

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- Bangor were among the 11 clubs who attended the founding meeting of the Welsh Rugby Union at the Castle Hotel, Neath in 1881.
- Godfrey Darbishire, of Bangor RFC, became the first North Walian to be capped by Wales when he played on the pack in Wales's first international against England at Blackheath on February 19th, 1881.
- There was a North Walian in the first Wales team to win an international match. Hugh Vincent was born in Caernarfon and learned his rugby at Friars School, Bangor. He played for Bangor and won his only cap against Ireland in Dublin on 28 January, 1882. A student at Trinity College, Dublin, he played in the pack.
- The first Welsh player to score a try against England was Charles Peter Allen, from Beaumaris. He crossed the English line in the 1884 defeat in Leeds. The Oxford University threequarter was making his debut in the game and later went on to become the Liberal MP for Stroud.
- Charles Taylor, who was born in Ruabon, also made his debut in the Wales threequarter line in the game against England at Leeds in 1884. He was playing for Blackheath at the time and went on to win nine caps.
- The North Wales Rugby Union was formed in January, 1931. Nine clubs formed the body and they were granted membership of the WRU in June that year. By 1934 the body had grown from nine to 12 clubs.
- In 1932, ND Guest, of Llandudno, became the first player from North Wales to receive a Welsh Trial in the 20th century. He was quickly followed by Rhos-on-Sea born Wilf Wooller, who went on to play 18 times for Wales and was in the first Welsh team to win at Twickenham and in the side that beat the 1935 All Blacks.
- Wilf Wooller won his first cap while still attending Rydal School and playing for Colwyn Bay. His debut was at Twickenham on January 21st, 1933, when Wales won at 'HQ' first the first time, 7-3.
- Wilf Wooller also became the first North Walian to captain Wales when he led his country four times between 1937-39. Wooller also became the first North Walian to help Wales win the Four Nations title outright in 1936, when they drew with England and beat Scotland and Ireland.
- Bangor-born Dewi Bebb became the first player from North Wales to play for the British & Irish Lions. He won two Test caps on the 1962 tour to South Africa before playing in all six Tests on the 1966 trip to Australia and New Zealand.
- Dewi Bebb won the first of his 34 Welsh caps on the wing against England in 1959 and marked his debut with the first of his 11 tries. He went on to score a try in the Triple Crown win over Ireland in Cardiff in 1965 and helped Wales win the title outright again in 1966. He played for Swansea against all three major touring teams.

- Abergwyngregin-born Meirion Roberts won eight Welsh caps between 1960-62 and captained Cardiff in the 1964-65 season.
- Although born in Melbourne, Bill Morris was educated at Grove Park School, Wrexham and played for Wrexham. He won two caps in the second row from Newport, including a winning debut against Scotland in 1965 that helped Wales complete the Triple Crown.
- Tony Gray became the first North Walian to play for and coach his country. The Bangor University lecturer won two caps in the 1968 Five Nations Championship while playing for London Welsh. He then went on to coach Wales between 1985-88. In 1988 he steered Wales to the Triple Crown and was voted European Coach of the Year. He coached Wales at the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987, when his side finished third.
- Colwyn Bay lock Mike Roberts made his debut for Wales against England at the start of the 1971 Five Nations campaign. Wales went on to win the Grand Slam that season, with Roberts, who was playing for London Welsh, playing in all four games. The last of his eight caps came eight years later also against England in Cardiff. This time the 33-year-old veteran scored a try as Wales won their fourth successive Triple Crown.
- Mike Roberts became North Wales's second Lion when he toured Australia and New Zealand in 1971. He played in 11 matches on that tour. Mike also played for North Wales against Tonga in 1974, when they beat the tourists, and was in the side that went down 38-15 to the Romanians in Colwyn Bay on September 29th, 1979.
- The WRU President in the 1979-80 season was Bangor stalwart Gwyn Roblin. Although born in Port Talbot, he made his mark on the North Wales scene from the 1930s onwards and remains the only North Wales clubman to have held the Presidency of the Union.
- When the WRU celebrated its centenary in the 1980-81 season their first special fixture was at Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay when a North Wales XV entertained the Overseas XV on 16 September. Led by Wrexham prop Gwyn Harries, North Wales were beaten 28-9. The home pack included Austin Thomas, who is currently the WRU Development Officer for North Wales
- Wrexham hosted the first Wales U21 international when Mike Hall's side defeated Scotland 39-19 on April 25th, 1987. There were seven future internationals in the Welsh starting line-up, including England's Jon Callard, and another one among the replacements used. Hall, David Young and David Brynat went on to captain Wales, while Hall, Young, Richard Webster and Tony Clement went on to become British Lions.
- Wales U21: Jon Callard; Andy Griffiths, Mike Hall (captain), Simon Davies, Graham Davies; David Evans, Andy Booth; Frank Hillman, Keiron Gregory, David Young, John Wakeford, Nick Jones, David Bryant, Richard Webster, Simon Bryant
- Replacements: Richard Williams, Tony Clement, Wayne Davies, Julian Mainwaring
- Arthur Emyr became the first North Walian to play in the Rugby World Cup when he played for Wales in the 1991 tournament on home soil.

