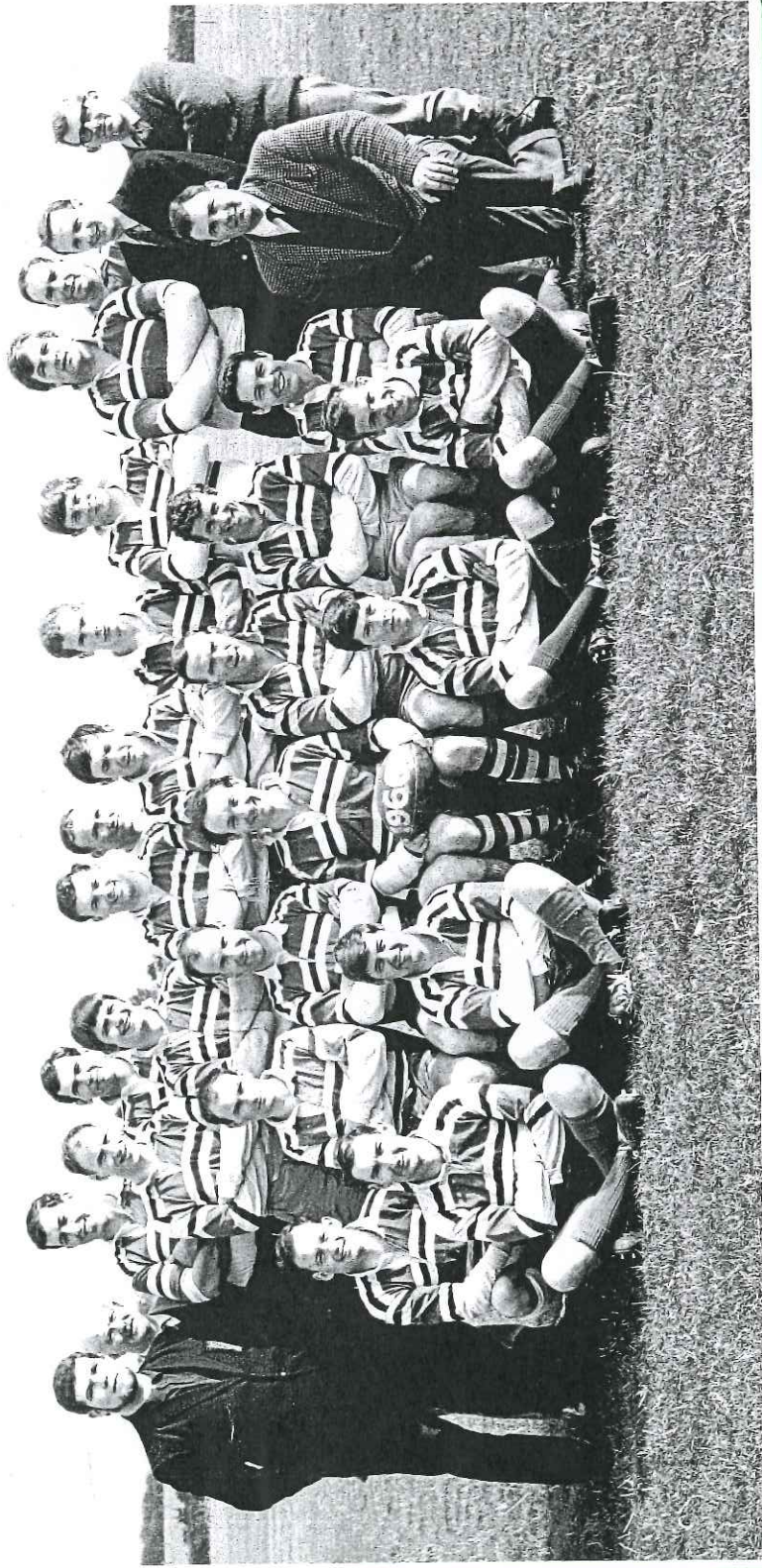




PLYMOUTH ARGAUM RFC

**A CAPTAIN'S YEAR
1966- 1967**

Bill Ryan 2018



Plymouth Argaum RFC 1966/67

M.Oliver T.Hitchins J.Stocker P.Bond F.Lavis F.Craig C.Sutton G.Bryant C.Tucker J.Curtis F.Rogers C.Pascoe
E.Rees D.Martin C.Lavers

Seated: M.Scantlebury S.Morrow B.Ryan G.Johnstone J.Ellis P.Green J.Siely (kneelt)
C.Charleston (crouching) A.Blonden A.Kirby P.Beed J.Perring

A CAPTAIN'S YEAR 1966/67

In 1966 I was elected captain of Plymouth Arguam during which I kept a detailed account of our season and which I would like to share . I had played for the club from schooldays at St Boniface's College and when home from University in Dublin and latterly St Mary's College Twickenham. it was through an Arguam contact, Frank Kingwell, that I learnt of a position in Saltash which finally brought me back to the area, having spent two years in Bristol and a term in Whitleigh Secondary Mod. school in 1965. I joined the staff of Saltash School in January 1966 , the school being the first in Cornwall to adopt the comprehensive scheme.

Arguam had a proud history and was considered one of the top junior clubs in both Devon and Cornwall. It had a long association with St Boniface but also with other Public and Grammar Schools, notably West Buckland and Shebbear College, together with a number of professionals in the area. It was also beginning to produce a number of talented local boys, notably from King's Tamerton Sec. Mod. through a staff member Bill Farren who was also a Club member, resulting in a good blend of youth and experience.

At that time Arguam was deemed a " junior" club making it difficult to take on so called better opposition. This was the case in Devon, prompting Arguam to seek higher status in Cornwall, which was unsuccessful. Nonetheless Arguam did manage a few fixtures outside the traditional list, most notably meeting and beating Camborne on their home turf and causing consternation among one of Cornwall's most famous clubs as the many press reports revealed. It was only when the League system was introduced that this division ended, allowing clubs to find their own level.

I did not consider myself captain material and relied heavily on players around me with leadership qualities, notably amongst the forwards while I was blessed with some talented three quarters. Nonetheless I feel that my contribution on the field allowed me to hold my head up in the dressing room after the game.

My first task as captain however was to take delivery of four trees donated from Lord Roborough's estate which needed stripping, knotting and painted before being carried up to the pitch and erected - no mean task! I also had the job of mastering the hot water boiler , a Heath Robinson type apparatus and most unreliable; switching it on was one of my first tasks on arrival at the Club for a game. The water heated two large concrete baths and by and large was up to the job, though one had to ignore the thin layer of scum from sheep droppings brought back from the pitch and goodness knows what life forms lurking beneath the surface. It was not advisable to sit on the hot water pipe that fed into the baths!

