

GRPA

Newsletter No 5



Design
Champion Polo



Gloster Boys Bar

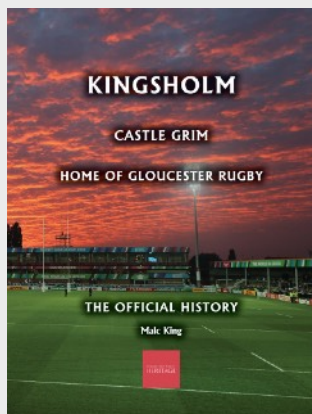
See opposite has moved to the Abbey Lounge, pictured is **Andy Deacon**, **Pete Jones** and **Ian Smith**. A Big thanks to **John Horner** who has decorated the room for us. As mentioned previously if you want access you will NEED YOUR **Members Pass**, guest passes can be arranged with prior arrangement with **Ron Etheridge**.

125 Charity Walk

Took place despite BT sport trying to disrupt the Presidents **Fred Reed** Arrangements.

Summer Days Reading

Malc King's book on the history of Kingsholm was launched prior to Christmas. He now has the follow up and another in the pipeline. See report.



The Gloster Boys now reside in Abbey Lounge



For those of you who were at the last reunion for the Saracens game, hopefully you will have noticed that the players bar now has a good compliment of display cabinets that we have had made and installed containing shirts and other memorabilia donated by former players.

The latest items to have been put up are **John Watkins** cabinet, a portrait of **Tom V Joyce** lent by the artist and a photograph of the last amateur committee donated by **Andy Mitchell**.

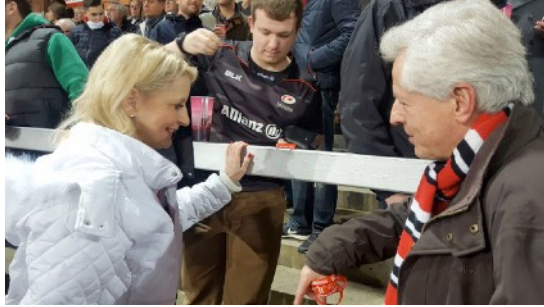
Each cabinet has the playing history, particularly Gloucester Rugby involvement, of the players donating the items. This information is supplied by our Heritage team, and in particular **John Theyers**, who keep amazingly detailed record of all those who have played for the club throughout its history.

I am currently working on a cabinet to contain a number of Gloucester Caps, some are Gloucester United caps which are indicative of how prestigious it was, and still is, to be a member of our club at all levels.

Our history is of great importance, and by displaying memorabilia it is immediately brought to the attention of the beholder. We have more items in storage and hope to find suitable display areas for them, but if you have more and wish to find a suitable home for it, then do let me or a member of the Heritage team know. **John Horner**

Dementia Awareness

The Former Players can take great pride in supporting Councillor Collette Finnegan the Gloucester City Health Champion in promoting this campaign. (pictured below with Gloucester MP and Rugby fan Richard Graham).



Commemorating **Mike Nicholls** - arguably the Club's greatest ever captain - who suffered from the disease, we financed the initial sale of wristbands at the Worcester home match and promoted them at further games in the Kingsholm stadium. Over £4000 was raised and donated to dementia charities.

The Farmers' Shedheads skittles team

had a bye in their season and invited GRPA to another friendly. A team was assembled and victory was secured with the huge assistance by Keith Nichols with a score of 72. Keith was immediately signed up by the Farmers' Shedheads team captain before any signing fee could be arranged by the GRPA skipper John Dix and Fred Reed (too slow boys). Keith did ask the Farmers' Shedheads if they had bigger balls he could use but was told by colleagues that it was the fact he has such huge hands which made the balls feel too small.

This was the third skittles match against the Shedheads and all the games have resulted in very enjoyable evenings. However the third match resulted in a win for GRPA which shows that true sportsmen whatever age, always maintain good ball control and hand eye coordination skills.

What GRFP has done for you....



Your Committee enjoy the hospitality of the Clubs owner Martin St Quinton, please let Ronnie know if you want to join the committee and help us.

