

# GRPA

## Newsletter No 6



### Gloster Boys Bar...

Survived the the "Flood" at Kingsholm that caused upwards of £1/2m worth of damage. **John Horner** reports that minimal damage was incurred. Much re decorating has been done, however we (our "Bar" ) has been relocated to the other end of the Abbey Lounge. This you may recall was where we were first located as an Association. Lets ensure we keep this most prestigious position by USING IT. The reason for the move is that the new coach wants to assemble the Players on match days many more hours before the game. Hence they need a nice relaxing place to prepare for the days "Work". Great idea and must improve the bonding and cohesiveness of the team.

### Ready for Xmas

**Malc King's** book about "Representative Rugby at Kingsholm", covering 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 is ready for Publication. However he is still searching for a little bit more sponsorship. £250 to become a sponsor, you will be thanked in the book and receive a complimentary copy. Please consider this opportunity to get your business associated with this book which will be read by all Gloucester fans. It's almost ready for publication.

### Charity Evening Presentations



Pictured is our Club President and the Chairman of the Former Players Association making the presentations at the charity evening in The RICOH Lounge on the 30th August. Gloucester Rugby owner **Martin St Quinton** honoured the occasion which saw **Fred Reed** present Cheques totalling **£ TWENTY thousand** to five different charities. Glos Rugby Community, CLIC, Pied Piper, Muscle & Crossroads.

Those of you who supported him on the Bristol walk will be relieved to know he is not expecting you to repeat such a venture until next year. Provisional thoughts are walking from one club (probably not Bristol) and this time finishing on the pitch at Kingsholm just before Kick OFF. ....Lets hope that Worcester are still in the Premiership at the time!!

## Legends Lounge & Boxes

The Former Players can look forward to playing a much more active part in integrating current Gloucester Rugby players with the supporters. Since its inception the Legends Lounge has been managed by current GFPA Chairman **Clive Walford**, and more recently by **Harold Symonds**. Now the organisation has been invited to help out with the "Hospitality boxes" as well. The boxes in both the Mira and Stowford Press Stands will be "hosted" by Former players accompanying a current player. It's hoped that a regular relationship can be built up between our "team of volunteers" and the regular occupants of these facilities.

## Gloucester Rugby acknowledges former internationals

by inviting our most talented teammates (some of which pictured alongside) to a couple of match day lunches courtesy of Club owner **Martin St Quinton**. It is most refreshing that Gloucester Rugby acknowledges the achievements of former Gloucester Rugby Football Club stars. Today's players receive large monetary rewards, but there was only the "Pride and acclamation" for these teammates that we had the pleasure and honour of playing alongside. Wouldn't it be nice if the Club could ensure these individuals were made permanent or Honourable members of the **Former Players Association** by securing their membership fees? (below)

**Fees for 2017/18 cheque/ cash £30 Standing Order preferred.**

**Now we have over 100 members.**



## What GRFP has organised for you....

We have arranged for GRPA to have social days on the following Gloucester rugby fixtures. Unfortunately the dates for the games in 2018 are not fixed but when known you will be notified.

- |                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Northampton Saints | Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> October  |
| 2) London Irish       | Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December |
| 3) Wasps              | 23/24/25 February 2018            |
| 4) Harlequins         | 13/14/14 April 2018               |

Our away day to Hartpury will be **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018** when they will play the Cornish Pirates. The cost will be £30 to include match day ticket, 2 course meal with wine and the usual hospitality at the Farmers Club.

We have booked **20 places** and payment of the full amount will be required to secure a place. The reason for this is due to people saying they will come and not turning up on the day. The booked places not taken up we had to pay for!

If you wish to attend the Hartpury game please send your cheque payable to GRPA for £30 to our Chairman:-

Clive Walford 14 Estcourt Close, Gloucester GL1 3LT  
Look forward to hearing from you.





Many thanks to everyone who supported **Pete Glanville** and the **5th Mike Nicholls Golf Day** which this year took place at Gloucester Golf Club at the end of June. Some serious scores were returned but no one could beat our very own **Terry Fanolua** who took the individual prize for the very best. As you can see from the picture above we had some fantastic support from local companies and the Gloucester Golf Club gave us our best ever welcome and we shall be definitely be returning to this venue for next years event. Over two thousand pounds was raised and as much as possible of the money raised will be directed toward Dementia charities.



