what Waterloo had, let alone improve the list. In 1971-72 Waterloo at least managed to get the success rate against the ever-present 16 up to 36 per cent, but the club's young backs in particular came in for some heavy criticism in the press for the poor quality of their defence.

These, however, were early days. What was quite clear was that the players had to pull themselves and the club out of the mire and that the club had, on the whole, to make do with what it had got. On the field the first two seasons under the new structure saw things bumping gratingly along the bottom. These were frustrating days for a beleagured football committee and the players. The signs, however, were there, with Laurie Connor, Frank Blackhurst, Phil Mahon and a young hooker named Colin Fisher impressing the Lancashire selectors. Older hands, like Dick Greenwood, Dennis Bowman, Mai Billingham and Paddy Conroy set grimly determined examples and, in retrospect, their contributions to the foundations of resurgence can only be described as massive.

The team kept training and trying to do the right things, all the while learning from the experience, even if it was defeat after defeat. The darkest hour came in March 1973. Northampton scored 11 tries at Blundellsands to humiliate Waterloo 55-nil, the visitors' biggest victory since the war and Waterloo's heaviest defeat since modern records began. The following week, Moseley rubbed it in at

Blundellsands 32-6. Would it never come right?

The next season began with a home match versus Roundhay, which Waterloo were not expected to win. But throughout the summer, training under the new captain, Gareth Hopkin, had been heavy and, if nothing else, the Waterloo players were fit, energetic and enthusiastic. Roundhay scored two tries, but Waterloo kicked four goals to win 12-8. In *The,Daily Post,* George Withy called the result "a shot in the arm." He wrote: "Sensibly, with five county players ranged against them, Hopkin kept a tight rein. The man who gave Waterloo their points was their 18-year-old full-back, Nick Spaven, who will not be regularly available until he leaves school at Christmas."

"But he was by no means Waterloo's only asset. Laurie Connor gave them plenty of possession from the new style and much tidier line-out. Hopkin and Mahon kicked and probed intelligently at halfback, new flanker Mick Daley was everywhere and the centres, Geoff Jackson and Steve Christopherson looked dangerous opportunists.

"Hopkin said afterwards, as if anticipating criticism: 'Let's get a few wins behind us first, then we'll worry about how we win.' But no one in the clubhouse was inclined to be critical. They had seen a spirited side pull off an unexpected victory and they were delighted."

More delights were to follow. At Sale six weeks later, Waterloo came back from being 9-4 down with 20 minutes to go to win 14-12. In *The Guardian,* David Irvine reported: "Waterloo are no longer a soft touch for points. Successive victories over Wanderers (who beat Coventry on Saturday) and Sale have confirmed a new spirit in the side and, while they may not yet be capable of breaking records, they do appear to have arrested the headlong slide which was threatening their still-enviable fixture list."

Just how much things were gelling was emphasised at the end of January. George Withy's report sums up the significance of the match concerned: "The young, fit and enthusiastic Waterloo side achieved their finest hour against Richmond at Blundellsands. They harried, wore down and at one stage almost demoralised the star-studded London team, who have already this season beaten Bedford, Wasps, Harlequins (twice), Coventry, London Welsh, Swansea and Gosforth. And make no mistake about it, this was the full-strength Richmond side, the strongest they had put for several weeks, with three internationals, three Blues and eight county players."

It was a cold, wet, windswept day and many spectators crowded into the clubhouse to watch the game as best they could from the windows. The 10-6 victory was assured when the referee, Alan Welsby, then a rising star in his own right, gave a penalty try to Waterloo as Mahon was impeded when about to fall on a bouncing ball over the Richmond line. In the clubhouse, members quite literally jumped about like whirling dervishes in the throes of ecstasy. Norman Curtis even had to be restrained from damaging himself as he pounded the window frame in front of him in a paroxysm of pleasure. A deep hunger to see the team do well was being satisfied.