Over the last season our members have enjoyed **free tickets** to the pre Season warm up game.

4 social gatherings at Kingsholm for premiership games donated by GR. (Big thank you to Mike Turner for all his generosity, help and assistance). The first of these a cheque was presented to Pied Piper.

120 tickets that can be purchased by our members at £20 in silver section for every home game (2 tickets per member per game).

Two **Cricket matches**, at Purton and Cinderford (came 2nd in both). Two **skittle matches** at Farmers Club against a league team (lost and won).

Away trip to Hartpury v Loughborough starting at Farmers Club with bacon roll, then lunch at Hartpury and transport supplied by Hartpury, then **tickets** to watch Gloucester v Cardif Blues in **1/4 final** of European Challenge Cup.

Day at the **Stratford races**, **Newsletters**, **Golf matches** against other rugby clubs.

Some members took up the challenge of **125 Presidents Walk** and some of those who did not walk sponsored some of those who did.

All this at a 2016/17 price of £40 cheque/cash, £35 for SO.

2017/18 season will **cost only £30** and hopefully we will have another exceptional season.

Fees are NOW DUE.

The elusive **Richard Mogg** (500club) poses for a photo with **Paul Tunstall** during our visit to Hartpury

(This picture courtesy of **Michael Bailey**)



CherryPickers / Legends Game v South Africa

The South African Legends were in town on the last Sunday in January, and in a low scoring encounter, only the difference of a conversion separated two well matched teams on an excellent Gloucester afternoon. Roared on by an enthusiastic crowd at Kingsholm, the two sets of players battled hard throughout to turn back the years and put on a real show of physical, whole-hearted rugby. The South African squad was jam packed with international caps, IRB Hall of Fame spots and a whole host of rugby stories that would last long into the night, and they were met by a star-studded Gloucester Rugby Heroes outfit pulling on the famous Cherry and White hoops for another exciting afternoon of fund-raising, camaraderie and silky skills. Rob Cook brought the game to life, collecting the ball in his own half, before slaloming his way through the traffic then pinning his ears back and cruising over the line, earning himself a face full of mud in the process for a fine try. The Gloucester Heroes were rolling back the years, a pin point line out throw laid the platform for Apo Satala to break the line, but with Keith Senior on his shoulder, the legend of Rugby League broke the tackle, but the move petered out and South Africa hacked away. The rain affected the game, meaning chances were at a premium for both sides, who looked first for territory, and then creativity to keep the scoreboard ticking over. Ernst Joubert and then Thinus Delpont went close for the South Africans, but desperate home defence kept it at a two-point game.



<http://www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk/rugby/matchcentre/13473.php>

Next Cherrypickers game is scheduled for **Saturday 20th May at the Prince of Wales Stadium.**

The game will be played between a Cheltenham Barbarians team and the CherryPickers. The CherryPickers are made up of former Gloucester stars while the Barbarians will be made up of those that Zac France has played alongside. Zac a former Cheltenham player suffered a spinal cord injury that doctors thought he could not recover from (see picture).

£5 on the gate to get in. Zac hopes to raise £500 to be split between She Ryder and the RFU injured Players foundation.

Andy Deacon, Terry Fanolua, James Simpson-Daniel & Pete Buxton will lead the Cherrypickers, but any “OLDER” former players who wants to play let **Dave Spencer** know. But come and support even if you **do not want to put your boots on.**



<http://www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk>

Forthcoming Heritage Books

Following the successful publication of their book on Kingsholm, which can still be obtained from the Club shop, Gloucester Rugby Heritage are now working hard on their next two publications.

The first of these, which is due for publication this summer, will record Representative Matches at Kingsholm. This will cover all visits by international side and touring teams, as well as all the County matches played at Gloucester. For most of the past 125 years these were the big matches of the season at Kingsholm.

After that, the next book, research and drafting of which is already well underway, will be called Gloucester Players. It will include profiles and photographs of at least 250 of the most prominent players, as well as a comprehensive list of every player to have made a first team appearance for the Club since 1873, giving dates of playing career, number of appearances and points scored. It is hoped to publish this by the end of his year, but there are no guarantees, since a lot of work remains to be done. Nevertheless, this will certainly be one for us all to look out for.