Training was a peremptory affair in those days, consisting mostly of a lot of touch/ unopposed rugby and the occasional fitness session. The backs and the forwards would practice the odd move but rarely combined . Player development was non existent beyond the skills and techniques instilled at school. There was little in the way of pre match warm ups while post match debriefing was confined to a chat in the bar following the game. Few clubs had a coach by today's reckoning. Selection was held during the week with players notified by postcard where required. All games were " friendly" but vigorously contested nonetheless. Replacements were not allowed. At that time Argaum ran four teams , one playing on Wednesday afternoons to accommodate those working in shops which were closed at that time. There was also a Colts/ Under 18 team. Evening games were played both early and

late in the season when touring teams would visit at Easter.

Cancellation of games due to lack of players was extremely rare. First aid treatment consisted of a bucket and sponge ; oranges were provided at half time. There did not seem to be the number of injuries as seen in the game nowadays, resulting in good team cohesion.

The Argaum clubhouse featured an open fire but was otherwise unremarkable. Post match food consisted of an Ivor Dewdney pasty while entertainment usually revolved around rugby songs.

The pitch was at walking distance from the Clubhouse and exposed at times to bitterly cold winds off Dartmoor but otherwise had a good playing surface, being grazed and nourished by sheep through the summer months.

The Club put on a pantomime at Xmas , written by a Mrs Peggy Hitchins, wife of one of the Club stalwarts, Tom, with clever references to Club members woven into the script. Transport to games was normally by car. Not having one myself I had to rely on others, choosing my driver with a degree of caution due to the then lax drinking laws. Nonetheless I did endure a number of anxious trips home after an away game.

The match reports , written 40 years ago , contain amendments, mostly with regard to length.

The first match of the season was at home to a Police Xv, KO 6.15 pm. I cannot recall if this was a Metropolitan Police team on tour or the local force. Argaum won 6/3.

Team: C.Charleston, M.Scantlebury, Rip Kirby, J.Price, C. Cooms, W.Ryan, C.Lavers, F.Lavis, F.Rogers, D.King, J.Stocker, B.Rees, I.Cooper, P.Green and G.Johnstone.

D.King : pen. P. Green try - gathering a loose ball and crashing over in the corner.

Conditions were dry. Argaum played against the wind in the first half..The Police dominated the second half up front, monopolising the ball, especially so in the line outs. Argaum relied on mistakes made by the opposition, especially at half back, and might have scored more nonetheless.

Home v Brixham. Sept 3rd KO 3.15 pm

Team : P. Clarke in centre. J.Price moves to flanker.

Result : Argaum 14 Brixham 6 Conditions: dry.

Scorers : Kirby : pen and try. Ryan try from break by Lavers. P. Green try :crashing over from line out. Cooms try from long chase up field.

Almost continuous pressure from Brixham in first half using wind and

sun to advantage with high kicks. Brixham led 6/0 at the break with try and penalty despite being a man down. Argaum employed same tactics in the second half along with superior weight and fitness to finish deserving winners. A fast and entertaining game.

Home v Newquay Hornets : Sept 10th KO 3.30 pm

Team : S. Morrow @ 15; J.Ellis replaces Scantlebury on wing.

Result : Argaum 11 Newquay Hornets 8 Conditions: dry.

Scorers: R.Kirby : pen , try - F. Rogers picks up from a wheeled scrum, scissors with Ryan who feeds Price to put Kirby over. J.Ellis: try - ball worked across field right to Ellis who dummies to score.

A good win ; might have been a wider margin.Forwards were excellent but backs not so effective on the day. Argaum led at half time. 8/3 .

Newquay drew level . Argaum score winning try in last 5 minutes after pounding the visitors' line.

A good enjoyable game played in excellent spirit.

Away @ Totnes Sept 17 th

Result: Totnes 5 Argaum 13 Conditions: warm dry day.

Team .unchanged .

Scorers: Ryan : try - from a dummy scissors with centre Clarke, touching down close to posts.

J. Price : try - fielding a X kick from the wing. R.Kirby : two conversions and penalty.

Argaum maintained pressure throughout the half but only led by two converted tries at the break. Totnes came back in the second half with a converted try by Mungo . A long range penalty from Kirby settled the game in Argaum's favour.

Home v O. Heleans (Exeter) Sept. 24th.

Result : Argaum 29 O. Heleans 0.

Team :C. Charleston returns at 15. D. Martin @ 11 and A. Blonden @ 13. M. Oliver replaces I.Cooper at prop.

Scorers: try each: J Price, F.Rogers, W. Ryan, J.Ellis, D.Martin, M. Martin, R.Kirby who also kicked 4 conversions.

The visitors were overwhelmed in all aspects of the game and proved no match for Argaum, forwards and backs combining with effect. Price scored from a kick ahead by winger Ellis. Rogers touched down following good approach work by Lavis and Green. Scrum half Lavers collected a long line out throw by Price to put Ryan clear. Kirby kicked two conversions to give Argaum a clear interval lead. Argaum maintained pressure after the break, scoring 4 more tries : J.Ellis scored following a break away by Green. Good handling by the whole team brought tries from Kirby and newcomer Oliver. Martin completed the scoring, showing great tenacity in chasing and collecting the ball after being dispossessed. An excellent team victory.

Away @ Launceston October 1st.

Result : Launceston 5 Argaum 21.

Team: N. Clarke comes in @ No 2

Scorers: B.Rees : try , J.Price 2 tries, D. Martin try, R.Kirby try and 3 conversions.

A hard earned victory. The home pack proved tough opponents. Argaum took the lead with a try from lock Rees, wingman Martin making the initial break. The Launceston pack continued to press , scoring from a quick line out close to the Argaum line. Argaum gradually wrestled the initiative away from the home team, forcing errors at half back. Flanker Price scored two tries, dispossessing on each occasion a home player near the try line. Ryan then collected a rebound and put Kirby in under the posts. Finally the Argaum pack came away with the ball at their feet leading to a try from Martin, Price and Blonden contributing to the move.

Away to Dartmouth College BRNC 2nd XV. Oct. 8 th

Result : College 6 pts Argaum 28 pts

Team : Peter Green moves to hooker in place of Nobby Clarke. M.Oliver is at prop.

Scorers: C. Lavers, W.Ryan , J.Price : try each . J.Ellis : 3 tries .

R.Kirby : try, pen. 2 con.

A one sided match with Argaum superior in all departments. Lavers opened the scoring,pouncing on an error close to the home line. The Argaum back row took full advantage of hesitation among the home backs to score twice more through Ellis on the wing and centre Kirby who also kicked a penalty.