**Mark Nicholls**, the Son of Mike who is acknowledged by most Gloucester former players as the clubs most committed Captain in recent years, entertains the table.

Please can we ensure that this event continues to grow each year from now on, especially as we have found a venue that is so committed to providing us with the best opportunity to be sure that as much money raised goes to the relevant charities.





The **CHERRYPICKERS** as usual managed by **Dave Spencer** turned on a real performance to outscore a Cheltenham Barbarians team put together by Zac France to raise £500 distributed to the local Sue Ryder charity and the RFU injured Players foundation. Some very famous Gloucester Rugby “Surnames” took to the pitch even if represented by their offspring! Well supported from the stands by a good number of Former Players the Cherrypickers scored 14 tries to the Barbarians 13. Fortunately no conversions were made!!!

Spanner is in the process of organising another game for later this year against a Cheltenham Tigers team. Please let him know if you wish to play in this game.

Pictured left to right is Zac France, who was paralysed and thought would never walk again let alone play rugby, the lucky winner of the “signed shirt”, and our Cherrypicker captain **Laurie Beck**.

Another game later in the season is being planned against Thornbury RFC, this will go under the title of a **Presidents XV**. **Mike Turner, Adam Balding & Tinus Delpport** will help **Fred** put a team together.



## Golfing fixtures

Oct 5<sup>th</sup> Bath at Stinchcombe  
 Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> Leicester at Evesham

**Paul Williams** will take over as Captain of the GRFP golf team from **Bob Timms** who remains "Manager" (getting a well deserved bacon butty). No need to bite your nails **Clews** I'm sure you'll still get a game! We all owe Bob a very big THANK YOU for organising the golf over the previous years.

Paul will soon be revealing his new strategy for continuing the great playing success that the Former Players have enjoyed under Bob's reign (according to Bob's after match speeches at least). Although I have been playing only a couple of years I am sure that Bob has an amazing ability to overlook some of the losses during the day's play and often manages to convince us that in fact we have WON !



## Another Day at the Races.

There will be another outing to **Stratford Races** on **Thursday November 2nd** this year. For those of you who did not manage the "tour behind the scenes" of the racecourse last year, there is a picture of the "jockeys Sauna" opposite. So you know what I mean when I say BEHIND the scenes!! We will have once again our own private dining area and "tour" of the facilities. Lunch, entrance Tickets, Racecard and Tea all for £45. This is truly amazing value for a Days Entertainment. A coach will be arranged once again going via Kingsholm from Stroud. on which "Cocktails" will be served traveling to the Course, and Communal Singing will be mandatory on the trip home all for approximately £10 per head. We will run our own version of the National Lottery, or some might call it a "betting competition sweepstake", which last year was won by Claire Morgan (approx £450 for a £10 stake).

This year the trip will be combined with the Masonic Lodge of Rugby Union against which a hard fought cricket match was played last month. See report which also featured some fine bodies?



## Does this ring a Bell?

When the battle scars have faded  
And the truth becomes a lie  
And the weekend smell of liniment  
Could almost make you cry.

When the last rucks well behind you  
And the man that ran now walks  
It doesn't matter who you are  
The mirror sometimes talks

Have a good hard look old son!  
The melons not that great  
The snoz that takes a sharp turn  
sideways  
Used to be dead straight

You're an advert for arthritis  
You're a thoroughbred gone lame  
Then you ask yourself the question  
Why the hell you played the game?

Was there logic in the head knocks?  
In the corks and in the cuts?  
Did common sense get pushed aside?  
By manliness and guts?

Do you sometimes sit and wonder  
Why your time would often pass  
In a tangled mess of bodies  
With your head up someone's.....?

With a thumb hooked up your nostril  
Scratching gently on your brain  
And an overgrown Neanderthal  
Rejoicing in your pain!

Mate – you must recall the jersey  
That was shredded into rags  
Then the soothing sting of Dettol  
On a back engraved with tags!

It's almost worth admitting  
Though with some degree of shame  
That your wife was right in asking  
Why the hell you played the game?

Why you'd always rock home legless  
Like a cow on roller skates  
After drinking at the clubhouse  
With your low down drunken mates

Then you'd wake up – check your  
wallet  
Not a solitary coin  
Drink Berocca by the bucket  
Throw an ice pack on your groin

Copping Sunday morning sermons  
About boozers being losers  
While you limped like Quasimodo  
With a half a thousand bruises!