Golfing fixtures

May 8th Exeter at Bridgewater Lost 4-3
May 31st Stroud at Stinchcombe
June 13th Bath at Sham castle
July 26th Northampton at Evesham
Aug 23rd Bristol at Stinchcombe
Sept
Oct 5th Bath at Stinchcombe
Oct 23rd Leicester at Evesham

Mike Nicholls trophy will be played for on **Friday 30th June**. More details will come to you via email from Pete Glanville



Recent overseas activities

Paul Williams visited Dennis Hargreaves whilst in Barbados following the England One Day Internationals. Pictured above

1977 USA Tour Re-union



The 40 year reunion dinner took place in the Legends Lounge lunchtime at GRFC on **Friday 5th May 2017 to celebrate the first** Gloucester RFC long overseas tour which lasted 3 weeks. There were 6 first team games and 2 United games. The party were unbeaten on tour. **John Watkins** was captain and **Gordon Hudson** was team manager.

There were **38 players** and **7 committee**, and **3 supporters** including a reporter from the citizen. The team toured Columbus Ohio, Indianapolis, Battlecreek(Michigan), Champagne(university of Illinois) & Chicago

Paul Williams and **Fred Reed** organised the re-union and some players could still get in their "Tour Blazers". (see picture). "Tour pictures" were shared and in some

our own Club president failed to recognise himself.

28 of the tourists made the re-union and John Simonett entertained the Club Owner with some of his magic to end the day.



Walking rugby

Pictured is some of the Gloucester Former players who have been seen attending the Walking Rugby sessions organised throughout the local area. these sessions take place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

They are great fun, and can be as tiring as you wish.



Countryfile star visits Kingsholm

Pictured is the our most famous local farmer, Adam Henson who is known to be a keen Gloucester supporter with his son. Her he is with one of the Former Player stars of the 1970's **Jim Jarrett** who is still regularly seen on match days at Kingsholm despite having now retired from Golf (after running the former players club for many years and now moved back from Spain).

Born in Pontypool in 1941, Jim was a rugged and mobile lock and no.8. Before coming to Gloucester, he had played at no. 8 for St Luke's College, where he took part in the annual match against Loughborough Colleges alongside full back Don Rutherford in 1962.

Leaving St Luke's Jim joined Pontypool, where he was club captain. He moved up to lock from no 8 while with Pontypool, playing against Gloucester at Kingsholm at no. 8 in November 1963 and at lock in December 1966. That year he skippered a Combined Pontypool-Newbridge-Cross Keys XV to a 12-3 victory against the 1966-67 Wallabies. He also played for Monmouthshire.

On his arrival at Kingsholm in 1967, Jim rejoined Gloucester club captain Don Rutherford and formed an outstanding second row partnership with Alan Brinn. He played his rugby hard and gave and asked no quarter. His aggressive style sometimes offended the sensibilities of some referees, but he was a firm favourite of the Shed.

In a game at Bristol in September 1968, Jim scored a rare goal from a mark. Catching a Bristol drop-out and calling for the mark, he then pointed to the posts and coolly dropped a goal from fully 45 yards. Inspired by this, Gloucester went on to win the game 9-6. The following December, he played against his old club in Pontypool, where he scored two tries in a 14-9 win.

Jim made 38 appearances for Gloucester in their record-breaking 1971-72 season under Mike Nicholls, playing in the epic knockout cup quarter-final victory over London Welsh and the victory in the final at Twickenham against Moseley.

He played 10 times for Gloucestershire and appeared in the losing Championship final against Staffordshire at Burton on Trent in 1970. After that final loss, he transferred his allegiance to Dorset and Wilts. He played against Gloucestershire in the 1971 County Championship ¼ Final and played for Southern Counties against the 1972-73 All Blacks. In his later seasons he moved back to number 8, often partnered by John Watkins and John Haines. He made 235 appearances for Gloucester and scored 20 tries, plus that dropped goal from a mark. His final game for Gloucester was at St Ives on the 1978 South West tour.



