

**Andy  
Deacon**  
Testimonial Year  
2000 - 2001

**£3.00**

## A message from Andy Deacon

*"I was surprised and delighted when I was told I would be the first Gloucester player to have a Testimonial year.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you very much to everyone who has helped me to organise it, and to everyone who has written something for this book.*

*I have had many, many great times playing for Gloucester and I am hoping to have many more great times this year.*

*Thanks very much again to everyone who has helped me through all my years of playing rugby and who has helped with my Testimonial. I hope you all enjoy this year as much as I do."*



### ANDY DEACON TESTIMONIAL YEAR 2000 - 2001

<i>Patron</i>	Peter West	<i>Committee</i>	John Fidler, David Foyle, John Hall, Mike Nicholls, John Partridge, John Moore
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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andy Deacon and the Committee would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this publication.

*The following are worthy of special mention:-*

Katie Coker for undertaking the editorial.

All the contributors both amateur and professional.

All the advertisers without whose support the publication would not have been possible.

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**PETER WEST** has been invited to be Patron of Andy Deacon's Testimonial, and has taken up the role with great enthusiasm.

The former BBC television and radio commentator and rugby correspondent of The Times, and now a resident of Gloucestershire, is an avid follower of the Cherry and Whites and a Kingsholm regular.

"A SMASHING BLOKE and a superb club man." Everyone who knows Andy Deacon will surely agree with that tribute from Colin Dunford, secretary of Longlevens, the club which has sent so many fine players onwards to Kingsholm.

Colin recalls with justifiable pride and doubtless a sense of loss that in earlier (amateur) days, there was at least one occasion when Gloucester's first XV pack was composed entirely of former Longlevens players. Andy was at prop, needless to say, but can you name the other seven before turning to the answers below?

These days, the staunch and ever-loyal Andy is coaching his old club and, having made his debut for Gloucester in 1988, is now the senior pro at Kingsholm. So who more deserving to be chosen as this great club's first Beneficiary?

Let me add that the committee's choice of patron tickled me absolutely pink. For the past

17 years or so I have lived some 20 minutes away from Kingsholm and soon after I gave up talking or writing about the game, I became a fully paid-up member of the club and a pretty regular attender at home matches.

I've always been grateful to the generous committee for their welcome.

I love the atmosphere at Kingsholm on match days, the fierce partisanship of supporters who really understand the game and give credit for good play by the visitors (even Bath and Bristol).

Good luck to Andy in his Testimonial season and, to the club, better luck with injuries as they pursue their Holy Grail, the winning of something really big again.

Answers: Tony Windo, Glyn Mann, Andy Deacon, Dave Stims, Richard West, Peter Glanville, Ian Smith and Simon Devereux.







We have come a long way  
the last few years as well.



**Introduction by JOHN MILNER, Chairman of the Testimonial Committee**

SINCE the advent of professionalism those of us who attempted to lead the Club through the early years have frequently faced some stark choices and often made difficult decisions with a great deal of personal regret. We had no difficulty and no regret when we accepted Andy's invitation to form the basis of his Testimonial Committee.

Andy is the first Gloucester player to be awarded a Testimonial. To those of you who are not aware, RFU guidelines only allow a Club to award a Testimonial for exceptional service. There is no player who has bridged the gap from amateur to professionalism more deserving of a Testimonial than Andy Deacon. At the onset of professionalism Andy was approaching the veteran stage, and as a prop was never able to command an exceptional contract. In fact I clearly remember one year when it was touch and go whether he would be better off going back to his old job as a drayman. Not surprisingly Andy stuck to his rugby, Gloucester needed him.

Andy has always been 100% loyal to Gloucester, he has often told me privately that

he could not imagine playing for any other club. His encouragement and assistance to young players, as well as his total commitment to the Club on and off the field is well documented. Andy truly epitomises all the virtues of Gloucester Rugby Football Club. I am sure you will all give his Testimonial the support he deserves.

We hope you enjoy this brochure and the events we have planned throughout the year. On behalf of Andy I would like to thank all the people who have generously given their time and expertise to help prepare this publication. I would particularly like to thank my Committee, Katie Coker who has worked long and hard on the editorial, Claire Smith, our secretary who bullies, cajoles and encourages us, and all the contributors and advertisers for their support. A special word of thanks also to Paul Forman and Unipart who have generously supported this brochure in addition to providing substantial sponsorship and assistance to the Club.





**KATIE COKER** became the Gloucester Citizen's rugby writer on September 1, 1992. Over the next seven years, she reported from Gloucester's games at home and away, and even on tour in Italy and France.

By the time she left the Citizen to join Rugby World magazine in November 1999 (where she is now a writer and sub-editor) Andy Deacon was one of only two or three players who had been at the club longer than she had.

Katie watched Andy break through to become a first team regular and one of the club's most influential players. In recent years, Phil Vickery has become first choice tighthead, but Deacon has remained a key figure and Katie was delighted and honoured to be asked to write the biography printed below and lend a hand with putting together this Testimonial brochure.



**ANDREW DEACON** was born at home in Tuffley, Gloucester on July 31, 1965. His mum Joan and dad Ken already had one son, Mark, and a daughter, Julie, who are five and three years older than Andy respectively.

His early schooling came at Grange Infants and Juniors, and he went on to Beaufort Comprehensive. However, sport always came before schooling in Andy's eyes.

"I was sports mad – football, cricket, any sport," he said. "Beaufort was a new school when I went there and the sports facilities were good."

Andy played his first rugby at Beaufort – as a lock rather than a prop - but it was just one of many sports for him and he became the first comprehensive pupil in Gloucester to beat a grammar school boy in a squash match.

His school rugby team were also the first to achieve a win over a grammar school and Andy remained in the team until he left school as a 16-year-old.

He then took up an apprenticeship at the Wagon Works in Gloucester and became a qualified welder. He had a succession of jobs, but did not enjoy them, until he joined the company who were to become his long-term employers.

"I hated being in a factory, because I had to stay in one place," Andy said. "Then I went to Whitbread and it was completely different. I went there as a storeman, which was more money than I had been on before, but they trained you to do different things and I ended up being a drayman."

"I was happy then because I was out and about and doing something I wanted to do."

Andy remained with the Whitbread brewery full time until rugby went professional. He used to work from 5am until 1pm, and then go to training.

In 1996 Whitbread allowed him to take a two-year break to give full-time rugby a try, and that sabbatical has been extended, still with the guarantee of a job at the end of it.

"They have been very good to me and I still have good connections with the company and go to see them two or three times a week. I want to keep going with the rugby until Gloucester boot me out, and then I will be back at Whitbread," he said.



*Top: Andy in the middle with his brother and sister.*

*Centre (left): Aged 10 at Junior School.*

*Centre (right): Trying his luck on horseback, aged 4 or 5.*

*Bottom: Aged 11 starting Secondary School with friend.*





During his teenage years, the idea of being a professional rugby player was far from Andy's mind. He joined Longlevens Rugby Club at the age of about 14, but a few years later he gave up rugby so he could indulge his passion for football by watching Manchester United for a season.

"I still went along to Longlevens, but I wasn't playing. I didn't miss a game at Old Trafford for about a year, but then I thought I would have another go at rugby," Andy said. "I played for the under-17s, then the thirds, the seconds and the next season I was in the firsts, when I was still about 17."

By the time he reached his early 20s, Andy had settled at tight-head prop, having moved up from the second row. He captained Longlevens in 1986, and then decided to try for a place at Gloucester, joining the group of local players who simply turned up for training at Kingsholm. "I went back and forth between Gloucester and Longlevens because I couldn't get a game. It was very tough to break in and after I made my debut I don't think I played again for about 18 months. I hated it, because I was on my own to start with and no-one spoke to you.

"Tony Windo, Dave Sims and Simon Devereux all came along a little bit later. I knew them from Longlevens and they were slightly younger than me, but they went to Gloucester at a younger age."