It was the final turning point. Waterloo were now back in the big time and showing the confidence of a team that knows it. With the last kick of the season, Waterloo proved a new ascendancy by winning the Lancashire Cup at Fylde, beating Broughton Park 12-9.

A FAIR consistency, with two notable peaks, has characterised Waterloo's performance since the 1973-74 season of resurgence. Throughout it, Rob Atlay has presided as chairman of football, a post he will give up to become president of the club in 1983. His has been the team-building role once played by George Key, and he will leave the First XV squad in fundamentally good shape. Success rates against the 16 clubs ever-present since the war (the same criterion applied earlier to measure decline) show the evidence of recovery: 47 per cent in both 1973-74 and 1974-75, rising to 55,85,64,63 and 76 per cent for the following five seasons. The

peaks, in 1976-77 and 1979-80, are notable for several reasons, not least of which is the consistency of the team throughout each season. In each case, 31 victories were achieved, a club record.

It was no accident then that in April 1977 and April 1980 Waterloo should find themselves in two more finals, the former at Twickenham in the John Player Cup and the latter at Fylde, in a repeat of the 1974 Lancashire Cup Final. In each season the team played well for week after week and achieved both cup final places with some fine football and dogged fighting spirit.

Nothing typified better the Waterloo of 1976-77 than the team's performance against Bedford in the quarter-final of the John Player Cup. Waterloo's improving squad had that year been strengthened by new blood from St. Helens that included Keith Hancock, who joined Keith Lunt in the back row, and scrum-half Dave Carfoot. In the forwards Mai Billingham from the old guard soldiered on with Laurie Connor. In the backs, Ian Ball had finished his student days and was permanently available, and the same went for the new full-back, Steve Tickle. At centre, Geoff Jackson and Steve Christopherson had now had three years together to develop a deep understanding, and young Mark Flett had been put on one wing. Phil Mahon, having had two years as captain, retired to become coach and pulled off two

It's a goal! Ian Ball, one of the outstanding players of his generation, kicks a penahv from 50 yards in the John Plaver Cup Final at Twickenham, his captain, Fisher, having held the ball upright in the wind. Photograph: Stephen Shakeshaft, Liverpool Daily Post & Echo.

notable achievements off the field in persuading Ball, who considered himself "only" a centre, to succeed him as stand-off, and Nick Spaven, the displaced full-back, to play on the other wing. Many of the men now wearing the same colours as Jack Heaton before them had come from the same Cowley School stable. Merchant Taylors' contribution included the captain, Colin Fisher, the Scottish hooker. It was an outstanding squad, the best for years. The pity was that it was to play together for so relatively short a time. Among other changes Ball moved first to London, and then followed Tickle into rugby league.

In March 1977, however, any notion of impermanence was far from anyone's mind. Waterloo had already knocked London Irish and Middlesbrough out of the cup and now the players were to achieve a kind of immortality in their struggle with Bedford, for many in the large crowd were to go away remembering the game as the most exciting, even the greatest, they had ever seen. Peter Robbins, reporting it for the *Financial Times*, wrote that it would stand for ever as the best of testimonials to knock-out cup rugby.

Yet, midway through the second half, the score was 19-10 to Bedford and Waterloo looked like not being able to come back from the dead. The Bedford side was beginning to ooze confidence and seemed to be ready to cruise into the semi-finals, well in control. Then their world fell in. Ball intercepted a pass to Derek Wyatt as Bedford attacked. As he set off the 70 yards to the line few gave him any chance as Wyatt, a 100-metre sprinting champion, gave chase. But Ball, with controlled, almost imperceptible swerves, kept his pursuer just enough off balance to prevent his closing to tackle, and thus beat him to the line.