125 Walk pictures of the stop at the P o W.

And after a night at Thornbury Rugby Club. The President has arranged for us to play a charity match there later this year. A great two day adventure enjoyed by all. Over £15,000 raised so far..



Hooking for Gloucester



For many years, positions in a rugby team, especially the forwards, were not defined. In the very early days, as a scrum was formed the first players to arrive would form the front row and so on. Time passed, but for many years, although a team might have a regular front row, they invariably moved around to fill in at prop or hooker. This was the case until well into the 1920's. writes **Chris Collier**, some famous Gloucester Hookers include...

Denzel Carpenter

In the late 1920's a miner from the Forest of Dean, began his career at Kingsholm. Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter became a legend. He was born in 1900, and had already made seven appearances for Gloucestershire as a Cinderford player. He played his first game for Gloucester on 1 November 1928 against Oxford University, and quickly established himself in the first fifteen. He first appeared for the club as a prop, but then became the club's regular hooker over a long career

which only ended when Gloucester stopped playing games in 1941 because of the war. He made his sole appearance for England against South Africa in 1932, where he started as a prop, but moved to hooker at half time. He was a reserve for England on more than twenty occasions.

“Bumps” played 61 times for Gloucestershire, which is still the most by any Gloucester player. He appeared in five County Championship finals and was on the winning side four times, 1930,31,32 and 37.

He was as tough as teak. He would often work a shift at Lightmoor Colliery, and then come on to play for Gloucester the same day. He was held in great respect. In 1938 when Bill Hook the Gloucester and England full back played his first away game at Bristol, he was only 17 years old. Before the game “Bumps” beckoned to Bill and took him into the Bristol dressing room, and addressed the home team as follows, “This is the babby we’ve brought down. He’ll take anything fair and square, but you drop anything below the line and I’ll be looking for you.” Then beckoning to Bill, “Come on me babby, you’ll be alright now.” And he was; Gloucester won 6-0.

Denzel made 354 appearances for Gloucester, which at the time, was the record for the club.

Cyril Thomas

Forwards these days are very big fellows. Sixty years or so ago they were not so large, but even by those standards Cyril Thomas was referred to as “slight”, weighing in at 12 stone. He was however a brilliant hooker, who seemed to win endless strikes against the head in every game. He played for Yorkley and Lydney before first appearing for Gloucester in February 1948 against Oxford University. Although acknowledged as an outstanding hooker, he only played in one England trial game and that was towards the end of his career in 1959. It is also surprising that he only made 13 appearances for Gloucestershire, but this was largely due to the fact that John Thorne, the Bristol and England hooker was selected in preference most of the time. Ironically in 1960 when retirement approached he broke back into the county team and displacing Thorne he made three appearances. However, he played his last game for Gloucester on 31 December 1960 against Newbridge.

Cyril captained Gloucester in the 1958-59 season which was not a successful one, where only 17 out of 42 games were won. From 1947 to 1960 he played in 357 games for the club.

Mike Nicholls

Mike Nicholls was born in September 1940 and played his early rugby for Old Centralians. He made his first appearance for Gloucester in September 1961 at Cardiff. It took him until the 1965-66 season to become first choice hooker, but for the next ten seasons there was no shifting him. He was an uncompromising player and like a terrier around the field. He captained the team with great success from 1970-72 and again in 1973-74, each of which were record breaking seasons in terms of games won. In the 1970-71 season he played in all 51 games, and in 1973-74 in 52 out of 54. Perhaps the most memorable season was 1971-72, when Gloucester won the inaugural National Knock-Out Competition. The team played all their games away at Bath, Bristol, London Welsh, Coventry and, in the final at Twickenham, Moseley. The most memorable game was the win (9-4) against London Welsh, whose team contained four British Lions and seven internationals. Nobody gave Gloucester a chance against such star-studded opposition. Much of the success must be put down to the leadership of Mike, who inspired the team. His pre-match talks, players freely admitted, were frightening. The style of play did not endear Gloucester to the purists, or the press. It was a case of a formidable pack, rock hard tackling and well directed kicking. But it

worked. The whole team was galvanised by Mike's leadership.

