

# THE ASHES



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## The Ashes

Nigel Roberts, Managing Director of Paramount, main sponsors of Glamorgan Cricket Club

On the 8th of July, 2009, Glamorgan County Cricket Club is hosting the first Ashes test match at the newly built SWALEC Stadium.

There are not many even in their wildest dreams would have believed that England would play Australia in the capital city of Wales, but this has happened, mainly due to the drive and enthusiasm of the of the Glamorgan Chairman, Paul Russell, and under his leadership Glamorgan Cricket Club now have a brand new 16,000 seater stadium and have raised the bar in terms of the first class facilities spectators will be able to enjoy during the match. This is not a one-off. Already, further international matches have been secured, with Australia back here in 2010 for a one-day international, a five-day test in 2011 against Sri Lanka and a Day-Night Game against India.

All this has led to more and more sponsors wanting to be part of the activities, but the economic benefit and profile for Cardiff and Wales cannot be underestimated. The first Ashes test match will bring in over £30 million to the local economy, and when you consider the television and media coverage leading up to and during the match (a recent one-day international between India and Pakistan attracted a viewing audience larger than the population of Europe), what a gift to the Wales Tourist Board!

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Cricket is enjoying a high profile at the moment with the Indian Premier League and the exciting prospect of the 20/20 World Cup here in the UK in 2009.

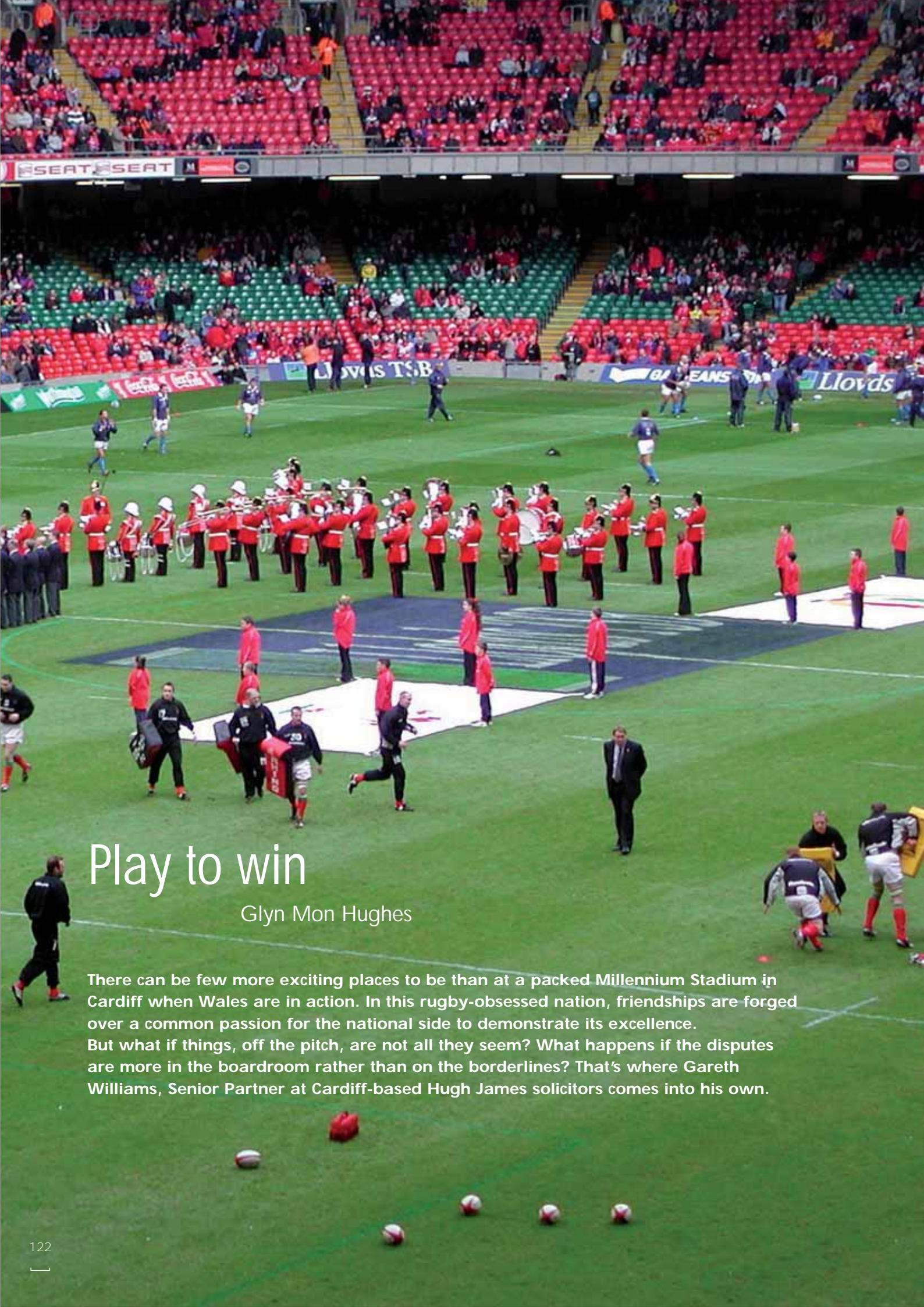
Glamorgan County Cricket Club is a not-for-profit organisation, and any surplus made from hosting international matches gets reinvested into the club with the objective of making Glamorgan County Cricket team as strong as possible so it can compete for trophies, and we look forward to the day when there are 16,000 cricket fans inside the SWALEC Stadium to see that happen.