John Sinclair, in *The Observer,* wrote of what ensued: "Waterloo's inhibitions fell away at once and with Lunt and Connor winning valuable loose ball, Bedford found themselves under heavy pressure. They conceded a further try to Spaven, taking advantage of a long pass from Carfoot, and surrendered the lead when Ball let fly with a drop goal. With the home crowd roaring them on, Waterloo continued to press. Then they made what seemed a fatal mistake in allowing the dangerous Wyatt sufficient room to beat Spaven for a try in the corner, which Jorden converted.

"Even then it was not the end. With the match going into injury time and players dropping from cramp, exhaustion and injury, a wild fly-kicked clearance enabled Waterloo to mount one last desperate attack. Ball, showing all his old skills as a sevens specialist, carved his way through to the posts with the most subtle of dummies. His own conversion made victory complete."

A tense semi-final, in which Waterloo defended with what George Mackay in the *Daily Telegraph* called "fanatical zeal," saw Saracens fail to breach the Blundellsands line and lose 11-6. In the bath afterwards, the Waterloo team sang, to the tune *of Che Sera, Sera:* "Tell me Mam, me Mam/I don't want no scran, no scran/We're going to Twickenham/Tell me Mam, me Mam." The puzzled, dejected Saracens players had to have it explained to them that "scran" was Scouse for tea.

Alas, in the final the Waterloo players met their own Waterloo in the shape of Gosforth, then the best English club in the land, with four internationals in their ranks, two of them British Lions and in the back row, and the third flanker an uncapped Barbarian. Nevertheless, Waterloo, average age 24, managed two tries to cross a Gosforth line that had been unbreached by Coventry, Fullerians, Gloucester and London Welsh in the preceding rounds. The scoreline, 27-11, looked worse than it was, for Gosforth goaled their last try three minutes into injury time and Waterloo, though losing out two-to-one on possession, came close to scoring another of their own.

Three seasons later, the achievements of 1979-80 were less mercurial and more stolidly meritworthy from the point of view of teamwork. The genius of Ian Ball had gone; the match-winning power of Mick Burke had come, and gone to Widnes rugby league, the incomprehensible overlooking of the class of Steve Tickle by the Lancashire selectors had seen him leave for professional ranks; Colin Fisher changed clubs to be near his new business. New to the squad were good club men and two potential internationals, Mike Leach in the back row and Jim Syddall at lock. Laurie Connor, who had joined the club as a lock in the dark days of 1971, was captain and first choice for Waterloo, Lancashire, North West Counties and, after Uttley's retirement, the North at No. 8. Gareth Hopkin, who had joined Waterloo with Connor, had become coach.

By December, the squad was starting to "click" and had scored notable victories over St. Mary's Dublin, Wanderers, Nottingham, Liverpool, Sale and Bradford. London Irish and Leicester had been run close on their own grounds. Christmas was coming and Waterloo faced Pontypool on the Saturday before at Blundellsands, and Moseley at The Reddings on the Saturday after. Pontypool, crammed full of Welsh stars and led by Tery Cobner, found themselves 13 points down in as many minutes as Flett ran in two tries, one of which Maurice Cotter converted, and Carfoot dropped

a goal. Then, on the stroke of half-time, came a sickening blow for the visitors as their backs dropped the ball while flinging themselves at the Waterloo defence. Flett, who was out of position and would have been seriously embarrassed had Pontypool's pass gone to hand, darted between centre and wing, picked up the ball and outran the cover for 70 yards to the line to score his hat-trick.

There was still a half to survive, but Pontypool, try as they might, could not regain the initiative. Their set moves failed because Leach, who had played shortly before in the same Welsh 'B' side as four of the visitors, appeared to know what was coming. And though they put on some truly awesome rolling surges, Waterloo countered by giving ground, with forwards standing off and not being drawn in, until the opportunity came to fell the ball carrier. Pontypool were beaten 19-0 to suffer their first whitewash for seven years. George Mackay in the *Telegraph* hailed Waterloo's victory as "a triumph of flair and imagination over dull orthodoxy."