From a tap penalty inside the Argaum 25 yds the ball was worked to Ryan who scored, Kirby adding the extras . Leading 17/3 at the break Argaum remained on top. Pressure lead to flanker Price touching down, Kirby converting, and, later, combining with Ellis to provide the latter with a hat trick. The College added a late penalty through Gilbert to their first half penalty but could have no complaints about the margin of defeat.

Away to Brixham Oct. 15 th

Result : Brixham 0. Argaum 6 pts

Team : D. Water worth comes in at No 15

Scorers : A. Blonden : try , R. Kirby : pen.

A very mediocre match with neither side able to play constructive rugby. This was Argaum's worst display of the season so far, but by making good use of the slope in the second half managed to wrest a win. Centre Blonden scored the only try of the match, showing great determination near the line after Price had broke from a loose scrum. Kirby added a penalty to complete the scoring. An early penalty by Brixham hit an upright.

Home to Plymouth Albion Utd. Oct. 22nd.

Result : Draw 3/3

Team : Charleston returns at No 15; Dave King steps in for John Stocker who was injured at work.

Scorers : F. Rogers : try

A game played in driving rain throughout. Both teams relied on opponents mistakes in the treacherous conditions. Line outs and mauls prevailed in amongst foot rushes. Albion took the lead with a penalty but were reduced to 13 men due to injuries. Argaum struggled to get into the game despite this numerical advantage. From a scrum close to the visiting line Ryan took the ball on the burst but, when held up, managed to ship the ball to Rogers who scored to equalise. The game ended with Argaum on the offensive but unable to add to their tally .

Away to Exeter Saracens . Oct 29 th

Result : Saracens 3 pts Argaum 0

Team : Chris Tucker for D. King.

Argaum lose their unbeaten run to a penalty despite having much of the game. In good conditions the Argaum back division lacked penetration against a stubborn defence, sometimes over kicking and guilty of handling errors.

Home to Kingsbridge Nov 4th

Result : Argaum 6 pts. Kingsbridge 10

Team: Ryan moves to centre Kirby to No 10. Johnstone to lock.

Scorers : try J.Ellis, C.Lavers.

In ideal conditions Argaum got off to a good start scoring twice . Ryan broke following a scrum to send Ellis over in the corner. Full back Charleston then initiated a counter attack , supported by Price whose cross kick found Oliver leading to some fine handling among the home pack and Lavers receiving the final pass to score, again in the corner. Neither try was converted. Argaum held on to this lead at the interval. Kingsbridge gradually got into the game resulting in two tries from breaks by their No 10 , both of which were converted. Argaum finished the stronger but failed to add to their score.

Footnote : the games against Kingsbridge were always tough encounters and wins were rare. Kingsbridge possessed two outstanding backs Mike Hobbs at 10 and Mundy, a small but lethal tackler in the centre. I do not know why I was playing at centre on this occasion. The following year I was injured at Kingsbridge in a game Argaum won. This led me to consider retiring along with other factors relating to family and work commitments. It was also the year when an Argaum player Peter Bond collapsed when playing at Barnstaple, resulting in him being confined to a wheelchair. It transpired that the injury was not rugby related but nonetheless was a factor in my decision to call it a day. As a result I began to get more involved with rugby coaching at Saltash School eventually leading to the formation of the Saltash Rugby Club in 1969.

Away to OPMs. Nov 11 th

Result: Argaum 27. OPMs 0

Team: Geoff Bryant comes in on the wing for D. Martin. Peter Bergum replaced Lavers at 9 who was injured.

Scorers : Price try - winning the scramble for a touch down. Bryant try - from break by Ryan. C. Tucker try - won scramble in dead ball area. Bryant try - break by Price . F. Lavis try - scrum wheel and push over. Blonden try - break by Bryant , followed by junk and dummy. Ryan try- dribbling dropped ball and wining the touch down. Kirby 3 con.

The Press report says I scored three tries but my records show Bryant as being one the 7 try scorers.

Away to Launceston Nov 19th

Result Launceston 10pts Argaum 6 pts

Team: unchanged. Scorers : R.Kirby pen , J. Ellis try

Argaum had most of the first half but had to be content with a single penalty by Kirby against a converted try by Launceston taking advantage of a short penalty. In the second half the home pack took control but Argaum had a fair share of the line out and in loose play. J. Ellis gave Argaum the lead once more , chasing a kick ahead from Price, Charleston having broken up field but another converted try by Launceston once again handed the initiative to the home team. G. Bryant was crash tackled into touch in the dying moments. This was a stronger Launceston side than that played earlier in the season. Johnstone, Price and Rogers were prominent for Argaum with Charleston and Bryant the pick of the three quarters.

Home to Exeter A. Nov 26th

Result Argaum 0. Exeter A 8 pts

Team : Dave Waterworth at 15 for Charleston.

This was Argaum's first fixture with this team. Prop Oliver was injured early on and had to retire. With 14 men Argaum still created chances. The game was played at a faster pace than accustomed due to the standard of the opposition. This was now Argaum's fourth defeat in 5 games.

Away to Devonport Services A Xv Dec. 3rd

Result : Services 6pts Argaum 12 pts

Team : Colin Charleston returns at full back, Colin Sutton makes first appearance on the wing. Dave Martin is shown at No 10 with Kirby at scrum half. Clive Pascoe debuts in the second row.

Scorers: G. Bryant : try , Sutton: try , Kirby 2 pen.

An excellent win. Services fielded a number of 1st team regulars including Devon player Newsom at fly half. The Argaum defence was stretched at times but their tenacity won through in the end. Two penalties from Kirby gave Argaum a 6/0 lead at half time. Services pressed hard in the second half, scoring a penalty. Argaum however retaliated with a try, Martin making a long cross field run to give centre Bryant a scoring pass. Services kicked a second penalty. Argaum skipper Ryan then pounced on a dropped ball on the half way to feed Kirby who put Sutton over to ensure a hard earned win and end a losing spell.

Home v Okehampton. Dec. 10 th
Result : Argaum 17. Okehampton 3

Team : Blonden returns at centre. Bryant replaces Ellis on the wing.
Scorers : Kirby : pen. and con. Ryan : drop goal and try ; F. Rogers : try.

Okehampton had a player Arthurs sent off early on, Kirby landing an easy penalty. Okehampton were rarely seen in the home half. The home backs ran and handled well in the slippery conditions with a blustering cross wind. A drop goal from Ryan extended the Argaum lead, and the same player followed up with a try after a dropped pass was chased upfield. Kirby's conversion attempt hit the upright. A break by Martin with Blonden and Ryan combining then led to Sutton scoring in the corner. Argaum flanker Fred Rogers who had an outstanding games added another try from a defensive error.

