



GLOUCESTER PROPS PART 1

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CLUB, GLOUCESTER BUILT AND MAINTAINED A FINE AND DESERVED REPUTATION FOR HARD UNCOMPROMISING PROP FORWARDS - OTHER CLUBS, INCLUDING THE WELSH, ALWAYS KNEW THAT THEY WERE IN FOR A TOUGH ENCOUNTER UP FRONT WHEN THEY FACED THE CHERRY AND WHITES.

This, the first of four articles, takes us up to the 1950s.

ERNEST COMLEY
ERNEST COMLEY was a versatile front five forward, who though primarily a prop, played for both Gloucester and Gloucestershire in the second row and was noted for his work in the line-out.



He played 272 1st XV games for Gloucester between 1924 and 1934. His 20 caps for Gloucestershire included the rare distinction of making his County Championship debut on the winning side in the final against Lancashire at Blundellsands in 1930.

He went on to win a second Championship against Durham at Blaydon in 1932 and was on the losing side in 1934 at Franklin's Gardens against East Midlands.

His outstanding season was 1933-34 when Gloucester notched a record 29 victories. He played in all six games for Gloucestershire and caught the eye of the England selectors, playing for the Rest against England at Twickenham in the final trial.

Ernest was born in 1904 in Gloucester, the son of a machine driller in an engineering works. He worked as a driver for Morelands Match Factory for 42 years. His daughter Patricia was married to the Gloucestershire and Nottinghamshire off-spinner Bryan "Bomber" Wells, whose brother Geoff played centre for Gloucester and Gordon League.

FRED WADLEY
FRED WADLEY was a durable prop forward who played in other positions in the pack when required and was a first team regular from 1927 until he retired in 1935, playing 210 games. He captained the club in his last three seasons and also captained Gloucestershire. He was on the winning side in three County Championship Finals and was an England triallist.

Alfred James "Fred" Wadley was born in Gloucester in 1902. He made his debut for Gloucester in 1926-27 and became a regular the following year. He was a reserve for England trials at Kingsholm and Northampton in December 1929, and later that season played for



Gloucestershire in their County Championship Final victory over Lancashire at Waterloo.

Fred played for The Rest against England in the final trial at Twickenham in January 1931 and two weeks later was a reserve for England against Wales. He played in Gloucestershire's Championship Final victory over Warwick at Kingsholm. The following year he played in a third consecutive Championship Final victory, this time over Durham at Blaydon.

In 1933-34 he captained the club to a record 29 victories. That season The Times considered Gloucester to be the Club of the Year. At the end of 1934-35, his third and final season as captain, he retired and was elected a life member of the club. He later served on the Committee, as did his son Doug.

TOM PRICE
TOM PRICE, renowned as a formidable opponent in both the tight and the loose, made 152 appearances for Gloucester from 1934-1948. He played 35 games for



Gloucestershire and won six England caps. He captained Gloucester in 1946-47.



Thomas William "Tom" Price was born in 1914. He made his debut for Gloucester in December 1934 and went on to play regularly in the second half of that season. He made his county debut in October of the following season and played for Gloucester throughout 1935-36.

In 1936-37 he suffered serious injury and even contemplated retirement at the age of 22. However he recovered to start the 1937-38 season and played for Gloucestershire and for the Possibles in the second England trial. Tom Price continued as a first choice for club and county up to the outbreak of WW2.

In 1945-46 he returned to play for Gloucester and was selected for an unofficial International against Ireland that season. He was appointed club captain for 1946-47 but only played in the first few games and resigned the captaincy in January due to illness. He returned at the start of the next season to play regularly for club and county and in March 1948 was selected to play for England against Scotland and France.

Tom Price joined Cheltenham in 1948 and continued to play for Cheltenham and for Gloucestershire until 1952. He played in all four Home Internationals of 1948-49 as a Cheltenham player.

TOM DAY

TOM DAY made 236 appearances for Gloucester at prop between 1938 and 1951. He captained the club in 1950-51 and played 16 games for Gloucestershire and for Western Counties. In retirement, he was a leading administrator in club and county rugby.

Sidney Thomas "Tom" Day was born in Gloucester in 1914. He made his debut for Gloucester in 1938-39 and played 19 games in his first season.

His career peaked in 1946-47 when he made his debut for Gloucestershire, playing through the season which culminated in a drawn County Championship Final against Lancashire. Tom also played for Western Counties against the Australian tourists and was a reserve for the final England trial that season.

Tom Day played for Gloucestershire in County Championship semi-finals in 1947-48 and 1948-49 and captained Gloucester in 1950-51, which was to be his final season.

After retirement he served as Gloucester Chairman for several years and was Gloucestershire RFU President in 1976-77 and Gloucester President in 1995-96.

GEORGE HASTINGS

GEORGE WILLIAM HASTINGS was born into a farming family in Dursley in November 1924. He made his debut for Gloucester at the start of the 1947-48 season and was a regular in the Gloucester side until his retirement in 1959-60.

Big and mobile, he started his career as a utility forward but went on to become one of the great England props. He was Gloucester captain in 1954-55. George made 260 appearances for Gloucester

and was capped 13 times by England. He played 34 games for Gloucestershire, culminating in a County Championship Final against Warwickshire in April 1959. He captained the county in 1955-56.

George Hastings first gained wider notice when he played for Western Counties against the All Blacks in 1953-54. The



following season he played in all three England trials before gaining his first cap against Wales at Cardiff. The Times said of his selection "the powerful Hastings of Gloucester, as a lusty forward, is well worth his place, but is not everyone's idea of a front row prop."

He went on to play in all four matches in the Five Nations Championship that year, scoring a try against Ireland.

In 1956-57, he played for England's grand slam winning side in all four Home Internationals and again in 1957-58, when England retained the Championship, he played in all four Home Internationals and against Australia.

Although George Hastings missed selection for the Lions tours of 1954 and 1959, he played no less than 20 times for the Barbarians, playing first on their Easter tour of South Wales in 1954-55 and touring Canada and South Africa in 1957-58.

The Times said in 1960: "C R Jacobs and G W Hastings helped to form the best front row that England have had since the war"