Although so successful at club level, Mike only made 10 appearances for the county from 1961 to 1972. He was unfortunate in that John Thorne and John Pullin, both of Bristol were his competitors for the hooking berth. He also played in one England trial game.

Mike played his last game on 22 October 1977 against Nottingham. In his career he made 434 appearances for the club.

After retirement became coach and a long serving Committee man for the club. After a long illness he died in December 2012.



Steve Mills

Steve Mills was an outstanding hooker who won five England caps, played 26 times for Gloucestershire and appeared in three County Championship Finals. In addition he captained Gloucester from 1980 to 1983, including one season which was the club's best ever.



Cirencester born, Steve first appeared for his home-town club, before making his Gloucester debut on 10 March 1976 against Cheltenham. He quickly established himself as first choice hooker, being hardy and very mobile. He was soon attracting attention further afield and his first game for Gloucestershire was in September 1976 against Japan. He would go on to appear in two losing County Championship finals in 1978 and 1980, but was in the winning team in 1984 against Somerset at Twickenham. He was a member of the Gloucester cup winning team of 1978, which defeated Leicester 6-3 in the final at Twickenham.

Steve would almost certainly have won more England caps had he not been understudy to Peter Wheeler the Leicester hooker. However, in the summer of 1984, in the first test against South Africa, the front row was all Gloucester, consisting of Steve Mills, Phil Blakeway and Malcolm Preedy.

Steve was a very successful club captain. In the 1981-82 season, in which he appeared in 40 out of the 48 games played, the team won a record 41 times and only lost three. No fewer than 1045 points were scored and only 338 conceded. The John Player Cup final against Moseley was drawn, and the title shared.

Steve played his last game on 19 October 1985 against Newport. He had made 303 appearances and scored 24 tries; not bad for a hooker

Fred Reed

Fred Reed was unfortunate in that he was hooking at the same time as Mike Nicholls and Steve Mills, so found chances limited. Even so he still made 132 appearances between 1969 and 1980. He also played nine times for Gloucestershire. He came more to the fore in two successive seasons 1975-77 when he managed 47 games, and in December 1975 was reserve for the final England trial. On retirement he became a team selector and club secretary. In the nineties he became Committee Liaison Officer with the club's sponsors. He is currently the club's president.

**Kevin Dunn**

Kevin Dunn was born on 5 June 1965 in Gloucester, and played his first rugby for Spartans and Lydney. On his debut for Gloucester against Glamorgan Wanderers in September 1986 he scored a try, and at once claimed the hooking berth for himself. For a hooker he scored a lot of tries. In the 1989-90 season he achieved no fewer than 13 and only Richard Mogg and Derrick Morgan scored more that term. That season was a good one for Gloucester and they were runners up in both league and cup. Kevin scored a try in the Pilkington Cup Final against Bath, but the game was lost 6-48!

Although Kevin played several times for England 'A' he could not make that final step. At the end of the 1991-92 season he thought that a move to Wasps might further his chances of a cap. He made further moves to Bristol (1997-98) and Cardiff (1998-99) before a wrist injury ended his career.

Phil Greening

Another local boy Phil Greening was born on 3 October 1975. He impressed from an early age and captained England Schools, and Colts. Not only that, he captained Gloucester on his debut against Clifton on 30 November 1995, aged 20! He was a very strong and mobile hooker and was straightaway on England's radar. He was selected for England 'A' in three games that first season, and by the 1996-97 season he had become the regular Gloucester hooker. He played his first game at England senior level against Italy in November 1996 at the age of 21. He went on to win 24 caps. He made five appearances in the World Cup of 1999, scoring two tries against Tonga and one against Fiji.

His career at Gloucester was disappointingly short. He made 28 appearances in the 1996-97 season, but next term he had to fight for his place against the emergent Chris Fortey and the total was cut to 14. After only three appearances early in the 1998-99 season, he signed a contract with Sale. He had made 66 appearances for Gloucester. In 2000 he was on the move again, this time to Wasps where he saw out his career until 2005. During that time he was yet again captain, this time of England's 7's team.