Footnote : my notes and the press report show Argaum scoring a try from Sutton but this does not tally with the total . It also shows Ryan as kicking a penalty, not a drop goal ; the latter is more likely. Also my notes show Okehampton scoring a try and penalty to make their total 8 against 20.

Home to Salcombe Dec. 17 th
Result : Argaum 25. Salcombe 3

Team: no change

Scorers: J.Price : try. G. Bryant : 2 tries; Ryan 2 tries; Lavis : try ;
Sutton : try. Kirby : 2 con.

A one sided affair. Argaum well on top. Price opened the scoring in the corner, a Salcombe player misfielding a kick ahead from Kirby. Bryant added another try again in the corner, Price fielding a cross kick from Charleston, to give Argaum a 6/0 lead at the interval.

The first attacking move in the second half saw Sutton and Ryan combine for Ryan to score out wide. From a scrum wheel Argaum No 8 Lavis crossed for his first try of the season, Kirby adding the extras. A scissors move by Ryan and Blonden then put Sutton in for his second try. Price, again, added the extra man in a passing movement resulting in another try from Bryant. Salcombe rarely threatened. Ryan was then on hand to receive a scoring pass from Sutton and touch down under the posts for Kirby to convert. . Salcombe managed a try late in the game, their fly half running through some weak defence.

Home to OPMs. Dec 26 th

Result : Argaum 26 pts OPMs 0 pts

Team: Vice Captain Stewart Morrow plays at No 15 for Charleston. Ian Cooper is at prop in place of G Johnstone.

Scorers: J. Price : 2 tries. Ryan : try and drop goal. B. Rees : try.

Pascoe : try . Kirby 4 con.

A clear win for Argaum in this long standing fixture. OPMs were well beaten up front and hampered by an injury to fly half Mercer who ended the game on the wing. Price opened the scoring early with a fine individual try converted by Kirby. Ryan added a drop goal and then combined with Martin to put Rees over, Kirby converting. Argaum stayed on the offensive, handling the slippery ball well. A foot rush from a loose scrum resulted in Price touching down again for Kirby to convert. Pascoe then broke from a line out to crash over for a debut try which Kirby adding the extras. Ryan completed the home total winning a scramble for the ball in the dead ball area. Kirby' s conversion out wide came close.

Footnote : this traditional fixture, I am pleased to say, continues despite all the changes in the game structure since the introduction of leagues.

Home to Launceston. Dec. 31st

Result : Argaum 3 pts. Launceston 0 pts

Team: unchanged.

Scorers : Ryan : try.

Despite the narrow margin , Argaum deserved the win, the pack giving a fine performance against normally heavier opposition. Conditions underfoot were slippery. Launceston used the touch line to effect and relied on foot rushes. Sutton finished the game for Argaum on the wing, having pulled a hamstring early on. Ryan scored the only try, the Launceston full back misfielding the ball which was hacked on by Lavis and Price for Ryan to win the touch down.

Away to Crediton. Jan.7 th

Result Crediton 8 pts. Argaum 8 pts

Team: Mike Scantlebury (no doubt home from University) plays on the wing in place of Colin Sutton who was injured . G. Johnstone replaces Barry Rees, also injured, in the second row.

Scorers : J.Price : try. C. Pascoe : try. Kirby con.

This was Argaum' s first fixture against Crediton for ten years in its search for senior status. Trailing by 8 pts late in the game Argaum finished strongly and could have won the game. Conditions underfoot were very heavy . Crediton had the edge in the loose scrums and denied Argaum useful possession. Crediton led by 3 pts at the break, Blonden forced by injury to move to the wing and Argaum now having to contend with the slope. The home team added a converted try shortly after the interval to go 8 pts clear but with Pascoe and Johnstone more prominent in the line outs and Tucker winning the hooking duel Argaum began to exert more pressure. A good kick by Martin put Argaum into the Crediton 25 yds zone. From the line out Price swooped on a loose ball and jinked over for an excellent try. Kirby failed to convert but Argaum were now back in the game: Scantlebury was tackled into touch in the corner while a push over try was not allowed. Another excellent scrum from Argaum however finally produced a try attributed to Johnstone, Kirby converting to level the score. The final whistle game with Argaum on top and the home team hard pushed to keep them out. The press report describes the forward battle as "stern ".

Away to Salcombe : Jan. 14 th

Result : Salcombe 5 pts. Argaum 6 pts.

Team : Freddie Craig debut for the injured Blonden.

Scorers : Kirby : try and penalty.

Salcombe proved stronger opposition than in an earlier encounter but remained a limited threat. Salcombe scored first with a try from their fly half which was converted and led by 5 pts at half time. Argaum began the second half as they finished the first on the offensive but finally had to be satisfied with a somewhat dubious blind side try from Kirby who later kicked a penalty 10 minutes from the end.

Home to South Molton. Jan. 21st

Result : Argaum 14 pts S.Molton 6

Team : S. Morrow M Scantlebury. G.Bryant B. Ryan J.Ellis. D.Martin
R.Kirby. F.Lavis F.Rogers J.Price C.Pascoe. G.Johnstone I. Cooper
C.Tucker P. Green

Scorers : Ryan 2 tries Kirby try, drop goal , con.

Argaum made hard work of this win, handing numerous penalties to the visitors who goaled only one. Argaum scored first ,Ryan picking up a loose ball to touch down after Pascoe had made an initial break. Despite heavy overnight rain the pitch played well, making handling easy. S.Molton replied with a drop goal before Argaum recovered their lead, Price pouncing on a rare fumble by the visiting full back to put Kirby over. After the interval Kirby added a drop goal to his tally. The visitors came back with a penalty but Argaum had the final say, the back row led by Rogers dispossessing the opposing No 10 and the ball reaching Ryan via Bryant to score. Kirby's conversion took him past the century for the season to date.

Away to Camborne Jan 28 th

Result : Camborne 3 pts. Argaum 8 pts

Team : Blonden returns at centre. Bryant moves to the wing to replace Scantlebury.

Scorers: Rogers try. Price try. Kirby con.

A historic win for Argaum in their bid for higher status. The win was all the more remarkable as Argaum played a part of the game with 14 men when Martin suffered a broken shin early in the second half with his team trailing by 3 pts.

Footnote : this win sent shockwaves through the Cornish rugby fraternity and especially so in Camborne. It drew many comments from the press in the area and much soul searching among the members of Camborne RFC. It will go down as one of Argaum's finest achievements in its long history.