A week later at Moseley, Waterloo proved it had been no fluke, crushing the home side 19-3 and reducing the home crowd to bitter catcalling of their own players, the like of which Waterloo players could never recall in even their worst moments at Blundellsands. A month later, however, came a setback when

Waterloo's centenary captain, Laurie Connor, in action for Lancashire, leading Tony Neary and Roger Creed in a back-row charge. Connor has been a key figure in the Waterloo revival of the last ten years and is the first player since Jack Heat on to captain the club for four successive seasons. Photograph: Mike Brett, Daily Telegraph.

Liverpool bundled Waterloo out of the John Player Cup. Coventry and Gosforth then won. But Waterloo's resilience soon became apparent: of the 16 matches to the end of the season, 14 were won, the losses being to Northern away, 3-9, and Northampton away by a single point. Four of the victories, however, were in the Lancashire Cup, with Liverpool beaten in the quarterfinal, Fylde crushed 34-3 in the semi final (when Cotter alone scored 26 points) and

Connor, having scored the try that sealed the game, holds aloft the Lancashire Cup at the end of a 1979-80 season in which the record of 31 victories was equalled.

Broughton Park systematically overcome 12-0 in the final with a technique of rolling maul cribbed from Pontypool and practised in every subsequent match.

The two years that followed, leading up to Waterloo's centenary, were not so auspicious. Overall success rates dropped from 72 per cent to 55. The reasons why were two-fold: firstly, new players were coming through to be blooded, with all the dislocation to flow and continuity which that can produce if it cannot be managed gently; secondly, serious long-term injuries to key, experienced players made such management impossible. Leach missed both seasons with a seriously broken leg. Connor and the other first-choice flanker, Jasper Bartlett Jr, both missed nearly all of 1981 -82 after knee operations. The team suffered chastening experiences at Leicester and Cardiff.

Nevertheless, in 1981-82 an under-strength squad scored some famous victories away at Bedford, Northern and Harrogate. Wasps were defeated at Blundellsands and, then, in the last

match of Waterloo's ninety-ninth season, Pontypool, fresh from clinching the Welsh Merit Table championship, came to Blundellsands with five internationals and four 'B' internationals in their side to take revenge.

Waterloo moved any ball won so quickly to the wings that Dicky Heywood, Joe Periton, Sammy McQueen and Jack Heaton, had they witnessed it, might well have wondered if anything had ever changed at Blundellsands. A young, seasoned, but substitute back row, led by the season's stalwart, substitute skipper, Geoff Hay, harassed the Pontypool halfbacks into continuous error. Fisher, back at Waterloo having forsaken retirement, won the battle in the front row, despite Graham Price's control of its height, and rattled his opposite number into dire threats of what would happen when the return match was played at Pontypool Park in the centenary season. The Pontypool captain, Jeff Squire, intervened: "Shut your mouth and get on with it. There's still ten minutes of this game left and there's only one score in it!" But though the Welsh dragon charged again and again, roaring fire, Waterloo's griffin stood, roared back, and kept the attackers out with some fearsome tackling. The victory, at 14-9, was fully deserved.

It was a fine way to end the first 99 years, and a fine hint of potential worth in the next hundred.

The Internationals

DESPITE the fact that there are 34 of them, Waterloo cannot quite make up two XVs, complete with replacements, out of its international players. This is because no one from Waterloo has ever been capped at prop. There have been three full-backs, four wingers, five centres, two stand-offs, two scrum-halfs, three hookers, six locks, and nine loose forwards. But no props.

This single fact says much about Waterloo and its style of play. The club has had many good props, some of whom have done well at county and divisional level, and one of whom had an English trial, but none has ever reached the standard needed to win the game's highest honour. Perhaps one reason for this is that Waterloo has never been a club of dour scrummagers. Successive, successful packs have usually been renowned, not for their power of tight forward play, but for qualities such as mobility, handling skills, line-out technique, scientific or acrobatic hooking, stealing the ball in the loose, rock steady defence, tactical sense, and physical fitness. The way any forward has played in the loose has always been a key factor in Waterloo selection and some props have quite notably not always been the last forwards to the breakdown.