Neil McCarthy

Neil McCarthy won caps at every England level, Under 16, Under 18, Under 21 and Senior. In his youth he played as a prop. A combative and dependable hooker, he made 65 appearances for Gloucester from 1997-2000.

Neil was born on 29 November 1974 at Slough. His early rugby was in the Bath Academy team, and was on loan with Bedford for the 1996-97 season, just as professionalism was starting, before making his first appearance for Gloucester off the bench against Bristol on 24 August 1997, the game in which Phillipe St.Andre played his first game for the club. His first start was a fortnight later against Petrarca Padova. He had to fight hard for his hooking spot against stiff opposition from first Phil Greening and then Chris Fortey. However, he was in the team which won the C&G Cup against Bedford in 1998. He soon after broke through to international recognition and won three England caps, all as a replacement, the first of which was against Ireland in March 1999. In 2000 Neil left the club for Bristol where he played until 2002, when a knee injury in October of that year ended his playing career.

From 2008 to 2015 Neil was Academy Manager at Leicester, but later returned to Kingsholm, and is currently head of Gloucester's Academy team.

Chris Fortey

Chris was born on 25 August 1975 and first played for Gordon League, before making his debut for Gloucester on 19 March 1996 against Lydney, the last game to be played against the Forest club. At this time he was third choice hooker behind Phil Greening and Neil McCarthy, but all the same he was in the winning C&G Cup Final team in 1999, and by the 1999-2000 season he was sharing the top spot with McCarthy. The next season he attracted national recognition by touring with the England 'A' squad to Canada and USA.

Ollie Azam's arrival at the start of the 2000-01 season restricted Chris's appearances, but he did have one undisputed season as first choice in 2003-04 when Ollie went back to France. Azam's return the following season prompted a move to Sale, but very soon he broke an ankle. Several seasons at Worcester followed.

Chris appeared in 181 Gloucester games from 1996 to 2005.



Olivier Azam

Ollie Azam must rate as one of the most popular players ever to pull on the famous cherry and white jersey. The Kingsholm crowd loved his complete commitment to the cause, although some referees took the view that he was a little over-committed. The site of him barging upfield with perhaps three tacklers trying to subdue him would bring loud calls of “Oll-ie, Oll-ie” from the Shed. No matter that he was French; he became an adopted Gloucesterian, and appeared in 240 games from 2000 to 2011.

Ollie was born in Tarbes on 21 October 1974. He played at No.8 initially for the local club before moving into the front row. He then played for Monferrand, now known as Clermont-Auvergne. In 1995 at the age of 21 he was awarded his first two French caps against Romania and Argentina. Several France ‘A’ awards followed, but it would not be until 2000-02 that he gained his other eight full caps.

It was Phillipe St.Andre who had played with Ollie at Montferrand who brought him to Kingsholm for the start of the 2000-01 season. He was an immediate hit with the home fans, who loved his aggression. Referees tended to take a different view, and Ollie was no stranger to yellow cards and some lengthy suspensions, none of which diminished his popularity in the Shed.

In 2000-01 Gloucester had a long run in the Heineken Cup, and only lost in the semi-final to Leicester. Ollie was present for all eight games. He was there in the successful Zurich League Championship final against Bristol in 2002, the winning Powergen Cup team against Northampton in 2002, and a few weeks later in the team which lost the Premiership final to Wasps. In 2006 Gloucester won the European Challenge Cup final against London Irish, and Ollie came off the bench in that game.

He did leave Kingsholm for one season (20003-04) and returned to Montferrand, but the lure of Kingsholm was too great and he was back the following season. In 2008-09 he was voted the Supporters Player of the Year, and in 2010-11 he was awarded a club Testimonial.

As time went on the one flaw to Ollie’s game, throwing in to the line-out became more apparent, but it was still a shock when he was not retained after the 2010-11 season. He did have the satisfaction though, of being in the team which won the LV Cup final against Newcastle that season.

Ollie then became forward coach at Toulon, and in 2013 coach at Lyon, where he guided them into the French Top 14.