Andy had missed out on selection for schoolboy representative teams, but he had played for Gloucester Colts. When he finally gave up playing for Longlevens and concentrated on Gloucester, he earned a place in the Gloucester United side (the second team) and started to make a name for himself at club level.

"It was even tough to get into the United team," he recalled. "It was like two different clubs and we were smashing everyone in the United games. We were all mates and it was a great crack and we never even thought about playing for the first team."

Ahead of Andy

in the first team, Bob Phillips was the tighthead, but, after making his debut in 1988, Andy gradually made more regular appearances in the early 1990s and became the outright first choice.

He was soon catching the eye with his excellent set-piece work and his barnstorming charges and he was rewarded with an England Emerging Players cap in 1994. He was a replacement for the match against Spain, then played against Canada, but his big day ended badly as he broke his collarbone.

The Gloucester squad and director of rugby, Barrie Corless, chose Andy as club captain for the 1994-5 season, but it was not to be a happy year.

"I came back too quickly from my injury and I was never fit and I had a bad season," Andy said. "It is an honour to say I have captained Gloucester, but we were struggling as a side and I was struggling with my form.

"We just held our own in that division, but there were a few highlights, like when we beat Leicester at Kingsholm. But we didn't have the players or a big enough squad. Other clubs were paying people and Gloucester were having none of it."

When professionalism officially started in 1995, Andy was delighted by the thought of being paid to do what he had done for nothing before. However, he soon discovered that professional sport was different.

"Year on year it changed and changed and changed and it was getting more difficult and more professional," he said. "People said we were two years behind on professionalism at Gloucester, but it is hard to say because we didn't have anything to compare it to. We knew other people were getting paid, but we never wanted to particularly – we just wanted a bit of beer."

As the professional years ticked by, Andy had to endure seeing many of his best friends leave Gloucester, including Windo, Sims and Devereux.

"It was difficult, because they were my mates, but it never entered my mind to go. I wasn't interested. If Gloucester didn't want me, then I would look for somewhere else."





Although his international career had stalled four years earlier, Andy was still invited to tour with the Barbarians to South America in the summer of 1998 and he enjoyed the experience tremendously. It gave him the chance to experience a new, foreign rugby culture, and gave the Barbarians officials the chance to work with one of the modern game's great characters.

Throughout the 1990s, Andy had kept in close touch with everyone at Longlevens and in 1998 they asked him to become club coach.

"I enjoy it and I will keep going until anyone says any different. Longlevens is all my mates who I have known for years. My brother plays there, in the second row."

Away from rugby, Andy met his future wife Karen when he was a teenager and in 1987 they were married.

They now have two children, Emily (11) and Oliver (8) and Oliver is already playing in the Longlevens mini section. Andy tries not to interfere, but he is happy Oliver is keen on rugby and admits to getting excited when he watches him play.

Karen and Andy's parents rarely watch Gloucester as they get too worked up, but they have always been very supportive of his

sporting career. Karen's dad usually takes Oliver along to Gloucester's games to cheer Andy on.

In the last couple of years, the Deacons have acquired a third "child" in the robust shape of Phil Vickery. The Cornish prop joined Gloucester in 1995 as the proclaimed successor to Andy, but despite their fierce competition for the number three shirt, they have become firm friends and Vickery is often at the Deacon house in Longlevens.

"He had to earn his stripes, but gradually my mindset with Vicks has changed and I want him to do well now," said Andy. "I still want to play but I want to see him get on."

By the start of this season, Andy had made 205 first team appearances, with more to come. He still enjoys his rugby, still contributes a massive amount to Gloucester and has plenty of good advice to give.

"I didn't think I would last this long, but I like training and I look after myself and that is why I have kept going," he said. "You have to work hard. You have to be honest with yourself about whether you are putting it in and hitting people as hard as you can. Only you know if you are doing that, and if you are not truthful with yourself you will never get on."



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**PAUL FORMAN is the Managing Director of Unipart European Aftermarket Division.**

It is a great pleasure for Unipart to extend its relationship with GRFC by becoming the main sponsor of this publication and supporting Andy's testimonial. It has always been our philosophy as a company to make the most of what the team can achieve as a whole. Andy is just such an example of how important it is that a team has many different parts to it. Perhaps he doesn't get the glamorous headlines of others, but he has always been there for his colleagues and has been an integral part of GRFC's success through their forwards over the years. A true team player who has been one of

Gloucester's unsung heroes, his contribution has been invaluable.

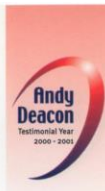
All of us at Unipart wish Andy every success with his testimonial year and helping the team to ensure that 2000/2001 is a season to remember on as well as off the pitch.



*Paul Forman (centre), Managing Director of Unipart, Gloucester Rugby Football Club's main sponsor 2000-01*

GLOUCESTER RFC





The son of a Scottish farmer, TOM WALKINSHAW made his name in the motorsport and engineering fields. He is the owner of the Arrows Formula One team and in the late 1990s he bought the majority share in Gloucester Rugby Club.

A big rugby fan, he makes the trip from his Oxfordshire home to Kingsholm whenever he can, to cheer on the Cherry and Whites with his family.

I WAS FIRST INVITED to become involved with Gloucester Rugby Club in early 1997 when Rugby was in its second year of professionalism.

As a young man it was Rugby's unique culture that attracted me most. The game has brought me immense enjoyment through playing, watching and generally being associated with my club. The people associated with rugby are clearly what make the sport truly incomparable to any other. Andy Deacon is a glowing example of the perfect ambassador for all the values the sport represents.

If asked to describe Andy in one word I am sure most of those who know him would say he is "dedicated". As a player you always know what you will get from him no matter who or

where you are playing. As a person he is someone that every club owner or coach would be proud of.

There were many requests from supporters for Andy to be given a testimonial year and I am honoured to be part of it. I am sure everyone will enjoy giving Andy the send off he most certainly deserves.

Finally, I would like to wish Andy every success in his career outside of rugby but I know he will always remain a part of Gloucester Rugby Club.







As a teenager, PHILIPPE SAINT-ANDRE was a tennis star, but he turned his back on the racket sport to concentrate on rugby and went on to become a legend in his native France and around the world. After captaining France to a string of successes and winning 69 caps, he left Montferrand to join Gloucester in 1997.

In 1999 he took over as player-coach after Richard Hill left the club and the Frenchman piloted Gloucester to the top echelons of the league last season and into this season's Heineken Cup.

SOME WOULD SAY that my English is not too good now, but when I first came to Gloucester it was worse and for a long time I knew Andrew Deacon as just 'big head'. I know him well now and I'm very impressed by what I know. When the game went professional he understood very quickly what it would take to succeed. For the last 3 years he has been an exemplary professional. He has improved his fitness and his all round game. He has also greatly improved as a scrummager - I now have every confidence in him in this area. People must

understand that he is not lucky to maintain a place in my squad - he is there because he is a good player who even at the age of 34, works hard to improve. He also has a great attitude and this means that he is a very positive influence on the other players - especially the younger ones.

Deacs is a Gloucester boy and proud of it - but he is also a Gloucester boy with an open mind and this is important. For me he embodies the character and spirit of the Club and I am happy to support him in his testimonial year.



A rock in the Gloucester second row during the 1980s, JOHN BRAIN has remained close to the Kingsholm club since his retirement from playing. For the last couple of years he has been Gloucester's first team forwards coach and is earning an increasing reputation as a top-class coach.

I FIRST CAME ACROSS 'DEACS' when he began playing at Gloucester and then some years later when I started coaching. When the game went open a significant number of players who had formerly played as amateurs found it difficult to adjust to the demands of the professional game. Some thought it was a charter for an easy life: amateur attitudes and habits accompanied by professional wages. Deacs has never been in this category and that is why he has not just survived but improved at the top level. The last bit is important. Many senior players are unreceptive to new techniques and ideas and fail to improve, but this is not the case with Andrew - if he thinks you're talking sense he'll

listen and take it on board. If he thinks you're talking rubbish he'll soon let you know. Honesty is a key characteristic of any successful Gloucester player and Deacs has this quality.