At one stage in the game Argaum had won a line out in their own 25 but the ball went to ground Scrum half Kirby, rather than risk a kicking , tapped the ball back to me with his boot. I managed to pick it up and clear it but made my displeasure evident. Rip's reply? - better you than me !

This game against a recognised senior side was played at the County ground. Despite recent heavy intermittent rain the pitch was in good shape and handling was not a problem. Argaum won the toss and placed into a stiff breeze in the first half. The heavier home pack ensured a good supply of ball but their backs rarely posed a serious threat. Camborne led by three points at the break from a scrum close in, their scrum half breaking wide and passing inside to the blindside wing. With the wind now in their favour Argaum tested the Camborne full back with high kicks and began to threaten more. Following the injury to Martin, Ryan moved to stand off with flanker Price joining the backs. From a scrum close to the Camborne line Rogers pounced on a loose ball from a wheel to score under the posts, Kirby's conversion giving Argaum the lead. Both sides threatened but it was Argaum who scored next. A relieving kick from Blonden in mid field put Argaum in the home 25. Johnstone was first to jump, patting the ball down to Price who had repositioned himself on the wing and who crashed over to touch down. Kirby failed with the conversion but Argaum held on comfortably to their lead to emerge the deserved victors.

Away to South Molton. Feb. 4th

Result : S.Molton 9 pts. Argaum 9 pts.

Team. F.Craig replaces Blonden who was injured. Peter Bond steps up to replace Martin.

Scorers: Ryan try and drop goal. Kirby try

A lethargic display after the previous encounter at Camborne and the long journey. After 20 minutes S.Molton led with 6 pts and Argaum somewhat adrift in spirit and execution. Argaum upped their game after the interval with the slight slope in their favour. A kick ahead by Ryan was misjudged by the home full back. Bryant following up gained possession for Rogers to continue the move and send Ryan over. Ryan then added a drop goal from in front of the home posts . Argaum began to scent a victory. Kirby dispossessed his opposite number and set off down field, chipping the fullback for a fine individual try, albeit failing the conversion. Scrum half Shepherd for the home team crossed for an unconverted try from a series of five yard scrums ensuring a draw in a game that rarely reached consistent heights.

Home to Brittonia College Reserves. Feb. 11th

Result : Argaum. 25 pts. BRNC 0 pts

Scorers : Bond try. Bryant try. Ryan try. Kirby -16 pts

Team : Ryan is back at stand half. Bond is at centre . No change in the pack.

The College were no match for Argaum who in better conditions might have doubled their tally. Rogers charged down a 25 yd restart to put Bond over in the corner. Bond then made the initial break to put Bryant clear in the opposite corner. Argaum were set for victory. Price retrieved a badly executed 25 yd drop out and broke through some weak tackling to send Kirby over and convert. Kirby added a well judged penalty to put Argaum further ahead. Against the wind after the interval Argaum maintained their dominance with centres Blondin and Bond a continuous threat and the Argaum back row enjoying the freedom. Ryan's grub kicks also stretched the visiting defence. From a surge upfield by the home back row Kirby at scrum half was on hand to score and add the extras. A blind side move ended with Ryan touching down before Kirby ended a long upfield break to add another try to his tally which he converted.

The result is shown as 25 pts but my report shows Kirby notching 18 pts and not 16 pts.

Away to Okehampton Feb. 18th

Result : Okehampton 0 pts Argaum 9 pts.

Scorers : Price try . Ryan drop goal. Kirby pen.

Team : R. Curtis replaces Bond at centre. Scantlebury is back on the wing. Stocker returns after a long break.

Atrocious conditions under foot and driving rain. Ugh! Argaum played wind the elements in the first half. Price scored a try from loose play resulting from a 5 yd scrum. Ryan 's drop goal extended the lead.

Okehampton were rarely out of their half. With the wind in against them in the condition half Argaum's pack ensured that they retained the initiative ,denying Okehampton useful possession. Pascoe and Stocker being prominent . Half backs Ryan and Kirby handled with assurance. A late penalty into the wind by Kirby settled the issue for Argaum who lost flanker Price with an injured knee in the last quarter.

Home to RNAS Culdrose Feb.25 th

Result : Argaum 6 pts. RNAS Culdrose 8 pts.

Scorers : Ryan try. Scantlebury try.

Team : P Bergum comes in for Kirby at scrum half. Dave Blackeney debuts at flanker .

Minus regulars, Price and Kirby, Argaum gave a good account of themselves and scored 6 points into the wind: Ryan making a break and receiving a pass from Curtis to score in the corner. Scantlebury added a penalty but Culdrose were proving difficult opposition. Trailing by 6 points the visitors were soon on the board after the interval with a try and conversion, adding a penalty when the Argaum back row infringed. The game ended with Argaum on the attack but unable to overtake their visitors.

Home to Exeter Saracens. March 4th

Result : Argaum 19 Saracens 6

Team. Charleston is back at No 15., replacing Cook. Rip Kirby returns at scrum half. Geoff Perring makes a first appearance at flanker , replacing Dave Blackeney. John Price is still injured.

Scorers. Perring, Blonden, Scantelbury : try each. Pascoe two tries . Scantlebury con. Kirby con.

With both sides prepared to play open rugby this proved an attractive game with the Argaum pack proving the greater threat. Saracens scored first with a try. The Argaum back row then engineered a try for flanker Perring in his debut. A break by Ryan ended with Pascoe up in support to touch down. A chase initiated by Scantlebury finished when Ellis picked up to give a scoring pass to Blonden and give Argaum a clear interval lead.

In the second half Kirby , "in irrepressible form". began to break more from the scrum base, one break finding Ryan in support who fed Scantlebury, the winger taking a difficult pass to beat the opposing full back for a fine individual try which Kirby converted from wide out. Saracens continued to play good rugby but the Argaum defence was

well led by Blonden. The Argaum pack settled the issue, forcing a push over scrum, Pascoe being awarded the try over Lavis. Saracens meantime scored a consolation penalty. Once again Argaum belied their junior status with this display.

Footnote : the Press report shows Kirby getting two conversions and Blonden two tries.

Away to Plymouth Albion Utd

Result : Albion 6 pts. Argaum 6 pts.

Team. Sutton returns on the wing after injury.

Scorers. Blonden drop goal Kirby

This was the first time Argaum shared honours with this Albion team which, on the day, featured two County players at hooker and flanker. They were also the more powerful unit up front but the Argaum eight were not found wanting despite some strong arm tactics. The match was not played in a very sportmanlike manner, one fracas leading to an Albion player being dismissed from the field. Albion were first on the scoreboard with a penalty, Stocker being penalised for not releasing. A well judged drop goal by Argaum centre Blonden levelled the scores early in the second half. Kirby, with a penalty, then gave Argaum the lead, an opponent penalised for foul play. The home team finished the stronger however, equalising with a penalty in front of the posts. Overall a dull encounter with the strong wind hindering open play.