Once again, congratulations to the Chairman Paul Russell and his excellent team at Glamorgan.



### Paramount Office Interiors Limited

Paramount House  
Paramount Business Park  
St. Mellons  
Cardiff CF3 0LW  
Tel: 029 2083 9800 Fax: 029 2083 9801  
Email: eileen.taylor@paramountinteriors.com  
[www.paramountinteriors.com](http://www.paramountinteriors.com)



## Play to win

Glyn Mon Hughes

There can be few more exciting places to be than at a packed Millennium Stadium in Cardiff when Wales are in action. In this rugby-obsessed nation, friendships are forged over a common passion for the national side to demonstrate its excellence. But what if things, off the pitch, are not all they seem? What happens if the disputes are more in the boardroom rather than on the borderlines? That's where Gareth Williams, Senior Partner at Cardiff-based Hugh James solicitors comes into his own.

Rugby is a passion in Wales and anything that happens in the Welsh rugby world will make the front pages of the papers," he said. "As a firm, we've made something of a reputation in the sporting world as we've acted for the Welsh Rugby Union – the WRU – for nearly 18 years. During that time, the business side of the sport has grown enormously.

"Think, for instance, about the massive investment which went into the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. We were involved in the construction contract for the stadium, which was a huge job. Then there are all the issues around sponsorship, around players and around disciplinary matters. Sport is a big business these days and all sorts of sporting organisations need advice on corporate matters, commercial enterprises, structural matters and so on."

Williams highlighted issues such as disputes between the WRU and individual clubs over the release of players for the all-important Six Nations championships. "Or there could be issues around doping and drug use by players," he noted. "It's a growing problem. Indeed, there are solicitors and barristers around the country who deal with little other than sports law."

The corporate and commercial teams at Hugh James have also won considerable new business, despite the biting economic recession, with the value of transactions on which the company worked rising from £149m in 2007 to £324m in 2008, a remarkable achievement.

"We are a top-tier player in Welsh corporate and commercial markets," noted Gareth Williams, "and, recognising that these are difficult times and that no-one wants to pay more than they must, we are constantly looking for innovative ways in which to deliver our products. We are always asking ourselves how much we can deliver as a niche specialist for a fair fee and we place considerable emphasis on service."

The company operates across many different economic sectors. The Commercial Litigation Team works with a wide spectrum of organisations, with work ranging from disputes in the construction and insurance industries to conflicts in public and private organisations, while the Corporate Team provides a full range of services, advice and support on non-contentious matters. The firm works for private and quoted companies, sports bodies, housing associations, charitable organisations and public bodies.

"I think the secret is that we have recruited wisely," said Williams. "Our bright lawyers in the City office can offer City standard services for regional rates. In Wales, we have the best in the business, offering all sectors of the economy an expert service, especially as our lawyers get to know a business and carry that relationship forward. And that's vital in these competitive days. Like the Welsh rugby team we play as a team and we play to win."

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[ **Hugh James**  
Hodge House  
114 - 116 St Marys Street  
Cardiff CF10 1DY  
Tel: 029 2022 4871  
Fax: 029 2038 8222  
Email: cardiff@hughjames.com  
[www.hughjames.com](http://www.hughjames.com)

# Wrexham's range of sports

The thwack of puck on stick will resound through Wrexham this summer as the town proudly hosts the Euro Hockey Nations' Trophy in August. Wales will be up against some of Europe's top men's sides, including the Czech Republic, Italy, Scotland, Switzerland and Belarus. If they can negotiate a way past the handy but fallible Scots in their opening game, a path could open for Wales to reach the final. The venue for the summer drama will be the new state-of-the-art North Wales regional Hockey stadium at Glyndŵr University.