Despite his 'catalogue' dress sense, a 'pub singer' style singing voice, an exceptionally large cranial area and a refusal to part with money except under considerable duress, he exemplifies much of what is good about Gloucester Rugby Club. For him, playing for Gloucester is not about money. Therefore, for me it is entirely fitting that he is the first Gloucester player to be granted a testimonial and I wish him every success.







## LIST OF EVENTS

### November

- TBC** Launch at Kingsholm  
**26th** Match at Longlevens RFC  
Longlevens XV v Andy Deacon s XV

### December

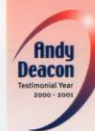
- 8th** Race Day at Cheltenham  
**TBC** Christmas Party at GRFC

### Proposed Events for 2001

- Auction of Promises**  
**Dinner at Stow RFC**  
**Dinner at Ledbury RFC**  
**Dinner at Forest Hills Golf Club**  
**Dinner in Cheltenham area**  
**Dinner in London**  
**All Star Match at Kingsholm**  
**Golf Day (sponsored by Warners)**  
**Clay Pigeon Shoot**

**Various functions at Kingsholm throughout the year**

For further information on these and other events please  
contact Claire Smith on 01451 850555



## Deacs' playing record to the end of the last season

ALL GAMES PLAYED: 205  
TRIES SCORED: 15

### PREMIERSHIP (INCLUDES COURAGE)

PLAYED: 100  
TRIES SCORED: 6

### EUROPEAN

PLAYED: 9  
TRIES SCORED: 0

## Season 1994/95 records with Deacs as captain

	<i>Gloster</i>	<i>Opp</i>	
Hamiltons	23	27	L
Milnerton	38	11	W
Belville	41	7	W
Stellenbosch University	26	9	W
LYDNEY	44	0	W
Stroud	63	7	W
Wasps ++	8	45	L
WEST HARTLEPOOL ++	48	12	W
Leicester ++	6	16	L
BRISTOL ++	19	17	W
Northampton ++	6	9	L
ORRELL ++	9	6	W
Cardiff	17	20	L
CANTERBURY (NZ)	7	70	L
BRIDGEND	45	0	W
CLIFTON	36	13	W
Bedford	14	16	L
COVENTRY	73	3	W
Cheltenham	25	14	W
Wakefield **	9	19	L
Lydney	14	5	W
MOSELEY	35	6	W
WASPS ++	16	21	L
West Hartlepool ++	21	22	L
EXETER	72	5	W
Rugby	28	33	L
LEICESTER ++	9	3	W
WATERLOO	35	16	W
NORTHERN TRANSVAAL	21	31	L
NEWPORT	44	19	W
Bristol ++	17	21	L
NORTHAMPTON ++	14	13	W
Orrell ++	14	43	L

### SEASON RECORD

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Away</i>
Played .....	33	16	17
Won .....	19	13	6
Lost .....	14	3	11
Draw .....	0	0	0
Points For .....	897	527	370
Points Against .....	559	235	324
Winning Percentage .....	57.58	81.25	35.29





## Deacs . . . . my hero

**PHIL VICKERY** made the move from his native Cornwall to Gloucester as a teenager, hoping to earn his stripes in top class club rugby. He did that, and more, as he turned from schoolboy international to a full England regular. As a tighthead prop, he was Andy Deacon's heir apparent when he arrived at Kingsholm and – despite a healthy rivalry for the number three shirt – he and Deacs have become firm friends.

PHIL GREENING and Richard Hill finally persuaded me to join Gloucester RFC back in 1995/6. I knew Phil from our junior representative days and I thought that if I was going to uproot myself from my beloved Cornwall I was best going where I had a good mate to talk to. That was just as well because I found it quite hard to get a conversation out of some of the more senior squad members at the Club.

Believe it or not it took months to get a few words out of some people . . . . Deacs for example spared me precisely two words over a period of about two years! This was a bit odd as I decided that the man who was playing tighthead prop for Gloucester should be my role model. I had always been used to chatting to people and I found it strange to be confronted with a wall of virtual silence! I asked myself – is this the norm in top Rugby.

Undeterred, I decided to make a point of watching my hero play. The first time was against Harlequins with Will Carling and all at Kingsholm . . . . an upmarket version of Redruth v Penzance I thought . . . . there he was in the thick of it . . . . a close game and he stole the headlines at the end of it . . . . what a man . . . . Deacon's late tackle on Carling gives a penalty try to Quins!

As time passed I wore Deacs out with my cheerfulness forcing him, in the end into more regular (if one sided) conversations with me . . . . "all right kid" he would say . . . . this was

progress. But more bad news was to come from Deacs . . . . he knew my hero-worship was out of control when I moved house into the same street as him – worse, I took Trevor Woodman with me! It was at this point that Deacs finally gave in and officially adopted me as a kind of Cornish refugee. Not only could we borrow his lawnmower ("don't break it you chimps!") but he found the courage to invite me round to tea. So, somewhat surprised . . . . his son Ollie had a kind of big brother and Mrs Deacs (Karen) had a kind of herd of cattle to feed! To help with the Deacon family food bills Trevor and I decided to employ Karen to help with our housework. If ever there was proof of anyone having a sense of humour that is it.

Over the last few years the Deacs clan have become great friends of mine . . . . Deacs now talks to me as much as Ollie does (nearly) and Karen has always made sure I keep body and soul together if I get hungry. There is no problem that they cannot help me with and no amount of support is too much trouble. It is a measure of the man that since I began to play regularly for Gloucester first team his support for me has been second to none. This is what makes him the special man that he is, to me and to Gloucester. As I said at the start of this article I needed to make friends in Gloucester when I left Cornwall, Deacs and his family have made it a home from home for me . . . . what more can I say?







**DAVE BARTON, Rugby Reporter of the Western Daily Press**

ASK A JOURNALIST which players are the worst to interview and they'll invariably offer you two types.

Firstly, there's the one who'll talk for hours and fill your notebook, but when you come to read back what they've said, you find they've actually said nothing worth quoting at all.

You know the stuff: "If we score more points than them we'll win; we've got to go out there and beat them; it's a game of two halves."

Then there's the one who doesn't say much at all and actively avoids interviews. Perhaps it's just me, but one player I had arranged to talk to made a swift exit from the back of the changing-room, leaving me hanging outside the front until I was told he had left 20 minutes previously.

I'm happy to say that Andy Deacon falls into neither of these categories.

One of my first phone-calls when I joined the Western Daily Press some five years ago was to set up an interview with Andy, who that coming weekend was due to face Leicester's England loose-head Graham Rowntree at Welford Road.

Andy was still getting up at 5am to work at Whitbread's brewery so with some trepidation I picked up the phone, half-expecting some traditional front-row grunts and groans from Kingsholm's most famous drayman.

At best I hoped for a vague arrangement to meet him after practice on a wet Tuesday night (when rugby teams used to train in the evenings).

Instead, I was greeted warmly and invited round to his Longlevens house for a chat and a cup of tea. I left some 90 minutes later all tea-d out and clutching a tape recorder full of usable quotes.

Unlike his chiselled head, there are no edges on 'Deacs'. He tells it how he sees it, without any "one game at a time" or "anything can happen in the cup" cliches.

Before Deacon led Gloucester as stand-in captain against second division Orrell in their Tetley's Bitter Cup tie at Kingsholm in January 2000 he said: "We must show there is a difference between an amateur and a professional outfit. There can be no sentiment involved. The fans expect us to do a professional job. We are professionals and we have to play like professionals.

"Those amateur days are gone. They have gone their way, we have gone ours.."

For those of us seeking for a few words of inspiration to liven up our prose, Andy invariably provides them.

He himself turned professional when Whitbread's gave him a sabbatical and his days of barrel lifting have been put on hold.

But he has never forgotten his roots. I saw him at training earlier this season wearing a shirt bearing the badge of Longlevens RFC, his former club which he still coaches.

In these days of high-tech training tops and rip-stop nylon, an off-white cotton jersey is refreshing. . . just like Andy.