Away to Old Heleans. March 18th

Result : Old Heleans 12. Argaum 9pts

Team : Peter Bond stepped in at No 10, Ryan being unable to travel.

Argaum found themselves 9 pts down in the half hour and facing the slope but recovered to 9/6 at the break. The visiting pack gained the advantage after the interval to level the scores but a breakaway try against the run of play proved the winning score.

An Extract from History of Ply. A.R.F.C.

Billy Ryan, associated with the Club from his school days, a fast breaking, incisive, quick thinking stand off half took over the captaincy, whilst Rip Kirby returned from his Plymouth Albion excursion to operate the base of the scrum.

The 1st XV made an encouraging start by going without defeat until 29th October but thereafter "stuttered" somewhat (despite a double over Salcombe) and recovered in the period January to March to score 6 wins 2 draws and a defeat. The results included creditable wins over Launceston and Exeter Saracens and away draws with Crediton and Newquay Homets. There were narrow defeats at Tiverton 0-3, St Marys Old Boys 6-8 and "C" Division 3-6.

My notes dry up after this entry- I cannot remember or explain why; perhaps I had come to end of the school exercise book I had used.

Thereafter the following games were played:

Mar. 25 th : Home to Old Perseans on tour : lost 28/5 :our heaviest defeat.

Mar. 26/27 th : no games played.

April 1st : Away to Kingsbridge : lost 19/6

The Press report comments on the high standard of play by both sides. Argaum had the better of the second half but met with some "devastating" tackling. Kirby kicked two penalties.

April 8th : Away to Tiverton : lost 3/0

April 12th : Home to Plymouth Police : won 6/0

The Press report mentions Argaum's excellent handling. Argaum took the lead when Richmond - a new name, passed to Blonden who ran half the length of the field to score in the corner. Kirby added a try following a series of five yard scrums.

April 15th : Away to Exeter A : lost 19/6

April 22nd : Away to Barnstaple A : won 14/6

April 29th : Away to Newquay : Draw 8/8

The record for the season shows as follows:

Played : 39 Won 22. Draws 5 Lost 12. Points for 429. Against 252

EPILOGUE

Although 39 games were played my records stopped at 30. Flanker Fred Roger played in all thirty as did No 8 Frank Lavis and prop Peter Green , all products of Bill Farren and of Kings Tamerton Secondary Modern. I played in 29 of them with Jeff Johnstone and Rip Kirby who made 28 appearances and finally John Price 26 , Tony Blonden from St Boniface College 22 and hooker Chris Tucker, also from St Boniface, with 21 games recorded. Overall 33 players were used although I spotted the name Richmond in Press reports after my records ceased. I doubt if in the game today this consistency would be the case. For many games the front and back rows barely altered.

Rip Kirby topped the scorers with 129 pts from the 30 games recorded from tries, conversions, penalties and the occasional drop goal. Bill Ryan scored 20 tries with two drop goals. Price made 12 touch downs.

Reading these accounts after so many years produced a number of interesting points. Loose scrums are mentioned although I did stumble upon the term " ruck" on one occasion. Also frequent were kick and chase/ foot rushes resulting in a number of tries.

The back row of Price, Lavis and Rogers was outstanding, putting pressure on the opposing half backs, with John Price, a Welshman, more often than not benefitting from the ensuing chaos. John was an exceptional talent. He had led the side the previous season. I never saw Fred Rogers miss a tackle while Frank Lavis was always in the thick of things. Both Frank and Fred proved stalwarts of the club. Rip Kirby was also a talented footballer, rarely ruffled and comfortable with ball in hand and with a good boot. He went on to play for Devon, having left Argaum to play for Plymouth Albion.

The injury to Colin Lavers was a blow. He was a powerful scrum half and in many ways an additional flanker in and around the scrums. Dave Martin's injury also had an impact. Had both been more available more wins might have resulted. The loss of Lavers forced changes at half back and in the centre.

The front five was solid and rarely took a step back. They also possessed a lot of experience in the shape of Jeff Johnstone and policeman Barry Rees, both wily operators. I was happy to rely on them and, also, on prop Ian Cooper when the situation demanded. John Price was also a valuable asset in this regard. Burly John Stocker was an uncompromising player while young Clive Pascoe, another Farren product, proved a worthy successor and had a long career in the game. Chris Tucker was a fierce competitor along with prop Peter Green, a powerful scrummager and mobile. He was not given to many words but not to be trifled with.

With a measure of possession and dominance up front the backs were presented with plenty of chances to prove their worth. Centre Bryant and Blonden were smooth operators , running some beautiful lines and with good hands. Geoff Bryant was a fierce tackler with some Rugby League experience, while Tony Blonden' s defence was also up to the task despite his smaller stature. He had a wicked side step. He succeeded as club captain the following season.

Both wings Ellis and Sutton had good pace which they showed to good advantage. John was the more classic runner with an elegant swerve while Colin was a good stepper in tight situations. Mike Scantlebury proved an able performer when available and was probably the quickest and strongest of the three, having competed in the England Schools National Championships. Both he and Blonden were products of St Boniface's College which had a strong rugby pedigree and had many ex pupils amongst the Argaum fraternity, such that it might have been otherwise named St Boniface Old Boys RFC. Old Boys then included Bill Farren, Frank Kingwell, Ed O' Carroll and George Finney , all of whom served on the Committee.

Overall the team had a good balance both among the backs and forwards of experience and youth, pace, power and cohesion. I do not recall any major dissent among the team. We were by and large, a happy bunch and it can be said with some confidence that we were one of the club's most successful teams.

Despite the performances against some senior clubs the quest for better fixtures did not come about as was hoped. It was not until the advent of the leagues in the 80s that a change was brought about, by which time Argaum was not the force it was and, indeed, its future looked in doubt. Happily this was not the case but, as with all clubs, without a steady supply of players and volunteers amidst outside pressures and despite the popularity that top level rugby currently enjoys, no club can feel totally confident of a long and secure future. Clubs that no longer function include Old Suttonians, Plymouth Civil Service, Plymouth Police and Jesters RFC. Devonport High School Old Boys RFC is struggling as is Old Technicians which grew from former Argaum players, Fred Craig among them. Devonport Services rely increasingly on non Service personnel. OPMs are languishing in the lower league tables as is St Columba/ Torpoint. Since becoming a professional outfit Plymouth Albion no longer has a second string. New clubs to emerge are Saltash and PlymVic, named after the Victoria Inn in Hooe. Tamar Saracens who play at St Budeaux was formerly Rank Toshiba. There is a large student presence now in Plymouth but this does not seem to have impacted hugely on the rugby clubs in the city. I should point out that Argaum was not a member of the Plymouth and District Rugby Combination at that time, considering itself a cut above and belonging to the wider band of clubs in Devon. The premises at Roborough were of course, and still are, outside the city boundary, being part of the South Hams District.