Yes – an urge to hug the porcelain  
And curse Sambuca's name  
Would always pose the question  
Why the hell you played the game!

And yet with every wound re-opened  
As you grimly reminisce it  
Comes the most compelling feeling  
yet  
God, you bloody miss it!

From the first time that you laced a  
boot  
And tightened every stud  
That virus known as rugby  
Has been living in your blood

When you dreamt it when you played  
it  
All the rest took second fiddle  
Now you're standing on the sideline  
But your hearts still in the middle

And no matter where you travel  
You can take it as expected  
There will always be a breed of  
people  
Hopelessly infected

If there's a teammate, then you'll find  
him  
Like a gravitating force  
With a common understanding  
And a beer or three, of course

And as you stand there telling lies  
Like it was yesterday old friend  
You'll know that if you had the  
chance  
You'd do it all again

You see – that's the thing with rugby  
It will always be the same  
And that, I guarantee  
Is why the hell you played the game!

## Naturism plays a big part in Cricket Match.

The **GRFP Cricket XIV** (fourteen) took on a Cricket team of local **Freemasons** at Daunceys Farm, Purton, (Near Sharpness) on Sunday 6th August. As usual the result was not in doubt if the Umpires and Match officials had their way. Sadly the Match Referee was taken ill prior to the end of the game and consequently there were no end of game prizes and “NO Champagne moment” presentation. However those who attended know full well who was



responsible for the demise of the Referee, and to whom the “Champagne moment” would have gone to. A total of over 500 runs were scored by the two sides and at least 30 wickets went down. However true to rugby form all “Penalties” for the loss of wickets were taken and many more besides. (Like not being in possession of the printed local rules - Thank you Willy). The match umpire **Alan Bond** (a life long Gloucester RFC supporter) kept order and reported that.....

*“The match result was not decided until the last ball. Gloucester Rugby required seven runs to win from the last over, after five balls they only scored two singles and lost a wicket but the last ball produced four runs and made a **tied match**”.* No names have been mentioned or assigned to the pictures to preserve anonymity !





## News in Brief...

### Walking Rugby

Continues to be well supported by many of the GRFP. There has been a few changes in the structure but the Gloucester Community team helps organise these regular events and now there are several groups within Gloucestershire also forming their own sessions like Newant FRC. Do come and join us on a Wednesday Morning.

### Coffee Shop

A new build is being planned at Kingsholm, which will form an extension to the stadium in the south-west corner of the ground alongside Worcester Street. This will include new Club offices, a larger shop for the XBlades franchise, a coffee shop and a museum. It is expected that both GPA and GRH will be involved in the planning for this project."

### 24hr Le Mans Scalextric

The Club President is still intending to organise a fund raising 24 hour Scalextric car racing event. This will take the format of Six teams made up of at least 4 drivers in a team. The teams will see how many laps can be achieved over a 24 hour period.



## Song

We are from Glo'ster, the pride of the west  
Some of the lads and some of the best  
We are respected wherever we go, where we come  
from nobody knows  
They call us the pride of the ladies, the ladies  
We spend all our wages, our wages, our wages  
We are respected wherever we go  
We are the Glo'ster boys  
Maggie dear, pint of beer, a Woodbine and a match  
A tuppence ha'penny stick of rock, we're off to the  
rugby match  
To see ol' Glo'ster score a try, the best try in the land  
We are the Glo'ster boys!  
We are the Glo'ster boys, we are the Glo'ster boys!  
We know our manners, we spend our tanners, we are  
respected wherever we may go  
And when you're walking down the Kingsholm Road  
Doors and windows open wide  
You can hear the people shout "Put them bloody  
Woodbines out!"  
'Cause we are the Glo'ster boys

### Pete Wilson

Many of you who listen to the Gloucestershire BBC Radio on a Sunday lunchtime will know Pete Wilson, a local lad born, brought up, worked, and lives in the County. He enjoys most sports including Golf and Horse racing, but is also very familiar with the going ons at Kingsholm. It is hoped that we might be able to get him to do a feature on the GRFP and this would require half a dozen sitting around a microphone and agreeing on 6 songs to play between the chat.