Talking of Gloucester hookers...

Three young Gloucester boys come to a grinding halt on their bikes at the traffic lights at the bottom of Barton Street. Besides them is a gleaming Bright Red Porsche 911 Carrera convertible. The first lad says "when I grow up I'm going to be an accountant and drive one of those". The second lad says "No, that won't buy one, I'm going to be a Bank Manager that will get me one". The third lad says "well when I grow up I'm going to become a Hooker". "Whats A Hooker?" enquired the other boys. "I don't know" he said "But my sister is one, and that's her Car!"

And Finally....Fijian Independence Ferociously Celebrated

The Fijians came to Kingsholm to play Western Counties on 10th October 1970, the very day on which Fiji was granted independence. The Fijian High Commissioner travelled down from London to watch his national side on this historic occasion. The Fijians were greeted warmly, but not with the weather in which they flourish at home. It was a damp, grey, drizzly, autumnal afternoon, but this did not deter the local rugby supporters, who were definitely up for the game.

Although the home team was labelled Western Counties, the selectors inserted only two Somerset players into the massed ranks of Gloucestershire players. This doubtless helped ticket sales – it was a sell-out and there were reported to be 20,000 packed into the ground.

Western Counties: J Waterman (Somerset); P Knight (Gloucestershire), M C Beese (Somerset), **J Bayliss**, M R Collins; J R Gabitass, **J Spalding**; A J Rogers, J V Pullin, B G Nemes, D E J Watt, **A J Brinn**, D M Rollitt (captain), **R C Hannaford**, **R Smith** (Gloucestershire)

Fiji: I Buadromo; R Latilevu, K Nalatu, P Vukula, P Tikobuva; I Batibusaga, S Sikivou; J Sovau, A Racike, J Qoro, A Tokajravau, J Naucabalavu, M Kurisaru, S Toga, V Varo

Referee: Mr R Johnson (Kent)



AFTER attending Fiji Independence Day celebrations in London the Fiji High Commissioner, His Excellency Josua Rabukawagh flew to Staverton and was escorted to Kingsholm to watch the Fijians play the Western Counties. Above he meets members of the Counties team before the match and below the Deputy Mayor, Ald. Freda Wilton meets the Fijians.



The match, though injury and penalty strewn, was exciting. **Dick Smith** scored very early on, after the Fijians had thrown long at a line-out near their own line. Western Counties went on to dominate the first half hour, before they were undone by a typical Fijian surge right down the field, with backs and forwards combining at speed. It culminated in a try for prop Jona Qoro who sidestepped four defenders on his way to the line. The conversion brought Fiji level but a penalty by full back Waterman and a dropped goal by Jon Gabitass restored the Counties' lead. Back came the Fijians, and a kick ahead found scrum half Batibasaga who threaded his way through the defence before converting his own try, which made it Western Counties 11 Fiji 10 at half-time.

England hooker John Pullin retired at the interval with a nasty head wound, having been repeatedly head-butted in the scrums, and was replaced by his Bristol colleague, John White. Early in the second half, a dropped goal by Batibasaga gave the Fijians the lead for the one and only time in the match, the Counties quickly regaining it when **Charlie Hannaford** scored from a careless knock back. Radrodo crossed for the Fijians after a brilliant passing move, but the final pass was judged forward. Thereafter the Fijian game became untidy, and Jon Gabitass, punished them with two penalties and then converted his own try from a blindside break by Dick Smith to finish the scoring.

This match must rank as one of the most violent seen at Kingsholm. The headline in the Citizen read "Fijians image tarnished in Kingsholm bloodbath". Their play was politely described as "over-enthusiastic" and it led to a stream of penalties being awarded against them for foul play, which ruined their few constructive attacks and resulted in 15 minutes of injury time being added on. By the end of the game, the casualty list included: John Spalding, two fractured ribs; Jon Gabitass, a depressed fractured cheekbone; John Pullin, numerous stitches to a variety of head wounds received from head-butts in the scrums; and Tony Rogers, laid out cold by an uppercut which broke his nose.

Thanks to Malc King for this.