Argaum meanwhile struggles now to put out two teams but there is a youth section of sorts. The area around is increasingly residential which may prove a vital future recruiting source. The shrinking of the military establishments has also impacted on rugby in Plymouth as a whole while many schools have limited rugby input, let alone regular teams or fixtures. At the same time there are many more demands on people's time as well as a growing number of diversions available for youngsters to choose from. There have been modifications to the Argaum clubhouse but this may need to be addressed with modern tastes and expectations taken into account. On a recent visit I noted the old baths had gone and negotiations are afoot with the South Hams District regarding long term plans and development.

I look back nonetheless with some nostalgia on those days and with a degree of satisfaction on a job well done.

Bill Ryan

December 2017.



ARGAUM DOMINATE WITH OPEN RUGBY

Plymouth Argam 19pts., Exeter Saracens 6

With another exhilarating display of the better side of open Rugby, Argam made a mockery of their "junior" label, and a lesser team than Saracens would have been swamped.

Ever eager to join in open movements, the Exeter backs were seen to advantage in the opening minutes, but faded later as the Argam eight set up a dominance in the loose and line-outs.

Ford had a fine game for Saracens and fly-half Venn capped a competent display by kicking a penalty. West went over for a try.

Scrum-half Kirby was in irreplaceable form for Argam and kicked two conversions from tries scored by Pascoe (2), Blonden (2), and Perring.

Fine handling gives Argam big win

O.F. Mas 0, Plymouth Argam 27pts.

This was a very good win for Argam, who played fast, open Rugby and handled the greasy ball well. With Barry Rees outstanding in line-outs Argam threequarters saw plenty of the ball.

John Price scored an early unconverted try and continued pressure gave Argam tries by Tucker and Billy Ryan (2). Rip Kirby converting two of them.

Three more tries came in the second half from Tony Blonden, Frank Lavis, and Billy Ryan. Kirby converted one.

Plymouth Argam v Exeter A

After losing Oliver with an ankle injury Argam still played some effective rugby.

Exeter were always dangerous and Kirby relieved a threatening situation with a fine kick, but the same player could have put Argam ahead in the opening minute had he capitalised on two penalty kicks. A fine run by Argam's Ryan nearly brought a try. Half-time: Plymouth Argam nil, Exeter A nil.

ARGAUM TOO GOOD FOR CITY POLICE

Plymouth Argam beat City Police by six points to nil and the losers did well to keep the margin down.

Argam's handling was excellent but their attempts to keep the game open were smothered by a determined defence.

Feek should have opened the scoring for the Police, but failed with a penalty kick. Argam took the lead when Blonden passed to Blonden, who ran half the length of the field to touch down in the corner. Kirby's kick was wide.

After the Police had lost Shephard with a shoulder injury, Kirby went over again for Argam following a series of five-yard scrums.

High standard

Kingsbridge 19 pts. Plymouth Argam 6

The standard of play was high and both sides were continually handling. For Kingsbridge Savidge came across from the right wing and sent Rew on the other wing in for a try which White converted. Then after more passing the forwards came through and Mauder scored an unconverted try.

Good movements resulted in a try by Hobbs after a reverse pass from Marsh. White converted. Kirby replied with a penalty goal for Argam, who did much better in the second half but met with some devastating tackling.

Kirby kicked another penalty goal and Kingsbridge scored with two drop goals, one from Lavis and the other from White.

Plymouth Argam v Okehampton

Establishing an early territorial advantage, Argam looked too strong for Okehampton, who were further weakened when Arthurs was sent off. Kirby kicked a penalty and Ryan went over for a try and kicked a penalty.

Almost on half-time Sutton went over to give Argam a convincing lead. Half-time: Argam 12pts.; Okehampton nil.

ARGAUM 14-MAN SHOCK

Camborne 3 pts. Plymouth Argam 8

ARGAUM created a surprise by defeating Camborne but it must be admitted that Camborne gave a most disappointing display.

Argam's success was all the more creditable because for the whole of the second half they played with only 14 men. Dave Martin, their fly half, was carried off the field with a suspected broken ankle just a few minutes after the interval.

In the first half Camborne had the advantage of the wind, but through poor handling by their backs could only penetrate Argam's defence - 10 minutes from the interval this came through a break by Terry Carter who sent in John Rockett.

Although playing a man short Argam scored in the second half through Rogers and Price (tries), and a Kirby conversion.

Camborne v P. Argam

After Tonkin had failed at a penalty for Camborne, Argam fought back with much cleaner handling. Blonden and Bryan showed up well to gain ground in a good movement.

Camborne counter-attacked through their forwards. Terry Markee making an excellent effort to score in the corner, but a five-yard scrum was ordered. Camborne eventually opened the scoring when Carter sent a quick pass out to Rockett who scored an unconverted try. Half-time: Camborne 3pts., Plymouth Argam nil.

ARGAUM SHOW WHAT THEY CAN DO

Camborne 3pts., Plymouth Argam 8.

PLYMOUTH ARGAUM'S bid for stronger fixtures met with its reward when they journeyed to Cornwall to win the encounter with Camborne by one goal, one try to a try.

Argam more than deserved this success, as for most of the second half they played under the handicap of being without their fly-half, Dave Martin, who was taken to hospital with an injured ankle.

It was Argam's outsiders who showed the more constructive play, which enabled them to enjoy more of the attacking movements. On paper Camborne fielded a strong side, but their display was far from praiseworthy. The handling by the backs was poor and the lobbing passes led to the centres being tackled in possession.

The only score in the first half was a try by John Rockett, who went over from a quick break by Terry Carter.

Although a man short after the interval, Argam showed greater determination in attack, which brought them tries by Fred Rogers and John Price, the former's being converted by Kirby.

SERVICES HIT BY INJURIES

Argam Wanderers 8pts., Devonport Services A 3.

Strong forward play, with Stocker outstanding, laid the foundations for a far more convincing win for Argam than the score suggests.

Injuries reduced Services to 13 men, but even before this they found great difficulty in getting into the game.