Whether the club's lack of international-class props dictated its style of play, or whether the style discouraged the emergence of such standards, is of course a chicken-or-egg question. The fact is that Waterloo's internationals are characterised, much more often than not, as outstanding running rugby players. Sometimes they were almost too clever in this department for their own good. As one contemporary said of the England scrum-half, Gordon "Shorty" Rimmer: "He was an absolute rugby genius in his own right. The only trouble was that he was so very difficult to play with. People could not keep up with him when he did the unconventional. They never knew where he was going to run."

In full-back Dick Uren's case, erraticism was said to be his failing, coupled with a disturbing habit of giving "phantom" dummies when unopposed. Gordon Macintosh recalls: "When he played for England for the first time, he did this behind his own line and unintentionally let go of the ball. It bounced away from him and they scored. As if to show us how it happened he did exactly the same thing next week at Waterloo against Leicester. Laugh? We almost died."

Both Gordon Rimmer and Dick Uren, however, were in the same select category as 14 other Waterloo internationals. These are the men who were sufficiently eminent to hold their positions for more than one year, so that they had international "careers" rather than odd "appearances." This also means, of course, that 20 of Waterloo's internationals each lasted only one season or less in their national teams. Indeed, one cynical view is that among Waterloo's records must be one for producing the greatest number of internationals to have won only one cap. This, however, is unfair to the players concerned: winning an international cap requires enormous dedication to the game and remains the major individual honour in rugby. No one should begrudge or disparage that. However, it is fair to say that there are classes of players even at the top. With 14 out of 34 having international careers of two years or more, Waterloo's share of the game's honours is by no means meagre, especially since nine of these spanned four seasons or more.

Jack Heaton had seven seasons at the top, the span actually covering 12 years because of the war, though this did not include three seasons from 1936-38 when the selectors were too timid to play him. Joe Periton played for six continuous seasons and Gordon Rimmer had six years and five seasons at the top, being recalled in 1954 after being dropped in 1953. Watcyn Thomas played six seasons for Wales, though only three were at Waterloo. Dicky Guest had one season on the wing before the war and four afterwards; Bert Toft was the England hooker for the four seasons 1936-39

inclusive, Alan "Ned" Ashcroft dominated the England back row for a similar continuous period exactly 20 years later, Reg Bazley's career covered three seasons in the four years 1952-55 inclusive, and Dick Greenwood's career would have done at least likewise but for a cruel accident off the field that robbed him of his English place and captaincy in 1969.

Positionally, the list of Waterloo's internationals is well spread, both on the field and over the years - sure signs of genuine long-term strength in depth. Periods shown below are inclusive, so that, for example, 1948-50 represents three years:-

Full backs:
Jack Wallens (1927)
Harold Uren (1946)
Dick Uren (1948-50)

Wings:
Graham Meikle (1934)
Dicky Guest (1939-49)
Reg Bazley (1952-55)
Peter Thompson (1959)

Centres:
Jack Heaton (1935-47)
Roy Leyland(1935)
N.O. "Nobby" Bennett (1948)
Robin Godfrey (1954)
Chris Jennins (1967)

Stand-offs:
Sammy McQueen (1923)
Steve Meikle (1929)

Scrum-halfs:
Jackie Me Arthur (1932)
Gordon Rimmer (1949-54)

Hookers:
Bert Toft (1936-39)
Alistair Fisher (1947)
Colin Fisher (1975-76)

Locks:
Raymond Bark-Jones (1933)
Allan Roy (1939)
Humphrey Luya (1948-49)
Sam Perry (1948)
Jasper Bartlett (1951)
Jim Syddall(1982-)