The Bangor-born wing won 13 caps from Swansea and Cardiff and scored Wales' first try in the 1991 competition, against Western Samoa. Although he started all three games, Wales failed to qualify for the quarter-finals.

- Leicester Tigers hooker Dorian West is the most famous rugby son produced by Wrexham – even if he did go on to play for England. He won 21 caps for his adopted country, captaining them on one occasion, and was a member of the 2003 Rugby World Cup winning squad in Australia. He was awarded the MBE for that success in 2003 and also toured Australia with the Lions.
- It was Mold v Wrexham in the front row when Wales met England in the early 2000s. While West was in the middle of the English front row, Robin McBryde wore No 2 for Wales. West came out on top in all three games.
- Current Wales technical coach Robin McBryde overtook Dewi Bebb as North Wales's most capped player by playing 37 times for his country. First capped against Fiji in 1994 from Swansea, he played four times as a replacement in the 2005 Grand Slam season to complete his international career. He won the majority of his caps from Llanelli, a club for whom he played 250 games and captained them to the Welsh Cup in 1998 and League title in 1999. He also toured Australia with the British and Irish Lions in 2001.
- Four days after Robin McBryde made his Wales debut, Holywell prop Ian Buckett followed suit. Another Swansea front row forward, he won three caps and also played for Oxford in the Varsity match.
- Mark Williams may have been born in England, but his North Wales father eventually brought him up in Colwyn Bay. Not that he stayed there for long. He went on to captain London Wasps and eventually emigrated to the United States. Cue a 37 cap career with the Eagles and appearances in two World Cup finals. As a goalkicking outside half or fullback, Mark scored 143 points. He made his Test debut against Wales at the Arms Park in 1997.
- Another English-born, North Wales bred international player is Stuart Roy. Capped for the Wales Schools from Ysgol Gyfun David Hughes, Menai Bridge, he went on to play for the Wales U19, U21 and A teams before winning his only cap in the 1995 World Cup as a replacement against Japan.
- Where Stuart Roy led in South Africa in 1995, so Wrexham-bred Andy Moore followed a few months later when he came on as a replacement in the one-off test against the World Champion Springboks. Andy went on to win 26 caps and also captained Wales. His brother, Steve Moore, also won three caps from Swansea in 1997.
- Steve Moore's debut came in Toronto against Canada and he then got the chance to play on home-soil when Wales played Romania at The Racecourse, Wrexham on August 30th, 1997. Wales scored 11 tries in a 70-21 victory in what was the first Welsh international to be played outside Cardiff in 43 years.
- That game against Romania was the first of three Tests played against them in Wrexham. Wales won all three

NORTH WALES'S CAPPED PLAYERS

WALES

- 37 - Robin McBryde (Swansea/Llanelli) 1994-2005**
- 34 - Dewi Bebb (Swansea) 1959-67**
- 26 - Andy Moore (Swansea) 1995-2002**
- 18 - Wilf Wooller (Sale/Cardiff) 1933-39**
- 13 - Arthur Emyr (Swansea/Cardiff) 1989-91**
- 9 - Charles Taylor (Ruabon) 1884-87**
- 8 - Meirion Roberts (Cardiff) 1960-63**
- 8 - Mike Roberts (London Welsh) 1971-79**
- 3 - Ian Buckett (Swansea) 1994-97**
- 3 - Steve Moore (Swansea) 1997**
- 2 – Bill Morris (Newport) 1965-66**
- 2 - Tony Gray (London Welsh) 1968**
- 1 - Godfrey Darbishire (Bangor) 1881**
- 1 - Stuart Roy (Cardiff) 1995**
- 1 – Hugh Vincent (Bangor) 1882**

ENGLAND

- 21 - Dorian West (Leicester Tigers) 1998-2003**

USA

- 37 – Mark Williams (Gentlemen of Aspen) 1987-1999**