

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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MIGHTY MEN FROM
CINDERFORD

Gloucester Rugby's association with the Forest of Dean has been long and illustrious, providing a host of players including three past captains and a string of internationals and trialists.

Two of the greatest of these were the legendary Cinderford hard men Arthur "Tart" Hall and Alfred Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter whose long careers together spanned two world wars.

Both men were miners who worked at Lightmoor Colliery, both were loyal club and county men who each won four County Championship medals but, more than that, both were hard as teak and the go-to men when things got tough. They also shared an all-consuming love of the game.

ARTHUR "TART" HALL

Arthur "Tart" Hall was born in Ruspidge in the Forest of Dean in 1886. His father Thomas was a miner who had worked in the Yorkshire coalfields. On leaving school, Arthur joined his father and brother at the coalface at Lightmoor Colliery.

Tart played his first rugby for the local village side Ruspidge before joining Cinderford RFC. Cinderford



Arthur "Tart" Hall

had a very strong fixture list at the time and his uncompromising play brought him to the attention of both the county and England selectors.

He partnered the great Adrian Stoop of Harlequins at half back for England against the South in a 1911 England trial, and played for Gloucestershire against the touring South Africans the following year.

Tart moved from Cinderford to Bristol early in the 1912-13 season and won his first County Championship Winners medal for Gloucestershire in the final against Cumberland that year. He was known to arrive at Gloucester

station after playing for Bristol or the county and walk the rest of the way home to Ruspidge.

Wishing to return to play his rugby nearer his home in the Forest, Hall offered his services to Gloucester in a letter to the committee in September 1913.

Gloucester checked with Cinderford "who had first claim on him" and he moved straight into the first team at half back playing 27 games.

After the 1914-18 war, he rejoined Gloucester and, at the age of 33, moved into the back row, where he was to play for a further 9 seasons and 200 games.

He went on to win a second England trial (for the South against England in 1920) and to win three more County Championship Winners medals against Yorkshire (1920), Leicestershire (1921) and North Midlands (1922).

At the time of his retirement, his 43 caps for Gloucestershire had been bettered only by Frank Stout.

Tart Hall played in Gloucester's 50th Jubilee match against the RFU President's XV in 1924-25. He was 38 and announced his retirement at the end of that season. He still came back to play a number of games over the



next three years; his last game was at the age of 41.

Tart could rarely be persuaded to claim expenses and, on his retirement, Bill Bailey (WB of The Citizen) wrote: "What sacrifices he made in time and money to play for Gloucester and other clubs is known only to himself. Hall has had a wonderful career, and a more popular player has never donned a Gloucester jersey."

ALFRED DENZEL "BUMPS" CARPENTER

Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter was born in Abenhall near Mitcheldean in 1900, the son of a farm labourer. His elder brother was a coal miner and Bumps, like Tart Hall, started work at Lightmoor Colliery.

Bumps played junior rugby in Cinderford from the age of 15 before graduating to the senior side. He became Cinderford captain and in 1925-26 made his debut for Gloucestershire.



Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter

The following season he played five games for the county and featured in Gloucestershire's 3-0 victory over the touring New Zealand Maoris at Bristol.

And so, in 1927-28, already an established member of the formidable Gloucestershire front row, Bumps made the move from Cinderford to Kingsholm.

Aged 27, he now embarked on a remarkable 315 match Gloucester career that was only ended by the 1939-45 war.

Bumps Carpenter was respected throughout the game. A man with huge hands, he was noted for his fitness, stamina and strength which carried him flat out for 80 minutes.

Wilf Wooller called him "a

by England at Twickenham.

The following season, he played prop for Gloucestershire & Somerset against the touring Springboks and, after being overlooked for the first trial, played at prop in the second for a Rest side that beat England 16-6.

The whole of the Rest front row were chosen for the international against South Africa and Bumps, starting at prop, moved over to hooker in the second half, as he had done in the trial. He became the first Forest player to play for England.

By all accounts, he acquitted himself well in a beaten pack but his rival at hooker, Doug Norman of Leicester, was retained against Wales and Bumps was dropped after only one game.

2d. OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 2d.				
ENGLAND		REST: W. L. FREEMAN (Third Player Football Rules)	SOUTH AFRICA	
(White)			(Green)	
No.			No.	
15	R. J. BARR Leicester	Full Back	29	G. BRAND Western Province
14	*C. C. TANNER Gloucester	Three-quarters	24	J. H. van der WESTHUIZEN Western Province
13	*J. A. TALLENT Cambridge Univ. & Blackheath	R. Wing	26	B. G. GRAY Western Province
12	R. A. CERRARD Bath	R. Centre	22	F. WARING Western Province
11	*C. D. AARVOLD (Captain) Blackheath	L. Centre	25	M. ZIMMERMAN Western Province
10	*R. S. SPONG Old Millhams	L. Wing	21	B. L. OSLER (Captain) Western Province
9	*W. H. SOBEY Old Millhams	Stand-off Half	20	P. de VILLIERS Western Province
8	A. J. ROWLEY Coventry	Scrum Half	1	L. STRACHAN Transvaal
7	L. E. SAXBY Gloucester		7	F. BERGH S.W. Districts
6	J. McD. HODGSON Northern		8	P. J. NEL Natal
5	R. G. S. HOBBS The Army & Richmond		11	H. KIPLING Griqualand West
4	C. WEBB Royal Navy & Devonport Services		12	G. DANEEL Transvaal
3	*G. G. GREGORY Bristol	Five-eighths	13	M. LOUW Western Province
2	D. J. NORMAN Leicester		17	P. MOSTERT Western Province
1	A. D. CARPENTER Gloucester		19	J. MACDONALD Western Province
	*Star recruited			

remarkable player, a typical West Country forward and a true Gloucester club forward," and Bill Hook told the story of how as a 17 year old full back he was introduced by Bumps to the Bristol dressing room: "This is the baby we've brought down...you drop him anything below the line and I'll be looking for you...Come on, me baby, you'll be all right now!"

Bumps was a first choice for Gloucestershire for a staggering 13 seasons (1925-39) winning a record 61 caps and four County Championship Winners Medals against Lancashire (1930), Warwickshire (1931), Durham (1932) and East Midlands (1937).

He at last caught the eye of the England selectors in 1930-31 when he was selected for the final trial, playing hooker for the Rest in defeat

In 1937 Bumps was chosen for the Barbarians' Easter tour of South Wales and played against Cardiff and Swansea. It was a rare honour for a respected veteran, which he admitted to cherishing more than his England cap.

Bumps Carpenter was the players' choice as Gloucester club captain for the 1939-40 season but war intervened bringing an end to his career.

He joined the RAF in 1942 as soon as an appeal went out for over-age volunteers as drivers and flight mechanics.

He played on for another four years in wartime fixtures and had the pleasure of packing down with two of his sons, Denzel (Gloucester & Cheltenham) and George (Lydney) both of whom played for Gloucestershire.