Pete is associated with a "Choir" and it has been suggested that the "Glo'ster Boys Song might be worth recording for prosperity purposes. Dave Spencer has in the past tried to get such a recording so we might get it done with the aid of BBC Radio Glos.



# Gloucester Second Rows

**Gloucester have always been blessed with outstanding second rows. All the following featured players were capped by their country apart from one.**

## **Roy “Digger” Morris**

“Digger” Morris was educated at Hatherley Road School, Gloucester and played his early rugby for Gloucester Old Boys, before making his first appearance for Gloucester on 19 December 1931 against Northampton. He only played one more game that season, but broke through to a regular place in the following campaign. That 1932-33 season was memorable in that the double over Newport was achieved for the first time in 50 years. Digger was present for both games. In due course he formed a famous second row partnership, and indeed friendship with John A’Bear, who was Digger’s Best Man at his wedding.

International honours were not to be for Digger, although he captained the Possibles to a win over the Probables in the England trial game of 1938. Had he played for Harlequins, who knows.....

After the war in 1946-47 Digger captained both Gloucester and the county. Gloucestershire drew with Lancashire in the Championship final, but lost the replay at Kingsholm. In all he played 317 times for Gloucester and 19 for the county.

Digger was a man of many parts and it is not widely known that at times he was a professional boxer, trainer of greyhounds and bookmaker. He was a real character, who long after his playing days were over, acted as a mentor to the young Mike Burton, a debt Mike appreciates to this day.

Digger was once asked what his most enjoyable game had been. He replied, “I think it was when that Kiwi outfit came to Kingsholm just after the war.” “That Kiwi outfit” was the New Zealand Services team which was in all but name, a full All Blacks side. Digger continued, “I got kicked in the yud in the first half and don’t remember much about it. After the break, I dropped one of their blokes on his yud and I ‘ad four of ‘em onto me after that. It was a bloody smashing game.”



**John Gwilliam**

John was a Welshman, born in Pontypridd in 1923. He won 23 caps for Wales from 1947 to 1954, and was captain in 13 of them. He was in the Wales team which famously defeated the All Blacks 13-8 in 1953. He played the majority of his internationals as a number 8 but was invariably in the second row for Gloucester.

As a young man in WW2 John was an officer in the Royal Tank Regiment, and was involved in fighting in Europe. He appeared for Newport in the early post war seasons, and won Blues at Cambridge in 1947 and 1948. He became a teacher and played for Edinburgh Wanderers from 1949 to 1952. He then moved to another school in Bromsgrove and joined Gloucester for the start of the 1952-53 season. John won five of his caps whilst at Kingsholm and was the first Gloucester player to captain his country.

John played two seasons at Kingsholm from 1952 to 1954 and made 49 appearances. The 1953-54 season was at the time the best in the club's history, winning 31 out of 42 games played, and John was vice-captain to John Taylor.

**Alan Brinn**

Alan had a career of remarkable longevity, playing for Gloucester from 1960 to 1979, and making 574 appearances, a club record, which will almost certainly never be beaten. More games were played in those amateur days, and this can be illustrated by the fact that in five seasons from 1963 to 1968 Alan played no fewer than 200 games.

Alan was born in South Wales on 21 July 1940 and before coming to Kingsholm played for Hereford who at that time played Gloucester United. His first game for Gloucester was against Lydney in September 1960, and he was immediately a regular. He was a powerful scrummager and hard working in the loose. At a time when a lot of rugby could be called "robust" Alan was always known as a gentleman on the field.

Considering his obvious talent, it was surprising that he was not called into the county team until November 1965 when he played against Cornwall. He would, however, go on to play in six successive county finals from 1970 to 1975, three of which were won in 1972, 1974 and 1975. In all he appeared 48 times for Gloucestershire.

He was now on the England selectors' radar and he won three England caps in 1972. That was quite a season for Alan as he was in the Gloucester cup winning team in the same year. He also played for Western Counties against South Africa in 1969, Fiji in 1970, New Zealand in 1972 and for the South & South-West against Australia in 1973.