Loose-forwards:
Joe Periton(1925-30)
J.W. Scott (1928-30)
Roy Foulds(1929)
Watcyn Thomas (1931-33)
Eric Bole (1946)
Bob Weighill (1947-48)
John Cain (1950)
Alan Ashcroft(1956-59)
Dick Greenwood (1966-69)

After Sammy McQueen's four caps in 1923, the club had one fallow international season before Joe Periton's selection for England in 1925. From then until 1959, however, at least one Waterloo player was a current international in every season, and for 17 of those 34 years, there were two or more Waterloo men on international fields. Vintage years, from a representational point of view, were:-

1929:
Periton (Capt.),
Foulds, and S. Meikle (England);
Scott (Scotland).
1939:
Heaton,
Toft (Capt.), and Guest (England); Roy (Scotland).
1946:
Heaton (Capt.),
Guest, Bole and H. Uren.
1947: Heaton (Capt.), Guest and Weighill (England); A. Fisher (Scotland).
1948: Guest, W.eighill, Bennett, Luya, Perry and R. Uren.
1949: Guest, Luya and Rimmer. **1950:** R**.** Uren, Rimmer and Cain.

Relatives among the internationals are the Meikle brothers, the Uren brothers, and the father-and-son hookers, the Fishers.

The non-England internationals are, for Scotland, McQueen, Scott, McArthur, Roy and the Fishers; for Wales, Watcyn Thomas and Raymond Bark-Jones; and for Ireland, Robin Godfrey.

Not surprisingly, Colin Fisher and Jim Syddall are the only internationals still playing at first class level for Waterloo. Of those retired from first class play, Dick Greenwood helps with coaching and Alan Ashcroft still turns out occasionally for the Fifth and Sixth XVs. Ashcroft, who remains a dominant memory in British back row play, ended his international career with a Lions tour to Australia and New Zealand, where he played

two test matches at No. 8. He joined Waterloo from St. Helens in 1955 and won his first cap a year later at the age of 26. He was then ever-present in the England side, winning 16 caps.

Unluckiest among Waterloo's internationals must be Raymond Bark-Jones, Sammy McQueen and Dick Greenwood, Bark-Jones was selected for Wales at lock, though he played at wing-forward in the trial, and might have been in the side for many years had he not suffered a serious injury in his second international, which finished his career altogether. McQueen probably fell from grace because of one error, despite being the key player in a Scottish back division that, according to press reports, combined brilliantly in moves he initiated. One of the wingers was the 1924 Olympic gold medallist, Eric Liddell (immortalised in *Chariots of Fire)*. McQueen had the misfortune to attempt a lobbed pass which, in the dying minutes of the Calcutta Cup match, was intercepted for England to snatch victory and deprive Scotland of the Grand Slam and the Triple Crown, Greenwood, capped in 1966 and 1967, was dropped the following year but was recalled to captain England in 1969. At the time he was not popular with many senior officials in the game for his advocacy of squad training and, indeed, for organising such sessions. Two days before he was due to lead England against Ireland, an accident on the squash court closed an eye and he had to withdraw. Though he was expected to be reinstated for the next match, he was never asked to play for England again, paying the price, many felt, for outspokenness and for acting as something akin to the players' shop-steward.

Generally, however, Waterloo's roll of international honours must remain one of rugby's most impressive. The gamut of talents from Sammy McQueen to Jim Syddall covers nearly every aspect of the game and includes (as articles elsewhere in this booklet testify) giants of rugby in Watcyn Thomas, Bert Toft and Jack Heaton. Others, notably Joe Periton, Dicky Guest, Shorty Rimmer and Ned Ashcroft, dominated their positions for years. Even those who only briefly touched the rainbow's end of international fame nevertheless added to a lustre that will always reflect well on the club they served. Others, in time, schooled likewise in the tough pastures of Northern and county rugby, will undoubtedly follow.

