

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGEwww.gloucester rugby heritage.org.ukFLY
HALVES
- PART TWO**TERRY HOPSON**

Terry arrived at Kingsholm at the start of the 1959-60 season, having already played two terms for Bath as a centre. Terry was an outstandingly gifted fly half who could kick long distances and make electrifying breaks.

He swiftly formed a legendary partnership at half back with Mickey Booth. Between 1959 and 1970 Terry played 314 games for Gloucester, and partnered Mickey in 204 of those.

In January 1967 Hopson played for Western Counties against the touring Australians and had a fine game. In addition to scoring two penalties in the 9-0 win, he was



stopped inches short of the try line, after making a typical break.

Later that season due to a disagreement with the club over selection policy, Terry returned to Bath. However he was back at Kingsholm the following season.

He played for Western Counties against the South Africans in 1969, and for Gloucestershire in the losing final against Staffordshire in 1970.

He played for the county 20 times.

Terry broke his leg playing against Sale in April 1970 which ended his career. For Gloucester he scored 102 tries.

TOM PALMER

Tom was a Cornishman who also played for Truro. He debuted at Gloucester in 1967, playing in the centre.



He played his county rugby for Cornwall and appeared at fly half in the final against Lancashire, at Redruth before 22,000 spectators, in 1969. At one point Cornwall led 9-0, but lost in the end 9-11.

Following Terry Hopson's career ending injury, Tom took over at fly half, and with the evergreen Mickey Booth forged a sound partnership. They were the half backs throughout Gloucester's successful cup campaign of 1971-72 culminating in the 17-6 win over Moseley at Twickenham, in the final. Palmer and Booth both scored drop goals.

Tom's form that season was so good that he was England reserve

fly half through the International campaign, and went on to tour South Africa with England that summer, although he did not gain a cap. Tom made 210 team appearances for Gloucester and scored 258 points including 28 tries.

CHRIS WILLIAMS

Chris was a big aggressive fly half, who first played for Lydney, St.Pauls College (Cheltenham), Headingley and RAF before joining Gloucester in November 1975.

He appeared for the county in a semi-final game against Warwickshire in February 1975, whilst still a Headingley player. He made a regular place for himself in the next county campaign and



appeared in the winning final against Middlesex in March 1976.

Meanwhile for Gloucester he had a good working partnership with Peter Kingston at scrum half in 1975-76, and part of 1976-77, when Paul Howell took over. This combination played against



Leicester in the cup winning team of 1978, and the losing county final against North Midlands in the same season.

Chris won one England cap against France in 1976. Peter Butler and Mike Burton were in the same team. Williams played 101 times for Gloucester scoring 27 tries, and 23 times for Gloucestershire with seven tries.

MIKE HAMLIN

Mike was a long serving fly half, who first played for Coney Hill and Cheltenham, joining Gloucester for the start of the 1982-83 season. He played 343 games for the club, scoring 63 tries.

For many seasons he had an outstanding partnership with Marcus Hannaford at scrum half. He captained Gloucester from 1989-91, and led the club in the cup final against Bath in 1990.



He was a player who never seemed to get injured. Evidence of this is in the sequence of appearances in successive seasons, 1983-91: 41,41,40,40,35,36,33,36.

MARK MAPLETOFT

Mark was a popular utility back, equally at home at fly half or full back, and a deadly goal kicker. In his 114 appearances for Gloucester he scored 1,365 points, consisting 39 tries, 183 conversions, 257 penalties and 11 drop goals.

Mark started out with Rugby Lions for whom he played from

1990-94. He was a big factor in the team's rise to Courage League 1. However, after Rugby had endured two successive relegations, Mark came to Gloucester for the 1994-95 season where he played full back.

He made an immediate impression and was selected for an England 'A' cap, but he picked up an injury which kept him out of the game for a year. Back to full fitness for the start of the 1996-97 season Mark moved to fly half to accommodate the young Chris Catling at full back. This was a season of great success for Mark



as he totalled 458 points, and gained his single England cap.

In 1997-98 he played in the Cheltenham & Gloucester cup winning team which defeated Bedford 33-25. He scored a try, two conversions, two drop goals and a penalty.

In season 1998-99 Simon Mannix signed for Gloucester and Mark's chances became limited, and in July 1999 he moved to Saracens.

LUDOVIC MERCIER

In the early noughties there was quite a Gallic air to Kingsholm, with the presence of Phillippe Saint-Andre as Director of Rugby and Ollie Azam the Shed's favourite hooker.

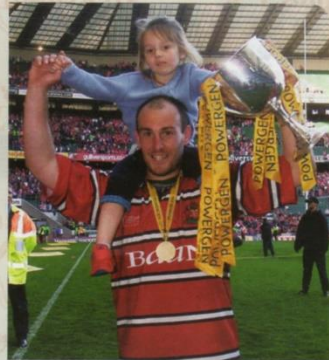
A band used to play La Marseillaise before the game, and to add to this heady mix Phillippe plucked Ludovic Mercier from the comparative obscurity of French League 2 team Aurillac.

"Ludo" was already kicking conversions and penalties for fun, and he quickly became another Shed hero.

His first season was 2001-02 and in his first five games he kicked 24 penalties. He continued in this vein all season and totalled 508 points, including 96 penalties and 77 conversions. He might not have had the natural elan one might expect in a French player, but he adopted a more English style.

He did though have a sharp eye for an interception. A case in point was in the Powergen Cup final against Northampton in 2003, with Gloucester pinned back to their 22, Ludo intercepted and made it to half way before passing to James Simpson-Daniel, who scored a glorious try, which put the result beyond doubt.

In that season Ludovic



scored another 394 points and won selection for France 'A'. Unfortunately for Gloucester he then returned to France for two seasons to play for Grenoble and Pau, but returned to Kingsholm for the 2005-06 season.

He played in the team which won the European Challenge Cup against London Irish that season, scoring two penalties and a conversion. In 2006-07 he found game time more difficult with the arrival of Ryan Lamb, and he left the club at the end of the season.

In his 105 games Ludovic scored 1,325 points, consisting of 14 tries, 224 conversions, 247 penalties and 22 drop goals.