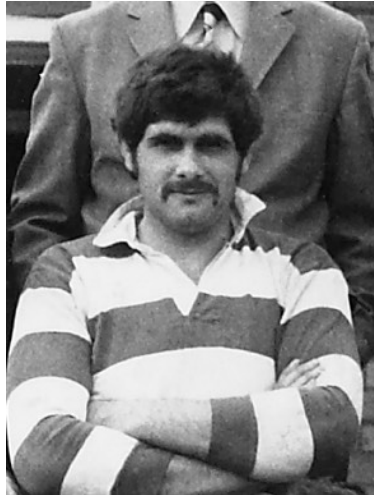
When his playing days were over, Alan became an England Rugby Associate Selector, was Gloucester Club Chairman when the game went professional, and he and David Foyle negotiated the sale of the club to Tom Walkinshaw.





## John Fidler

John was a big, solid second row who commanded the line-out and was a formidable scrummager. He was born on 16 September 1948 in Cheltenham and played for his home town against Gloucester in 1970 and 1971. He had already caught the eye of the Gloucestershire selectors, as he played in a friendly for the county against Monmouthshire in 1971. He moved to Gloucester for the start of the 1972-73 season and was an immediate success. Later in the season he made his competitive debut for the county in the quarter final against Oxfordshire; retained his place and went on to play in the losing final against Lancashire. His county career was outstanding. He played in no fewer than nine finals and was on the winning side in five, 1974,75,76,83 and 84. In all he played 43 times for Gloucestershire.



In October 1973 John played alongside Alan Brinn in the South & South-West team which beat Australia 15-14. He played for Western Counties against Australia in 1975.

John won four England caps, all obtained abroad, two against Argentina in 1981 and two at the very end of his career in 1984, when 36, against South Africa.

For Gloucester he was a permanent fixture, whose opponents had long fruitless afternoons trying to wrestle the ball from his limpet-like grasp in the line-out. He played throughout the successful cup campaign of 1978 culminating in the win against Leicester at Twickenham.

From 1972 to 1984 John made 287 appearances for the cherry and whites. After hanging up his boots he became Gloucester Team Secretary and then Team Manager during the transition to professional rugby.

## Steve Boyle

Steve was a very proficient front jumper, who was devastating with the ball in hand. He scored many tries from tapped penalties close to the opposition line. In his career he played 303 games and scored 78 tries, an outstanding try rate for a second row. In three seasons 1979-82, he scored 43 tries.

Steve was born on 9 August 1953 and educated at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. He played for Old Richians before making his first appearance for Gloucester in the last game of the 1972-73 season against Camborne away. Gloucester won 70-9!

At that time it was difficult for Steve to play for the first fifteen regularly, because he was up against Alan Brinn and John Fidler. He broke through to a regular place in both club and county teams in 1976, making his first county appearance against the touring Japan team. He went on to play 34 times for Gloucestershire and appeared in two county finals; losing to North Midlands in 1978, but scoring a try in the team which defeated Yorkshire at Bristol in 1983. He was present for every game in the Gloucester cup campaign of 1978, when Leicester were beaten in the final, and again in 1982, when the final with Moseley was drawn.

Steve was capped by England three times in 1983, and was selected for the British Lions tour of South Africa later the same year. He made six appearances, but did not play in any of the tests.



## John Orwin

John, who was born on 20 March 1954, was a rugged, hard tackling forward, who in his early days played at No.8, but soon moved up a row. He played his early first-class rugby for the RAF for whom he gave gallant service over many years, beginning in the 1975-76 season. He played for Combined Services against the All Blacks in November 1978, and in December 1981 against the Australian tourists. In 1982 he was in the RAF team which won the Triangular Tournament defeating both the Army and Royal Navy.

John made his debut for Gloucester in September 1976 against Bristol and in the next game against Cheltenham he kicked seven conversions in a 62-7 win. After that season he never scored any more points from kicks for Gloucester. At that time Gloucester were well blessed with second row forwards, such as John Fidler and Steve Boyle, so it was not until the 1978-79 season that he became a regular. He was a member of the record breaking 1981-82 team, which lost only three games that season, and won 41, plus drawing with Moseley in the final of the John Player Cup. He captained the club from 1984 to 1986, and made a total of 203 appearances.

John first played for Gloucestershire in the 1981-82 season, having previously played his county rugby for Oxfordshire. In 1984 he was in the team which defeated Somerset in the County Championship Final.

In January 1985 John won the first of his 14 England caps against Romania, and proceeded to appear in all of England's championship games that season. He was then selected for England's tour of New Zealand and played in both tests.