## GLOUCESTER RFC 2000 - 2001

*Back row (left to right):* Andy Gomarsall, Andy Deacon, Chris Fortey, Chris Catling, Rory Greenlade-Jones, Olivier Azam, Kingsley Jones, Franck Schisano, Trevor Woodman, Tom Bein.  
*2nd from back row (left to right):* Ed Archer (conditioning coach), Rob Jewell, Junior Paramore, Jake Boer, Ed Pearce, Mark Cornwell, Richard Ward, Adam Eustace, Steve Ojomoh, Chris Yates, Peter Finch (conditioning coach).  
*3rd from back row (left to right):* Ian Sanders, Herve Gregoire-Mazzocco, Adey Powles, Phil Vickery, Ian Jones (captain), Rob Fidler, Joe Ewens, Robert Todd, Simon Mannix.  
*Front row (left to right):* Elton Moncrieff, Byron Hayward, Stephane Sanchez, Andy Hazell. *Inset:* Jason Little.



#### MICK CLEARY, Daily Telegraph

YOU KNOW THE STORY only too well. Young pup arrives on the scene, fancies his chances, old lags take one look and decide to give him the treatment. Nothing too nasty, of course, just to see what the lad is really made of. Do him no harm in the long run. Sort out the men from the boys. See if he's one of us.

Phil Vickery knew what he was in for when he headed north from Redruth in the mid-nineties to try his hand at Gloucester. He'd have been disappointed if there hadn't been a few slaps waiting for him at Kingsholm. But now there is a tale to tell, a tale of terrible betrayal, a tale of one man who refused to go with tradition. Phil Vickery, name that man.

"I got a walloping a couple of times from the lads," says Vickery. "But Andy Deacon was always as good as gold to me. Still is"

Andy Deacon, heart of gold. What will that do to his reputation? At least Deacs didn't go soft with any other lot packing down against him for the last 20 years or so. A hard, true son of Gloucester is Andy Deacon. Phil Vickery knew he was stepping into some pretty formidable shoes.

"Deacs has taught me a lot," says Vickery. "He was the first to congratulate me when I finally got into the first team ahead of him. There aren't many like that. Of course there was tension between us at times on the training field but it was competitive tension. No more than that. I wouldn't want it any other way. Nor would he. Deacs has been such a good ambassador for the game. It wouldn't matter if he weren't paid a penny these days. He'd still be giving his all. Money has never entered into the equation with him. The mark of the man is that he thinks of the team first and foremost. He puts himself last whatever the situation might be."

And only too eager to help out as Phil Vickery knows. The Deacon household has become a second home to Vickery, Karen Deacon often being presented with a couple of shirts for a bit of ironing when he comes calling.

"Deacs calls me his 'Romanian Orphan,'" says Vickery. "I don't know what I would have done without his support. He's a great bloke. And you won't find anyone in the entire game of rugby saying any different."



#### STEPHEN JONES, Sunday Times

ANDY DEACON'S TESTIMONIAL is the clearest indication yet that in an era where so much has changed in rugby, then in essence, rugby remains the same. He has been a first XV player at Kingsholm for almost a decade. Has played over 200 times in the famous cherry-and-white jersey before the greatest club rugby following in the sport; he has captained the team, been bested or bested by precious few opponents in the front row battles, and been one of the best props in the English game, easily a better player than some who played for England.

And he has spanned the eras. First, he moved on with the game from the era when props scrummaged then went home, almost a contest within a contest, and has made himself a thoroughly-modern all round operator. But he has spanned a bigger divide than that. When Deacon first joined his home town club in the 1980s, he found around him fellow townies, in the era when most Gloucester players could walk or cycle to the ground from where they lived and where the aura of the club was that of a local institution.

Now, we have the professional era, with big signings and less concentration on the localities. Some players have been left behind by the change of emphasis. It could have been the same with Deacon at Gloucester because the club is now one of the most exotic clubs around, with famous players bought in from many

parts of the sporting globe. But Deacon never blinked. He has fitted in with his illustrious new friends with ease - if the professional era has produced players of intensity and application and pride then it suits Deacon down to the ground - because that is precisely how he approached the game anyway, pay or no pay. Us hacks always have our favourite players and I have always found the true grit grafters easier to regard as heroes than the high-scoring backs.

It is difficult to remember Deacon looking ruffled or under pressure in any Gloucester match I have seen and he also has had the application and the club spirit to battle on even when the illustrious Phil Vickery came to take his place. Even Vickery would admit that in the matches which he missed and when Deacon stood in, there was never a noticeable difference.

Deacon's recognition of his own roots in the sport remains. It remains in the coaching role he has assumed with the Longlevens club, putting something back into an institution which has given him, and the whole Gloucester club, so much support and so many players over the years.

The testimonial is a fitting tribute to one of the great West Country forwards. Gloucester fans have embraced their foreign players with a passion but it is good to know that they recognise the fantastic contribution of one of their own.





## Deacs . . . . Spanning the Eras

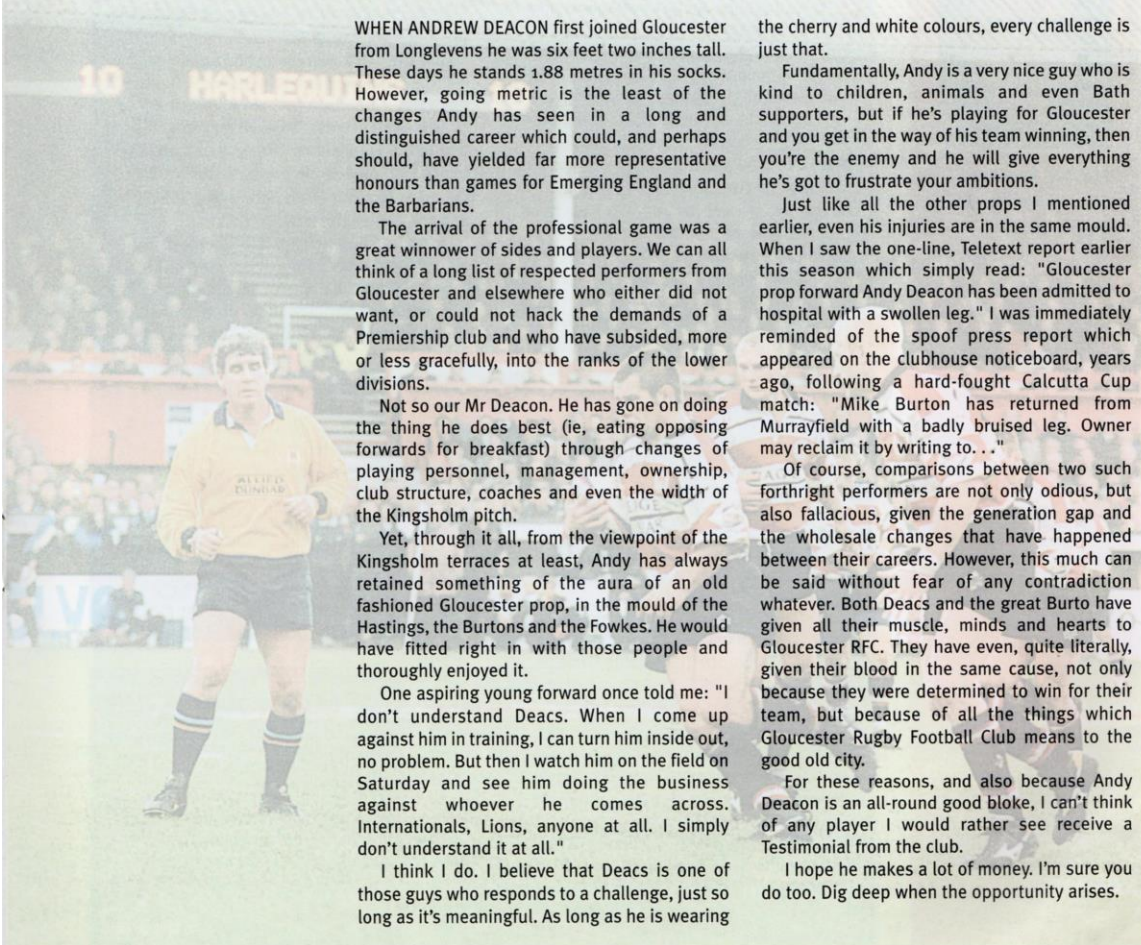
A couple of years ago, PETER ARNOLD was described in the press as writing "the most entertaining programme notes in English rugby", a job he has been doing for Gloucester RFC for over 20.

