

BARNES, WALLEY (1920-1975), association footballer.Sports and Leisure Pursuits

Name: Walley Barnes
Date of birth: 1920
Date of death: 1975
Gender: Male
Occupation: association footballer
Author: Richard E. Huws

Born 16 January 1920 at Brecon, where his father, Sergeant Edward ('Teddy') Barnes, was stationed with the South Wales Borderers. Both Teddy and his wife Joyce (née Plummer), were born in north London. Walley Barnes was the third of their four children and the only one born in Wales. Edward and John were born in England, whilst Pearl, his only sister was born in India to where the family moved in 1924.

The young Walley Barnes and his brothers attended school in Leborg, an army hill station, near Darjeeling where the family lived in married quarters where they remained until May 1928. Teddy Barnes was an army physical education instructor, an useful footballer, and in his younger days he had also fought boxing exhibition bouts at Liverpool against notable Welsh pugilists such as Johnny Basham (1880-1947), "Peerless Jim" Driscoll (1880-1925) and Jimmy Wilde (1892-1969). The family eventually settled at Gosport, Hampshire in 1932, where Walley was eventually to sign amateur forms with Southampton, after his father had moved to Hampshire to take up a civil appointment as a physical education teacher at Price College, Fareham.

Walley Barnes' talents as a full back soon attracted the attention of major clubs, and he signed for the Arsenal in June 1943, and during the war years he played in every position for the club except that of centre forward. He made his full debut against Preston North End on 9 November 1946 when he was a few weeks short of his 26th birthday. He soon established himself as a regular full back in the league side, and won a championship medal as well as the first of his 22 Welsh caps during the 1947-48 season. In 1948-50 he captained Wales as well as winning a championship medal. He played in Arsenal's cup winning team in 1950, and again in 1952 when they were defeated 0-1 by Newcastle United, but a serious injury in that match resulted in his early departure from the match, at a time before substitute players were introduced. His injury badly affected his career for 16 months, and after he resumed playing his regular appearances were less frequent. By 1956 he was forced to retire.

During his Arsenal career he played a total of 267 first team league matches, and made 25 additional appearances in FA Cup matches, scoring a total of 12 goals. In all he played 395 matches for the Arsenal if friendly and reserve matches are also included.

After he retired from football he joined the staff of the BBC. He also established the first of two successful sports shops in 1950. At the BBC he was a commentator with Kenneth Wolstenholme (1920-2002) on the very first edition of *Match of the Day*, broadcast on BBC 2 on 22 August 1964. He also assisted Wolstenholme with sporadic remarks during his commentary on England's World Cup triumph against West Germany in July 1966.

He married Joan Sutton (born 1923), a county athlete, at a quiet wedding in Portsmouth in 1941. They had one daughter, Sandra, (born 1942), who was born at Gosport, Hampshire. The family subsequently lived in the Palmers Green area of north London at 216, Winchmore Hill Road, before moving in 1971 to 68 Park Drive, also in Winchmore Hill.

Walley Barnes died in a London hospital on 4 September 1975, aged 55 years.

Author

Richard E. Huws

Sources

Walley Barnes, *Captain of Wales* (London 1953)

The Times, 5 September 1975, p.16f; 1 December 1975, p.14a

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Walley Barnes](#)

Additional Links

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