

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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ARTHUR HUDSON

A GLOUCESTER HERO

Arthur played 260 matches for Gloucester, scoring 235 tries, and was captain for 5 seasons from 1908 to 1913.

He won 29 County caps, scoring 14 tries, and captained them to the County Championship. He won 8 England caps, scoring 9 tries.

At 12st 7lbs and 5ft 11ins, he was a fast attacking wing three-quarter. His running style, with a high knee action, made him very difficult to tackle.

His contemporary, Dai Gent, described Arthur as "...a wing who thrilled me – a splendid example of a man using his excellent physique to the best advantage."

Born in Gloucester in 1882, Arthur first played soccer. Indeed he played at Kingsholm for the City Albion soccer club on what is now the car park.

In 1902 he switched to rugby, and devoted the rest of his life to the Gloucester Club.

Even before he stopped playing, he had taken up administrative duties, and became "The Grand Old Man of Gloucester Rugby".

PROLIFIC TRY SCORER

Arthur made his debut for Gloucester against Cheltenham,



Arthur, captain, 1911-12

scoring 2 tries in a 14-11 win. He had come into a team in transition, struggling to win more games than it lost, and he himself struggled for a couple of seasons.

The arrival of Jimmy Harrison from Lydney to play inside Arthur lit the blue touch paper.

Arthur had to wait until the end of October 1904 to score his first try of the season, but then scored 7 against Broughton Park, 6 against United Services, 4 against Old

Edwardians, 3 against Clifton, and 2 in three other games to end up as the Club's top try scorer with a record-breaking 35.

The following season, Arthur raised the bar again with 41 tries, including 6 against Bream in the County Cup, 5 each against Penylan and Hartlepool Old Boys, 4 against Bedford, and 3 against Old Merchant Taylors.

With "Whacker" Smith scoring 27 tries on the other wing, Gloucester finished the season with a whole host of new records - aside from Arthur's try scoring, the team total of 158 tries, the points aggregate of 661 (against 165), and the glut of tries allowed George Romans to set a new individual scoring record with 152 points (70 conversions, one mark goal and 3 penalties).

Arthur's try scoring feats brought him to the attention of the England selectors, and he scored on his debut, a 3-16 defeat by Wales in 1906.

Later in the season, Arthur travelled to Paris and scorched across the turf of the Parc des Princes to score four tries, a feat matched by a couple of England players in the century since, but never exceeded.



Arthur in his England strip

AN ENFORCED CAREER BREAK

During the Great War, Arthur served in the Navy, spending much of his time in submarines, but playing rugby as often as possible when he was ashore.

When rugby returned to Kingsholm in 1919, so did Arthur, now aged 36. He had lost none of his dash, and was again the leading try scorer, including four of the eight tries in a 24-0 trouncing of Bath away.

He led Gloucestershire in the County Championship Final against Yorkshire at Bradford, and a famous victory was won 27-3, but Arthur had to leave the field with a dislocated shoulder, and this ended his playing career.

SETTING UP SHOP

Whilst Arthur was playing his first game for England in 1906, his place in the Gloucester side was taken by an All Black, Duncan McGregor, who had returned to Gloucester at the end of their tour.

The two became friends, and when McGregor returned again a year or so later, he set up a sports outfitter shop, using Arthur's name to promote it.

Arthur's sister, Bessie, continued to run the shop when McGregor went back to New Zealand, and Arthur himself took over when his playing days ended.

The family business later passed to his son, Gordon (296 games for Gloucester, captain, secretary and chairman), and then to his grandson, John, who also now runs the Club shop at Kingsholm.

SUPREME CLUBMAN

In 1920 Arthur was appointed as Secretary of the Club, a post he was to hold for 42 years, but he did so much more, with stints as Treasurer and Fixtures Secretary, controlling the day-to-day running of the Club and keeping the Club sound financially. Yet he also found time to devote to organising County rugby, athletics and tennis.

He worked hard to preserve Kingsholm through the depredations of the Second World War, and the Club rewarded him



Arthur flanked by "Doc" Alcock and Tom Voyce during WW2

rugby was such that the 1972 All Blacks, on their way back to their hotel from Kingsholm, called in



with an honorarium of £150, which he insisted be used to start a fund to purchase a ground for local rugby as a memorial to those players who had lost their lives in the war.

The result was the Memorial Ground on Tuffley Avenue, of which Arthur remained a trustee until his death in 1973, and which is still home to the Old Cryptians and Widden Old Boys clubs.

His reputation in the world of

to pay their respects to Arthur, now 90 years old, who had played against their predecessors in 1905.

Arthur himself said, "I do not begrudge one minute of the time I have devoted to Rugby. To me it has been a labour of love; it has given me some of my richest memories."

He was described by the Club's President, Dr Arnold Alcock, as "...the heart and soul of Rugby in Gloucester."