During that time he has written many articles and publications about the club, including "Kingsholm – the First 100 Years" which was the official handbook of Gloucester's ground centenary.

Peter has also written several publications which have nothing to do with rugby, including "How to be a Local Councillor" which, to his bemusement, has recently been translated into Japanese.

Peter was a member of Gloucester City Council for 17 years, served as City Sheriff and also became Gloucester's 500th Mayor, as well as serving as the mock Mayor of Barton three times.

A fanatical Cherry and Whites supporter, Peter made sure his other duties did not interfere with his Kingsholm commitments.



WHEN ANDREW DEACON first joined Gloucester from Longlevens he was six feet two inches tall. These days he stands 1.88 metres in his socks. However, going metric is the least of the changes Andy has seen in a long and distinguished career which could, and perhaps should, have yielded far more representative honours than games for Emerging England and the Barbarians.

The arrival of the professional game was a great winnow of sides and players. We can all think of a long list of respected performers from Gloucester and elsewhere who either did not want, or could not hack the demands of a Premiership club and who have subsided, more or less gracefully, into the ranks of the lower divisions.

Not so our Mr Deacon. He has gone on doing the thing he does best (ie, eating opposing forwards for breakfast) through changes of playing personnel, management, ownership, club structure, coaches and even the width of the Kingsholm pitch.

Yet, through it all, from the viewpoint of the Kingsholm terraces at least, Andy has always retained something of the aura of an old fashioned Gloucester prop, in the mould of the Hastings, the Burtons and the Fowkes. He would have fitted right in with those people and thoroughly enjoyed it.

One aspiring young forward once told me: "I don't understand Deacs. When I come up against him in training, I can turn him inside out, no problem. But then I watch him on the field on Saturday and see him doing the business against whoever he comes across. Internationals, Lions, anyone at all. I simply don't understand it at all."

I think I do. I believe that Deacs is one of those guys who responds to a challenge, just so long as it's meaningful. As long as he is wearing

the cherry and white colours, every challenge is just that.

Fundamentally, Andy is a very nice guy who is kind to children, animals and even Bath supporters, but if he's playing for Gloucester and you get in the way of his team winning, then you're the enemy and he will give everything he's got to frustrate your ambitions.

Just like all the other props I mentioned earlier, even his injuries are in the same mould. When I saw the one-line, Teletext report earlier this season which simply read: "Gloucester prop forward Andy Deacon has been admitted to hospital with a swollen leg." I was immediately reminded of the spoof press report which appeared on the clubhouse noticeboard, years ago, following a hard-fought Calcutta Cup match: "Mike Burton has returned from Murrayfield with a badly bruised leg. Owner may reclaim it by writing to . . ."

Of course, comparisons between two such forthright performers are not only odious, but also fallacious, given the generation gap and the wholesale changes that have happened between their careers. However, this much can be said without fear of any contradiction whatever. Both Deacs and the great Burto have given all their muscle, minds and hearts to Gloucester RFC. They have even, quite literally, given their blood in the same cause, not only because they were determined to win for their team, but because of all the things which Gloucester Rugby Football Club means to the good old city.

For these reasons, and also because Andy Deacon is an all-round good bloke, I can't think of any player I would rather see receive a Testimonial from the club.

I hope he makes a lot of money. I'm sure you do too. Dig deep when the opportunity arises.





## Diary of Season 1999/2000



Alastair Downey,  
Gloucester Citizen  
Rugby Writer

I HAVE NOT ACTUALLY completed a full season as my role as the Citizen's Gloucester rugby writer, but I have already been twisted through the whole gambit of emotions after a rollercoaster of a campaign - the first full one under coach Philippe Saint-Andre and Kingsley Jones.

For the sceptics who believe the job is just an endless round of jollies, they will not be pleased to know that my first sortie into action was in the beautiful city of Madrid in the European Shield. But I will back track for the moment and recap on Gloucester's excellent start to the then Allied Dunbar Premiership.

They opened with a comprehensive victory against Newcastle Falcons, lost to Wasps, thrashed Leicester before losing to Bath.

Then, perhaps against Harlequins on a typically heart thumping night under the Kingsholm lights, Simon Mannix skidded over a last minute penalty and Gloucester collected a 24-23 victory.

It proved to be the catalyst for the best part of Gloucester's season. In conditions that suited them and a game plan that was, for the most part, running as close to clockwork as Saint-Andre could have hoped, Gloucester went 12 games undefeated, an outstanding achievement for the new team. And then it was off to Spain.

It was a totally new experience for me. Travelling with the team first hand was fantastic and once in Madrid, I shared an evening meal with players on the same table as Andy Hazell and Adam Eustace.

Deacs politely informed them that they were not allowed to leave the table until they had finished their meal, which they of course did.

On the Sunday of the game, I was, as hoped, involved with carrying tackle bags and endless amounts of water for the players into the dressing room. Gloucester duly completed a easy victory.

A Premiership collision with Bristol was my first official league match and what a game it was. Gloucester, playing some of their best rugby of the season, simply blew Bristol away in the first-half and then defended stoutly against the wind in the second to continue their great run.

A draw at a wet and windy Brewery Field against Bridgend was not the best way to usher in Saint-Andre's two year extension of his Gloucester contract, but ensured Gloucester's European Shield campaign remained on track.

Bridgend then made the trip to

Gloucester and Tai Glassie sealed the Cherry and Whites' victory with a kiss on Richard Webster as Gloucester carved out a 23-6 victory.

Back in the Premiership, Gloucester battled for a late Christmas present for a superb forward dominated success over London Irish.

Their 40-15 humbling underlined their intent in the Premiership as everything came together at a festive Kingsholm.

Three days later Gloucester were involved in a furious collision with Bedford.

Hundreds of Gloucester fans arrived at Goldington Road to find the game frozen off, despite the fact Gloucester were prepared to play and the pitch was playable.

Saint-Andre and his team holed up in a hotel for the night, drafted in stewards from Kingsholm, and won the acrimonious match the following day 18-6.

But the clash everybody had been waiting for arrived at a rain-lashed Kingsholm three days into the new Millennium.

Gloucester turned the century top of the tree in the Premiership and rubbed their hands with glee at the opportunity to rub the faces of bitter rivals Bath well and truly into the Kingsholm mud.

In an bruising forward battle, Gloucester kicked their goals to knock Bath out of the Tetley's Bitter Cup. Wasn't life grand.

Spain were easily seen off in the Shield competition which left Gloucester the tricky prospect of winning in Biarritz to qualify for the quarter-finals.

Again I had the luxury of travelling with the team and had the added bonus of sitting next to Ian Jones on the flight out. It was a privilege and an honour to share conversations with the former All Black lock.

The match did not go well for Gloucester and they slipped out of the competition 25-39.

The supporters made it their job to 'drink back' the fixture and converged on former French prop Pascal Ondart's bar right on the coast.

It was an amazing night as supporters, players and officials settled rather too easily into the hospitality.

Saint-Andre is obviously seen as a national hero and the table he commandeered for himself was stacked high with drinks.

However, the moment of the tour was the Haka led by Ian Jones and followed, albeit rather off balance, by the Gloucester supporters.



Andy Deacon congratulates Andy Deacon on his consistency and dedication to Gloucester Rugby Football Club

They were obviously still feeling the affects when they arrived back at Kingsholm because Gloucester only just managed to see off rivals Bristol 29-25 to keep their Premiership dreams alive.