In 1986 John moved to Bedford to be a pub landlord and played three seasons for Gloucester's longstanding opponents, captaining the club for the final two. Whilst at Bedford he won more caps and even captained England in 1988.

## Dave Sims

Born on 22 November 1969 in Gloucester, Dave had already played club rugby locally for Longlevens and in Australia for Sunnybank in Brisbane, before making his debut for the Cherry and Whites against Cheltenham in November 1988, scoring a try in the 48-3 win. Tony Windo made his debut in the same game and also scored a try. In his early days Dave played at No.8 but over time graduated to the second row. By the 1990-91 season he was fully established and his rugged no nonsense hard tackling style made him a Shed favourite.



The mid-nineties proved to be a difficult time for Gloucester and they flirted with relegation at times, no more so than in 1995-96, the first season that Dave was made club captain. The last game of the season was a straight relegation shoot-out between Gloucester and Saracens at Kingsholm. Sims leading by example inspired Gloucester to a 17-10 win which apparently consigned Saracens to the drop. However, it was later decided there would be no relegation that season, and Sarries were saved. Is it cynical to wonder if the decision might have been different had Gloucester finished in the relegation place?





Professionalism arrived in 1996 and Dave became Gloucester's first full-time contracted player. He was in the team in 1998 when Gloucester won the C&G Cup against Bedford, and he was again captain the following season when the club again won the trophy against the same opposition.

England recognition came late, but he was capped three times in 1998, twice against New Zealand and once against South Africa. He appeared for the South-West Divisional team 12 times, and the Barbarians on three occasions.

Dave left Gloucester for Worcester in 1999, and later had spells with Bedford, Launceston and Taunton. For Gloucester he made 257 appearances, scoring 30 tries.

### **Ian Jones**

Overseas players nearing the end of their careers, are sometimes perceived to be topping up their pension when playing in the Premiership. Ian Jones could never be accused of that. In the two seasons he was at Kingsholm from 1999-2001, he gave his all, and was very popular with the fans. He was one of the biggest signings in Gloucester's history having made 79 appearances for the All Blacks from 1990-99, forging a legendary second row partnership with Robin Brooke. Scotland seemed to feature strongly in his career. His first cap was against them in June 1990 at Dunedin; his fiftieth cap was on the same ground against the same opposition and he scored a try. Not only that, his final All Black appearance, off the bench in the 1999 World Cup, was again against Scotland.

Born on 17 April 1967, Ian started his career with Northland in 1988, and with the arrival of professional rugby played for Waikato Chiefs from 1996 to 1999, often as captain. He was a lithe 6ft.6ins tall, and very mobile for a second row. He played in three World Cups, 1991, 95 and 99, and in two tests against the British Lions in 1993.

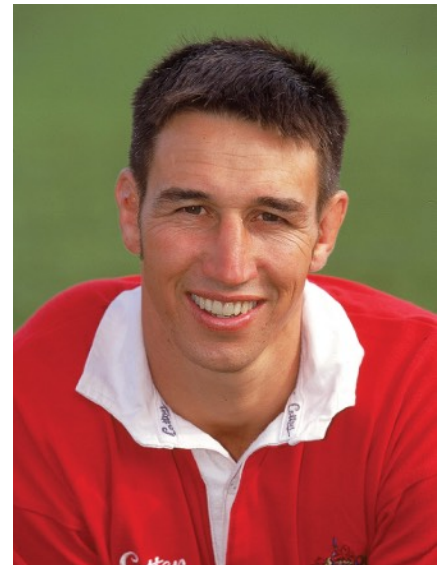
At Gloucester he ruled the line-out and made some barnstorming runs ball in hand. He played in six of eight games in Gloucester's Heineken Cup campaign of 2000-01, including the semi-final loss to Leicester at Vicarage Road, Watford.

Sadly, this was to be his swan song, for he left to play one season with Wasps in 2001-02 before retirement.

### **Rob Fidler**



Rob, son of John, had a big act to follow when he made his debut for Gloucester against Cheltenham in December 1994. He had already played for Cheltenham, which was his place of birth on 21 September 1974. He would go on to make 222 appearances for the Cherry and Whites, including 148 league games. That first appearance was at No.6, where he continued until 1996 when he moved up a row. He soon settled into a formidable second row partnership with Dave Sims. Rob was a very good front jumper and in addition an aggressive tackler. He was in the teams which lost Pilkington Cup semi-finals in 1996 to Bath and 1997 to Leicester. The transition to professional rugby was proving difficult, and Rob led the club for several games in 1998-99 in the absence of club captain Dave Sims.