Horse racing at Bangor-on-Dee

Hosting such a prestigious event reflects both the growth of sports in Wales and the country's success in raising the profile of Welsh sport and making its finest venues available for major occasions such as this. Although it should be rightly held in high esteem, there is more to sport than rugby in this part of Wales. Wrexham is home to the North Wales Regional Tennis Centre, recognised for its excellence by being chosen to stage a number of international competitions each year including the "Challenger" series, where young players have the chance to earn enough points to qualify for the main tour. The Racecourse Ground not only accommodates the 130 year old Wrexham Football Club but has also hosted some of Wales' home international matches. For athletics, there are few venues with finer track and field facilities than Wrexham's Queensway International Stadium, which has staged events featuring the world's top athletes. At Bangor-on-Dee, you can enjoy watching jumps horse racing on this unique, charming old racecourse.

In a further recognition of Wrexham's growing reputation for sport development, Glyndŵr's hockey stadium, the Racecourse

ground, Queensway and the Tennis Centre have been identified as training sites for athletes attending the London Olympic Games in 2012. Building on this, the Council have submitted a bid to host the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2017.

Cllr Bob Dutton OBE, Deputy Leader of Wrexham Council, says: "Sport is not just an integral part of the Wrexham economy but also a key part in establishing strong communities. We have a thriving voluntary sector, many of whose volunteers help out in the sports sector, and our facilities are exceptional in their standard and variety."

Wrexham has invested more than £16.5 million per annum in sports in recent years, delivered to sports activity itself and in staging prestigious competitions. In turn this has bolstered the growing perception

of Wales as the UK leader in attracting globally significant sports events. The myriad economic benefits of this can be seen in Wrexham in terms of steadily increasing employment in services, leisure and tourism. Wrexham has developed a great infrastructure and world-class facilities set in an area of outstanding natural beauty and, whatever drama unfolds on the hockey pitch at Glyndŵr this summer, you can't beat that.



Wrexham County Borough Council  
Economic Development Department  
Lampit Street  
Wrexham LL11 1AR  
Tel: 01978 292010  
Email: [worldclasswrexham@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:worldclasswrexham@wrexham.gov.uk)  
[www.wrexham.gov.uk/business](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/business)

# Sports skills

Kevin Edwards was a first class rugby player in the 70s and 80s with Pontypool and Cardiff and has also become a leading Sales and Marketing Director in the pharmaceutical industry. He is currently working for Hospital Innovations in St Mellons, a company that is showing remarkable growth in its first year of trading. Here he is asked a few questions about the skills he has and how they were developed from his rugby days.



Kevin Edwards

## Did playing sport at such a competitive level help you with your sales skills?

Sport at such a level means competition for places and like the current market place you have to be better than the competition. During our training sessions at Cardiff RFC, I would focus on the mistakes I had made in previous games; I would train and prepare myself in such a way that I would not repeat the same mistakes in the future. Here lies the analogy between the competitive sportsman and salesman. As in sports, a salesperson has to master his art, for the latter it is selling the products of the company to the customers. The sales person himself should learn the fundamentals of selling and master them in order to get best results. For me a competitive edge in the game meant applying the same competitive edge to sales and marketing.

## What makes a good salesperson?

Being autonomous and drive, which makes you want to make the sale. When you make a sale it is a great feeling, like winning in rugby once you have a taste for it you become addicted to it. You should have inner confidence and believe in the products you sell.

You were an avid supporter of rugby before you started playing at such a high level did this help you understand the game better and equally is it the same in business?

Yes. Whether it's knowledge of the game in sport or knowledge of your products in business it will make you better at both. You must have an in-depth knowledge about the products you are

selling. A sales person without technical knowledge about the product would be a danger to the customer. Knowledge of the production methods means you can justify the cost of the product.

## Is motivation important in both arenas?

Two of the most important lessons I learnt in playing first class rugby were motivation and composure and I apply these daily in my business life. I am totally motivated and understand the customer's needs to make sure they buy the right product at the right price.

## Are you a team player?

The answer to this is short and simple; "Rugby gave me a grounding that it is the team which wins not one component"



## What strengths are needed to be a first class rugby player and a successful sales and marketing director?

At the top end of both sport and business it becomes apparent:

- No matter how talented you are you have to work hard. Feedback is immediate, the more hours you put into practising the better your results.
- At some point, all your competitors have equivalent ability and drive, but belief in yourself and your products is the most important factor.

The mental training, the belief and positive attitude needed in order to win in sport has such an impact on the way you think that it can be transferred with great success to other areas in life, especially in business. Teams are chosen based on people's strengths and competencies rather than who is liked or disliked. It is important to act confidently and not to let your teammates know you are afraid, nervous or have a weakness, even if you are not confident. Composure always brings positive results and a winning team.



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[ **Hospital Innovations Ltd**  
19 Willowbrook Technology Park  
Llandogo Road  
St. Mellons  
Cardiff CF3 0EF  
Tel: 02920 020858  
[www.hospitalinnovations.com](http://www.hospitalinnovations.com)