January 25 went down as an historic day for Gloucester - although for the wrong reasons. It was their first defeat for three months and nine Premiership matches as Saracens claimed the honours - 21-35.

There was always the worry now that Gloucester's newly formed squad would not be able to match the best in the Premiership, but they thumped Orrell in the Tetley's Bitter Cup to move into the quarter-finals and then beat Sale at Heywood Road in the Premiership to move back to the top of the table after Northampton's home defeat by Bristol.

Knocks and injuries as well as the hectic schedule were now beginning to take their toll on Gloucester and they tumbled out of the Tetley's Bitter Cup at London Irish.

Then, Northampton blew Gloucester apart at Kingsholm 35-11 to virtually end their hopes in the Premiership.

Gloucester simply froze on the afternoon and never competed to the same level as they had done all season. The occasion became too much for them and Northampton, inspired by Matt Dawson were outstanding.

The sad truth is that Gloucester lost

three of their seven remaining games, but they responded very well with an away victory against Harlequins - their first for five seasons, securing a 38-24 triumph.

The survival of the fittest was soon beginning to catch up and on an afternoon perfect for running rugby, Bath did not disappoint at Kingsholm and put Gloucester to the sword to strengthen their own title challenge 36-16.

Gloucester then lost at a rain soaked Leicester, but showed the resolve that summed up the whole campaign when the drove Wasps into the floor to win 26-12 at Kingsholm - their first victory in almost a month.

It appeared Gloucester would end their season on a high. However, they endured a disastrous trip to Newcastle to be beaten 36-28.

The last game Kingsholm however was a celebration, with Elton Moncrieff bagging a record four tries against doomed Bedford. Gloucester romped to a 60-16 victory before their end-of-season Craic at London Irish.

Nobody there will ever forget the scenes. Gloucester players were surrounded by their supporters after Adey Powles' double try burst secured Gloucester a 42-40 last-day win.

It was fitting that one of Deacs' best mates should round off Gloucester's season. Europe here we come.



Madrid



London Irish



Wasps



Biarritz

- BATH
- BEDFORD
- BIARRITZ
- BRIDGEND
- BRISTOL
- LEICESTER
- LONDON IRISH
- MADRID
- NEWCASTLE
- NORTHAMPTON
- ORRELL
- SALE
- SARACENS
- WASPS





## Powerful props

**MIKE BURTON** is one of the great characters to have come out of Gloucester Rugby Club in the last 30 years. He played at prop for Gloucester, the Barbarians, England and the Lions and still lives and works in the area, running his well-known travel and hospitality business.

Here, he pays tribute to some of the many top class props who have worn the Cherry and White.



COLIN TEAGUE (Mike's uncle) arrived at Kingsholm from Spartans as a second row forward and, like so many before him and, indeed, after him, was promptly introduced to the world of propping and a new kind of pain barrier.

With that "promotion" came the responsibility of showing the opposition an uncompromising attitude to matters physical and to deal with the situation against all comers and in all conditions.

Colin did not fail, though his not unreasonable assumption that various technical advice would be forthcoming proved misguided when an established Gloucester prop told him "find out for yerself".

Difficult though that may have been, it has been the hallmark of all Gloucester props down the years, who've learned their trade in the dark confines of the front row, where a single-minded determination to succeed is a pre-requisite to success.

I followed the Colin Teague path to Gloucester as a boy second row forward, from Longlevens, only to be shoved up front upon arrival at Kingsholm. The Longlevens club gained something of a reputation as a nursery for prop forwards when England prop Malcolm Preedy, and Andy Deacon both went on to wear the Gloucester jersey.

Props are said not to be intelligent or articulate, yet Keith Richardson captained the club from the front row in the mid-70s whilst a master at Wycliffe College and for some years he has written a regular column in the Gloucester Citizen's Pink Un.

Continuing on that theme, Alan Townsend (a banker, no less) captained the team from the tighthead position during the early 1960s and went on to serve on the committee of the Rugby Football Union.

The Shed's hero has more often than not been a prop forward. I enjoyed a wonderful relationship with them during my years and, more recently, Tony Windo was voted the Shedhead player of the year. Witness the popularity among the Shed of today's colourful prop forward, Serge Simon.

Indeed, the longer the story goes on, the better it gets. Both Phil Vickery and Trevor

Woodman have worn the England jersey with pride, while local lads Pete Jones (who actually played for Scotland) and Bob Phillips held that famous Gloucester scrum together during the difficult, pre-professional era of the 1980s.

Richard Pascal was a tighthead of distinction, a big man on the Phil Vickery scale, and it may surprise some to know that the former Gloucester captain and England hooker Steve Mills started out life in the Gloucester front row as a loosehead prop.

It seems in these days of multi-skilled players that we can expect to see more of the inter-change between front row players with the tendency to specialise as a loosehead, tighthead or hooker becoming a thing of the past.

"Baggy" Hudson, a no-nonsense Gloucester forward of the early 1960s, played his club rugby as a lock, but won England trials as a prop, so he qualifies as one of us. He played in the same pack as the redoubtable John Herbert, another in the line of fearsome Gloucester props.

Robin Cowling, who played so well for Gloucester in the early 1970s, was not capped by England until after his agricultural commitments had taken him to Leicester, where he represented the Tigers for many years.

Tom Price was another Gloucester prop to wear the England jersey, as was George Hastings who, believe it or not, was a very adept goal kicker.

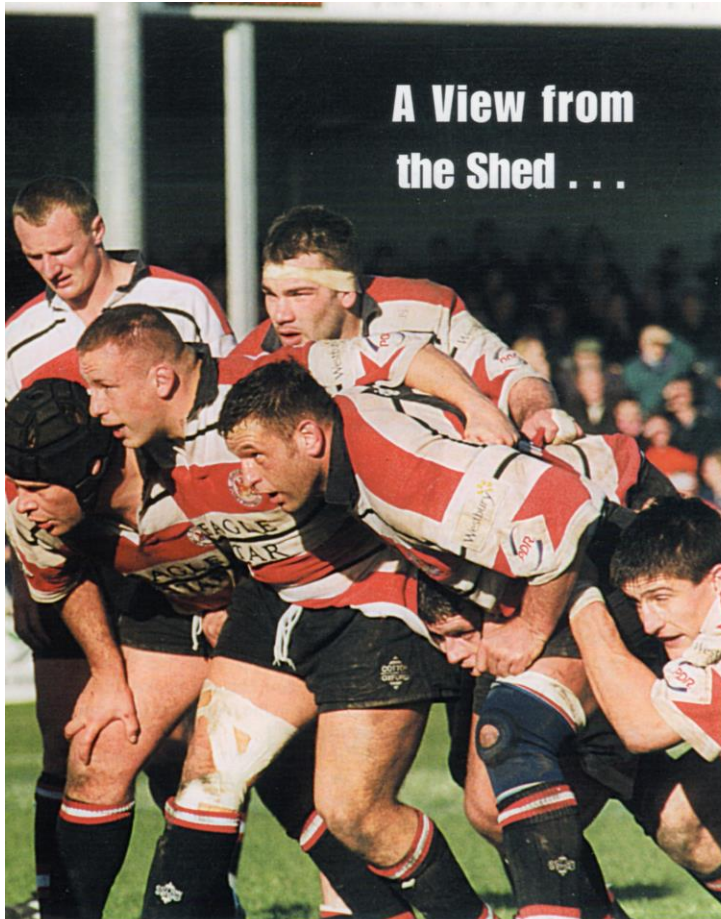
Gordon Sargent, who played for England, and Lion Phil Blakeway were cornerstones of the Gloucester pack in the 1970s and 1980s. No-one who ever saw them play could doubt the technical expertise or all-round abilities of those most famous of Gloucester brothers, Roy and Jack Fowke.

So, what next on the conveyor belt of Gloucester props? With the professional game upon us, we can always buy them in, although something happens when they arrive at Kingsholm.

You could call it a "commitment surge", though some say that Gloucester props are driven by the fear of failure and the ghosts of those who played before them.