Highlight was a brilliant try by Richmond after Curtis had carried on a break by Bond. Scattlebury converted and kicked a penalty. Services replied with a try from Lindsay.

Argam think they have made break-through

PLYMOUTH Argam have made their best start for many seasons. In six games they are undefeated, having wins over Brixham, Tohres, Launceston and Newquay Hornets. This is encouraging to David Dobbell in his search for better fixtures.

The fixture card this season is stronger than ever. Over a third of the games are against senior opposition.

This improvement is reflected in the fixtures of the other teams, the Wanderers and Drifters. Already the Drifters have narrowly lost to the Jesters and defeated Launceston A.

The Wanderers have Brixham Res., Truro Res., Old Suttonians and R.N.E.C. II, on their list this year.

This season could well be the break-through into better rugby that the club have been searching for a number of years.

TIGER.

Former members of the club, both players and committees who have done so much in the past to make the name of the Camborne R.F.C. a hall mark in Cornish rugby, are being let down to the extent that some straight talking is needed in all departments to ensure that a team worthy of the town, and especially their supporters, returns to the lime-light.

The latest humiliation was a defeat handed out by Plymouth junior club Plymouth Argam, at the Recreation Ground. Argam played with 14 men for half the game, but in fairness they are a competent side, who would not be disgraced in the senior ranks, but Camborne's display against them left much to be desired.

It has become obvious that the spirit that was once a main factor in the side is slowly dwindling and the lack of imagination and thrust on the field is missing. What is urgently needed is more dedication to the game in both the senior and reserve sides.



Plymouth Argaum full-back Colin Charleston kicks ahead when pursued by Plymouth Police second-row forward Roderick Herbert in their match at Bickleigh Down, Plymouth, yesterday.

February Positions
 P. W D L For. Agst.
 27 19 3 5 FIRST XV

Date	Opponents	Grd.	Points
1966			
Sept. 1	Plymouth Police	3	A 6
3	Brixham	3	H 14
10	Newquay Hornets	3	H 18
17	Totnes	3	A 13
24	Old Heleans	3	H 23
Oct. 1	Launceston	3	A 21
8	Britannia R.N.C. II	3	A 28
15	Brixham	3	A 6
22	Plymouth Albion U.	3	H 3
29	Exeter Saracens	3	A -
Nov. 5	Kingsbridge	3	H 6
12	O.P.M.s	3	A 27
19	Launceston	3	A 1
26	R.N.E.C. Exeter	3	H -
Dec. 3	Devonport S. A	3	H 12
10	Okehampton	3	H 17
17	Salcombe	3	H 25
26	O.P.M.s	3	H 26
31	Launceston	3	H 3
1967			
Jan. 7	Crediton	D	A 8
14	Salcombe	3	A 14
21	S. Molton	3	H 8
28	Camborne	3	A 8
Feb. 4	South Molton	3	A 9
11	Britannia R.N.C. II	3	H 25
18	Okehampton	3	A 9
25	R.N.A.S. Cudrose	3	H 6
Mar. 4	Exeter Saracens	3	H 19
11	Plymouth Albion U.	3	A 6
18	Old Heleans	3	A 9
25	O. Perseans	3	H 5
26			
27	St. Mary's O.B.	3	H 6
30	Kingsbridge	3	A 6
April 1	Kingsbridge	3	A 6
8	Tiverton	3	A 0
12	Plymouth Police	3	H 6
15	Exeter A	3	A 6
22	Barnstaple Athletic	3	A 14
29	Newquay Hornets	3	D 8

Played Won. Drawn. Lost. For. Agst.
 39 22 5 12 429 252

WANDERERS

Date	Opponents	Grd.	Points
1966			
Sept. 1	Devonport Ser. B	1	A cancelled
3	Newquay Hornets	1	H 13
10	Truro II	1	A 8
17	Falmouth One & All	1	H 17
24	Okehampton II	1	A 19
Oct. 1	B.R.N.C. Floaters	1	A 30
8	Old Technicians	1	A 27
15	Exeter Saracens U.	1	A 5
22	Camel	1	H 14
29	Kingsbridge A	1	A 17
Nov. 5	Old Suttonians	1	H 11
12	Launceston A	1	H 14
19	EXETER B?	1	A 22
26	Jesters	1	A 3
Dec. 3	Okehampton II		H
10	O.P.M.s		H
17	Launceston A		A
26			
31			
1967			
Jan. 7	Exeter Saracens U.		H
14	St. Austell		A
21	Dev. Serv. A.		A
28	Brixham II		A
Feb. 4	Bude		A
11	Old Technicians		A
18	R.N.E.C. II		A
25	Jesters		A
Mar. 4	Devonport Ser. B.		H
11	Brixham II		H
18	Whitnash R.F.C.		H
25			
26			
27			
April 1	Kingsbridge A		H
8	Tiverton		H
12			
15	St. Austell		H
22	Barnstaple B		A
29	Newquay Hornets		A

Footnote

I recently came across the fixture list for 1966/67 which showed the results for the games played in April. It proved to be a disappointing end to the season overall.

We lost to St Mary's OBs 8/6 and Metropolitan Police C Division, regular visitors, by the same score. The games were played over the Easter weekend.

Away to Kingsbridge on April 1st we lost 19/6. The following week we travelled to Tiverton, losing narrowly by 3/0 .

In mid week we hosted Plymouth Police , winning 6/0, having beaten them in the opening match away 6/3.

Away to Exeter A we were beaten 19/6 but won, again away, against Barnstaple A 14/6. We ended the season with a draw at Newquay.

The fixture list shows Argaum fielding a Wanderers team, a Drifters Xv and Barbarians outfit who played mostly mid week against military sides. Eg Mountbatten, 29th Commando and HMS Drake.

The Wanderers were having an impressive run winning 11 games and losing only two in the run up to December when my input ceased. There were also two Colts teams who played mostly against local school teams and other Colts sides but there are some " senior" teams in mix, St Columba Quins and the Royal Signalls Regiment. Most Plymouth schools seemed to have a first and second XV with St Boniface fielding three teams. I was surprised to find Saltash Grammar School on the list.

I was impressed by the results of John Price's team of 1965/66. Their fixture list shows 44 games with 29 wins and 8 losses, with two drawn games. The results of 3 games are not shown and two games were cancelled. I was surprised to find that I dropped 7 goals. It doesn't show passes dropped or tackles missed ! I missed five games in total, it seems. Both Easter games against Windsor and St Mary's Old Boys were won. I cannot remember Argaum going away on tour. Newquay is not shown but there were games against Liskeard/ Looe, Launceston and RNAS Culdrose, the only Cormish teams encountered. A sevens event was held at Argaum on Thursday. April 28th.