On the walls of the Waterloo clubhouse, international caps are the only playing honours recorded for posterity. It is not that lesser honours are not valued, only that the immortality conferred by a few flakes of gold leaf on a wooden panel is reserved for the few who reach the very pinnacle of the game. At Waterloo, 34 have done it so far. Waterloo's name could not be what it is without them.

The Calcutta Cup match of 1939 was a vintage one for Waterloo, which had Jack Heaton, Ben Toft, Dicky Guest and Allan Roy on the field.

Presidents

1883-87 Rev. J.B. Richardson
1887-88 I. Glover
1888-91 H. Kyrke Smith
1891-96 Rev. C. de B. Winslow
1896-06 H. Kyrke Smith
1906-08 P.G. Hall
1908-10 G.A.H. White
1910-12 S. Hall
1912-21 E.R. Harpin
1921-22 T.R. Schofield
1922-24 R. Glass
1924-26 T.G. Roddick
1926-28 T. Brakell
1928-30 W. Woodward
1930-32 T.R. Schofield
1932-34 R.P. Heywood
1934-36 P.M. Quiggin
1936-38 A.D. Townshend
1938-41 C.R. Taylor
1941-45 A.D. Townshend
1945-47 F.A.P. Zacharias
1947-49 P.J. Taylor
1949-51 H.M. Radford
1951-53 G.L. Key
1953-54 A.H. Stenhouse
1954-56 K.H. Wilson
1956-58 S.S.C. Meikle
1958-60 T.A. Macfarlane
1960-62 C.C. Corkill
1962-64 J. Heaton
1964-66 G.A. Macintosh
1966-68 R. Bark-Jones
1968-70 C.E. Williams
1970-72 R.H. Guest
1972-74 J.C. Richards
1974-76 C.R. Eaton
1976-78 J.J. Simpson
1978-80 A. Crank
1980-82 J.A. Carter

Centenary President: J.C. Richards

Captains

1883-84 H.H. Hall
1884-85 S. Hall
1885-86 G. Holt
1886-87 W. Herron
1887-89 A. Unsworth
1889-90 G. Holt
1890-91 W.J. Herron
1891-92 H. Hewson
1892-93 H. Whitehead
1893-95 T.R. Schofield
1895-96 G. Brown
1896-98 T.R. Schofield
1898-00 P. Buckley
1900-03 R. Glass
1903-05 C.H.F. Bentley
1905-07 T. Brakell
1907-10 M. Morham
1910-12 E.T. Bark
1912-14 R.P. Heywood
1914-15 A.H. Stenhouse
1919-21 R.P. Heywood
1921-22 H.F. Dixon
1922-23 E.R.W. Bullen
1923-24 G.L. Key
1924-25 S.B. McQueen
1925-29 A.H. Rigby
1929-31 H.G. Periton
1931-33 S.S.C. Meikle
1933-37 E.H. Weld
1937-38 J.H. Chubb
1938-39 J. Heaton
1945-49 J. Heaton
1949-51 R.H. Guest
1951-54 J.J. Cain
1954-57 G. Rimmer
1957-59 J.B. Tattersall
1959-61 A. Ashcroft
1961-62 G.V.R. Watson
1962-64 G.O. Porritt
1964-66 J.J. Simpson
1966-68 J.R.H. Greenwood
1968-69 J. Lascelles
1969-71 D.G. Bowman
1971-72 W. French
1972-73 M.F. Billingham
1973-74 R.G. Hopkin
1974-76 P.S.Mahon
1976-77 C.D. Fisher
1977-78 S.G. Tickle
1978-79 S.G. Tickle
C.D. Fisher
1979-82 L. Connor

Centenary Captain: L. Connor

Waterloo F. C. thank the following for their generous assistance in the production of this booklet:-

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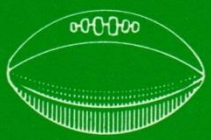

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warmly congratulates

Waterloo Football Club

on its Centenary