## A View from the Shed . . .

### The saga of Deacs and the rapidly rotating rugby ball

by Shedhead's  
Martin 'Coleser' Cole

THE REALISATION that Andrew Deacon was absolute class arrived not overnight but after a series of peerless performances. It was the 1993-94 season and, for my cherry-obsessed friends and me, the bloke could not put a foot wrong. Every time he received the ball he broke the gain-line and more. He rampaged around the park with the skill, vigour and endeavour of a loose-forward. Hapless opposition forwards were left broken men, trailing in his wake. He never spilt a pass. He always shipped the ball on intelligently. In the tight his strength and tenacity meant the Gloucester scrum was feared, its line-out dominant.

Game on game on game we watched Deacs' form transform him from a reliable squad man to one of 'those players' whose name on the team sheet is essential if the side is to have a reasonable chance of winning a fixture.

Andy's form become so inspirational, so consistent that the cry 'he's absolute class!' became a bit of a mantra for us and some of our number considered fairly rationally the possibility that an alien life form had somehow taken over our hero's sturdy frame. We all agreed that it would be an utter shock should Deacs ever demonstrate anything approaching merely ordinary again.

Deacon  
Location  
all Club

But then he went and dropped the ball. I remember it all too clearly. Gloucester were playing away at Nottingham in the cup. Our hosts restarted after a successful Gloucester penalty with a speculative drop-kick towards our forward pack. It hurtled straight towards Deacs who reached out for a straightforward take. He didn't collect it cleanly and it shot from his grasp. Luckily it went backwards and a teammate tidied up. However after a stretch of exemplary, error-free performances, the shock was palpable among my comrades. Deacs had dropped a ball. Incredibly the 'absolute class' tag lay, if not shattered, then a tad dented. Silence reigned.

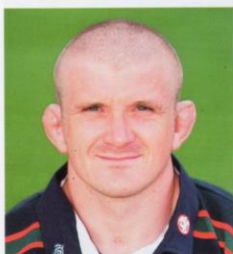
Thankfully we were saved from a cruel betrayal. 'He deflected the spin!' cried a wag. Yes – that was it! The ball must have been spinning so violently that Deacs had selflessly slapped the ball against the spin thus neutralising its gyration, allowing it to be fielded with ease by a colleague. The explanation was considered purposefully, agreement was reached and everything was wonderful once more. Andy Deacon was absolute class again.

And he has been absolute class ever since. The game of rugby nowadays compared to the game when Deacs skilfully deflected the spin is different beyond recognition. What hasn't changed is the average punter in the shed's expectations of a player lucky enough to wear the cherished cherry and white and represent the city club. Our heroes must put their bodies on the line, tackle their hearts out, strain every sinew for the cause and never give up the game, whatever the score, until the final whistle. They must show pride in the shirt and respect the club's traditions as well as the supporters who follow the team with passion and complete loyalty. Andy Deacon has lived up to and, indeed, surpassed these expectations. Not for one match, not for half a dozen games, not for a single season but for ten fantastic years.

On behalf of the Shedhead team I am delighted to congratulate Andy on the singular honour of being the first Gloucester player to be awarded a testimonial. Thanks for all the pleasure you have given to countless Gloucester supporters, Andy. You totally deserve this recognition.



## Individual Contributions and Endorsements



**GRAHAM ROWNTREE** is a long-time rival of Andy Deacon's, having made more than 250 first team appearances for Leicester Tigers. He has faced some of the best props in the business during an England career which has brought him 26 caps, but he rates Deacon as one of his toughest opponents.

Having played against Andy for the best part of ten years now, I think I know him pretty well as a player. Andy embodies the expression 'unsung hero'. I first played against him in a second team game at Kingsholm. His big mate Tony Windo was playing that day and together they gave the young upstart from Leicester a good hiding!

Fortunately for me the hidings became less frequent throughout the years, however Andy has always been one of my most difficult and supremely awkward opponents. I purposely use

the word awkward because that's what he is! He's not the biggest of tightheads around but technically you know you are in for a rough time and, in addition to this, Andy has an incredible workrate around the pitch.

It's great to see loyal and long-serving players such as Andy getting such recognition as a Testimonial, especially in these times of 'bought-in players'.

Good luck in your Testimonial year Andy – it's fully deserved and I hope it's a great success.



**JASON LEONARD** is the most capped forward in the northern hemisphere. He had played for England 84 times by the start of this season, and is aiming for a place on his third Lions tour next summer, having travelled to New Zealand in 1993 and South Africa in 1997.

Jason has played for Harlequins since 1991 and had two seasons at Saracens before that, so he has faced Andy Deacon countless times over the years.

I am very happy to write a piece for Andy's brochure. It's about time he was given a benefit year, although in truth he should have retired years ago.

Andy has managed to span the changeover into the professional era and his Testimonial is a just reward for the clubman that he is. Quiet and easygoing, I'm sure he will be very proud of the honour bestowed on him.

Being a fellow front-rower, I wish him all the very best on and off the pitch - well hopefully not all the best when we play against each other... we do enjoy a bit of a scrap.

Over the years Andy has gained a reputation for being a bit of a talker on the pitch and this I can confirm as being true.

He is always whingeing about being pushed back and lifted off his feet and getting tired and his opposite prop being too strong, and other manly stuff.

We all know that front rowers are the real rugby players and to last as long as Andy you have to be well hard.

So I have to say, I can't believe he is still playing!

Good luck for the year mate, you deserve it.

One of the great characters of modern rugby, **VICTOR UBOGU** has become a household name playing for Bath and England during the 1980s and 1990s. Always a player the Gloucester fans loved to hate, he had many a battle with Andy Deacon in the front row, but beat Deacs to retirement by stepping down at the end of last season.



By granting Andy Deacon a Benefit Year Gloucester recognised a loyal and committed servant. During my playing days, as if going to Kingsholm wasn't bad enough, having to face Andy filled me some trepidation!! The Bath front row were always guaranteed a torrid time on the pitch. As a player he gave total commitment on the park and never shied away from any confrontation...he always put his body on the line and sometimes in areas where it shouldn't be...which explains why he hasn't managed to retain his good looks!!...he never quite mastered the art of being in a position where nothing was happening..unlike my goodself!!

Good luck in your year Andy...the hard work is only just beginning...but it's worth it.



# TESTIMONIALS

## Individual Contributions and Endorsements



**KINGSLEY JONES** crossed the bridge from Wales to Gloucester in 1998, having played for Cross Keys, Ebbw Vale and New Zealand club Ardmore. He has played at the highest level, having won 12 Wales caps, captained his country and captained Wales A as well.

Jones' career has also seen him play for the Barbarians and New Zealand Barbarians. A natural leader at any level, Jones has captained both his Welsh clubs and was appointed Gloucester's skipper in 1999-2000.

Deacs, or Big D, as he is known, was the first man to come and shake my hand when it was announced that I was to be Gloucester captain for 1999-2000. And when he did, it wasn't out of courtesy, it was because he was genuinely 100 per cent behind me.

This meant so much to me. Coming from Deacs it was like having the seal of approval from all the players, and this gave me a lot of confidence, being a Welshman and captain of an English club steeped in rugby tradition that loved to hate the Welsh.

Deacs, himself a former club captain, is a true professional, always early for training and

always giving a look, with a raised eyebrow, to anyone late.

"Time and Motion" is another name I like to call him. He is a very humble man and someone who has made the difficult transition from a drayman, with regular working days, to a professional sportsman, and one of the fittest props I have ever played with.

He has not only been a great clubman, he is an outstanding player. I don't see any reason why he couldn't play on after this, more than deserved, Testimonial year.

There are lots of parts to this great club, but Andy Deacon really is the heart of Gloucester.



**RICHARD HILL** did the unthinkable in 1995. The man who had played more than 260 times for Bath in an 11-year career which included two years as captain, crossed the great divide between the west country clubs to become Gloucester's director of coaching.