Rob was soon considered an international prospect and made 14 England 'A' appearances before winning full caps against New Zealand and South Africa on the England tour of 1998.

With the arrival of the millennium the fortunes of the club rose and Rob was a regular in the Heineken Cup campaign of 2000-01 which led to the semi-final defeat to Leicester. However, he was in the team that won the Zurich Championship Final against Bristol in 2002, and the 40-22 win over Northampton in the final of the Powergen Cup in 2003.

After problems negotiating a new contract, Rob was offered one at Bath and played his rugby there from 2004-07. He then had a season with Cinderford accompanied by old colleagues Pete Glanville, Andy Deacon and Mark Cornwell.

### **Marco Bortolami**

Marco was born in Padua, Italy on 12 June 1980. He was only 18 years old when he first played for Patrarca Padova, and only 21 when he won the first of his 112 caps for Italy against Namibia in June 2001. Not only that, he became Italy's youngest ever captain at the age of 22. The game was against New Zealand, and the All Blacks won 64-10! He was again made captain for Italy's tour of Japan in 2004. On return he moved to France to play two seasons for Narbonne.

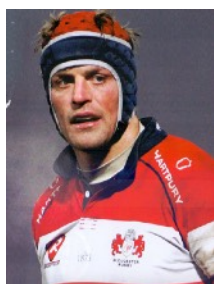
When Gloucester signed Marco in 2006, he was reckoned to be one of the outstanding forwards in world rugby. He was rated so highly that he captained Gloucester to start the season against Bath, and effectively shared the captaincy for that term with Pete Buxton. He was a natural leader, with great physicality and presence. That season was a good one for Gloucester. They topped the Premiership table (again), but heartbreakingly once more lost in the final against Leicester. Although selected as captain, Marco missed the final due to injury. In 2007-08 Gloucester yet again topped the table, and Marco was in the team which lost in the semi-final play-off, again to Leicester.

In 2008-09 the Cherry and Whites did make a final and Marco came off the bench, when they played Cardiff Blues at Twickenham for the EDF Cup, but Nicky Robinson and co. cantered to an easy win.

Injuries and loss of form plagued Marco in the following season, and he decided to return to Italy to play for Aironi, and when that team folded, moved on to Zebre for whom he played against Gloucester in 2014.

### **Alex Brown**

Alex was born in Bristol on 17 May 1979 and educated at Colston's College, Bristol. After brief stays at Bath and Pontypool, Dean Ryan contracted him to Bristol where, in his first campaign he was voted the player of the season.



By 2003 Ryan, now coaching at Kingsholm, signed up Alex, when again he promptly won the player of the season award, and started every game. He also holds the record for the most consecutive starts in the Premiership with 86, spread over games for Bristol and Gloucester. He made a formidable partnership with Marco Bortolami in the second row.

Alex was in the teams which beat London Irish to win the European Challenge Cup in 2006, which lost the Premiership final to Leicester in 2007, and the ill-fated loss to Cardiff Blues in the EDF final of 2009. But he was in the winning team against Newcastle in the LV Final of 2011.





For some years Alex was on the England selectors' radar, but after appearances for England Saxons in the first Churchill Cup he was not capped until England's tour to Australia in 2006. He won two more caps on the tour to South Africa in 2007.

Alex Brown was an utterly dependable player, whose form never dipped. He made 233 appearances for Gloucester, including 159 in the Premiership. He seemed set to play several more seasons but a shoulder injury in the first game of the 2012-13 season ended his career. Happily, he has remained at Kingsholm and is now the club's Rugby Administrator.

## And Finally....

What's the definition of a successful Man?

A man who earns more than his wife can spend !!

Definition of a successful Woman ?

One who finds such a Man.

Please keep sending the pictures of ANY Glos Former Players activities you might capture.

.....Any stories you might want to share.

.....Any news on ANY former players that the rest of us might find interesting.

.....Keep encouraging any non members to join us.

Let me know if you fancy the trip to Stratford Races.  
ASAP. [jockeydoc@me.com](mailto:jockeydoc@me.com)