Hill had played 29 times for England, making him the most capped England scrum-half until Matt Dawson beat that record. He played in the 1987 and 1991 World Cups and also captained his country.

However, Gloucester was his first formal coaching job following his retirement and he was in charge of the Cherry and Whites until February 1999. He then had a year with Ebbw Vale, before becoming assistant coach at Harlequins this season. Hill was also head coach of England A from 1997 until this year.

On the first day of my coaching role at Gloucester RFC, I am not quite sure whether it was by accident or design, but I was welcomed (and I say "welcomed" in the loosest sense of the word) by the imposing figure of Andy Deacon.

He had spent all our previous encounters on the pitch attempting to leave his mark all over me with his 22mm aluminium studs – and usually succeeded.

Andy was a man of few words and his expression – to me at least – was unmoving from his scowl. I very quickly learned he was the spokesman, the "shop steward" for all the Gloucester boys, and here was this ex-Bath player arriving to coach them.

In most of my time there, I could gauge the mood of the squad by Andy's reaction. When I suggested a new strategy, or a new drill in training, or a change to the training timetable, it wasn't a bad thing to run it by Deacs first, because when the suggestion was made to the whole group, they would look across to Deacs and he would either shake his head in disgust (in which case the motion would be turned down unanimously) or he would give an approving nod and all the players would accept the idea.

It wasn't long before I grew to like and admire Deacs. If I could have 30 players in a squad with his terrific attitude, no side would go wrong. He was fast (for a prop) and had good hands – a wicked dummy and reverse flip pass which would frighten me silly on occasions, but was usually successful. The thing I liked most about him was that if an opponent was on the wrong side once, Deacs made sure they would not want to be there a second time (enough said).

His sense of humour was very dry – I would have to stop and think sometimes "Is he taking the mickey out of me?"

He would never be slow to challenge me: "Come on Dick, what are we doing?" or "I don't f\*\*\*\*\* agree with that Dick," he used to say.

I could sit down and literally write pages upon pages about Deacs, but I don't want his head to get any bigger! Just suffice, perhaps, to say that I found him to be one of the most honest, hard-working and loyal players I have ever worked with and if Gloucester ever dare get rid of him (and they would do so to their own detriment), then he only has to give me a ring at Harlequins . . . (don't choke Deacs).



## Individual Contributions and Endorsements



One of the most recent additions to Gloucester's pack is one of rugby's legends. IAN JONES played 79 Tests for New Zealand between 1989 and 1999, making him the second most capped All Black in history. He has also played in New Zealand for North Auckland, North Harbour and Waikato Chiefs, as well as playing seven games for the Barbarians.

When the World Cup ended last season, Ian joined Gloucester and is now in his second season at the club.

Rugby has offered me many things over my career. It has offered me opportunities, travel, friendships and the chance for me to wear my nation's jersey. But it has also offered me the chance to meet men like Andy Deacon.

Every club, no matter how big or small, has at least one common element. And that element is your loyal clubman. He is the man that has the club's blood running through his veins and is the man that gives more than just his rugby services. Loyal to the bitter end ... that's your clubman.

Deacs is Gloucester's clubman. A favourite with the supporters and players alike, he has the ability to mix with everyone and has the important job in this ever changing team, of keeping the Gloucester tradition alive with the new breed.

It was Deacs that welcomed me to Gloucester with a friendly reminder that I was sitting in his spot in the changing rooms.

Deacs treats everyone with respect, but shows no bias for past glories. Whether you have worn the All Black jersey, the English jersey or the Samoan jersey Deacs treats everyone as equals and demands nothing more than loyalty to Gloucester.

All of these attributes and his lifetime dedication to the Cherry & Whites mean he thoroughly deserves his testimonial year. It has been an honour to play alongside him and it's a friendship that I respect.

Deacs, I wish you every success and thank you for your contribution to Gloucester and rugby in general. You deserve everything that you have worked so hard for.





## Individual Contributions and Endorsements



Among the greatest Gloucester players in history, MIKE TEAGUE was a star performer in the back row during the 1980s and early 1990s. His dynamic play earned him a place in the England team and from there he went on to star in the British and Irish Lions tour of Australia in 1989, earning the title player of the series.

Andy Deacon is the first Gloucester player who has spanned both amateur and professional eras at the club and who has been awarded a testimonial. I wish that testimonial every possible success as 'Big Eddy' deserves only the best.

Deacs has had the impeccable breeding and pedigree of an all-time great Gloucester prop. His journey to cauliflower-eardom started with a parental input in Coney Hill, through the Longlevens academy conveyor belt and into the Kingsholm hall of fame. They don't come more Glaws than that.

It was not a career which automatically just happened when he went to Gloucester; there was a long and hard apprenticeship with The Shags where he learned the subtle secrets of front row play and will be all the richer for the late-night extra curricular activities which led to the book that Laurie Lee did not write: Cider with

Reggie. During this formative period he came under the guidance of fellow luminaries in the art of apple juice downing in Simon 'Chisel' Devereux, Dave 'The Mad Hooker' Kearsley and Andrew 'The Man' Stanley.

Andy was unfortunate not to have been capped at full international level, yet he has been a cornerstone at Gloucester when others have been invited not to stay around. He has been good enough to stay, which is in itself some form of accolade and a great honour. The very fact that the club is awarding this testimonial suggests that he is in fact the ultimate clubman.

I came back to Gloucester in '95 after being a bastion of amateurism and illicit payments at a Midlands club. Deacs was captain at that time and he was in charge of a group of players who had had to grow up very quickly. Many of them had graduated together through the United and they soon found out what it was like to turn from boys into men: Andy Deacon had a great deal to do with making that process possible as the senior pro. He, more than any other factor, kept the show on the road.

The quality that comes to my mind most is his stickability when the going got tough. At no time did it get any tougher than against Northampton when the Cherry and Whites had to win at Kingsholm to stay in the top flight: Deacs got straight to the point and simply asked the team if they wanted to be remembered for taking Gloucester down into the second division by losing. They didn't and they didn't.

When I returned to the fold at thirty five years old for another final sawnsong he paid me the highest compliment possible when the Strongbow had loosened his tongue and he mumbled something along the lines that I did not fully realise how highly he and all the players regarded me. I don't mention that to throw any light on me, but rather to suggest what sort of player and person he is. He may not say a lot but it matters. It says a whole lot more about him that he was trying to say about me.

His team talks usually got around at some stage to what he wanted from us all: big men with big hearts. And that, I suggest, is just what Andy Deacon is; a big Gloucester man with a big Gloucester heart.





## Individual Contributions and Endorsements



**NIGEL REDMAN** played for Bath's first team for more than 10 years, until his recent retirement. He was at the heart of their pack, in the second row, and made many trips to Kingsholm to do battle with Andy Deacon and Co. Redman also represented England and the Lions during his career, and now coaches at Basingstoke.

Throughout my 17 year career with Bath, the one game I always looked forward to in the fixture list was our annual trip to Kingsholm. As a forward who played in the 80's and 90's, playing against a Gloucester eight was always one of the season's biggest challenges and in particular over the years Gloucester's ability to pick from home grown talent in the front row was astounding. Names like Malcolm Preedy, Phil Blakeway, Gordon Sargent and Phil Vickery to name but a few. In amongst those names the name of Andy Deacon does not go amiss.

When preparing for the Bath/Gloucester derby the centre of attention was always who would play in the Gloucester front row and how were we to overcome the problems that they would create. With Andy Deacon we knew we were up against a hard forward, an aggressive scrummager, and somebody who did not mind putting his head and body where it hurts!! Andy Deacon seems to have been at Gloucester forever, and the crowning glory of his long career must have been to captain the team.

I have experienced many things at Kingsholm over the years, I've won there, I've lost there, I've been kicked, punched and stamped on there, I've even knocked myself out there and been verbally abused by the Shed, but can

honestly say competing against players of the calibre of Andy Deacon, it was always an absolute pleasure.

If anybody deserves a testimonial Andy does, so I would like to wish him all the best for his testimonial year.

