



**GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE**

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GLOUCESTER SECOND ROW FORWARDS **PART 2**

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF RUGBY THERE WERE NO SPECIALISTS IN THE FORWARDS. WHEN A SCRUM FORMED, THE FIRST TO ARRIVE MADE UP THE FRONT ROW AND SO ON. IT WAS MANY YEARS BEFORE PLAYERS WOULD BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICULAR POSITIONS.

In part two the story carries on through the sixties to the eighties.

ALAN BRINN

ALAN had a career of remarkable longevity, playing for Gloucester from 1960 to 1979, and making 574 appearances, a club record which will almost certainly never be beaten. More games were played in those amateur days, and this can be illustrated by the fact that, in five seasons from 1963 to 1968, Alan played no fewer than 200 games.



Alan was born in South Wales on 21 July 1940 and, before coming to Kingsholm, played for Hereford who at that time played Gloucester United. His first game for Gloucester was against Lydney in September 1960, and he was immediately a regular.

He was a powerful scrummager and hard working in the loose. At a time when a lot of rugby could

be called "robust", Alan was always known as a gentleman on the field.

Considering his obvious talent it was surprising that he was not called into the county team until November 1965 when he played against Cornwall. He would, however, go on to play in five successive county finals from 1970 to 1975, three of which were won in 1972, 1974 and 1975. In all he appeared 48 times for Gloucestershire.

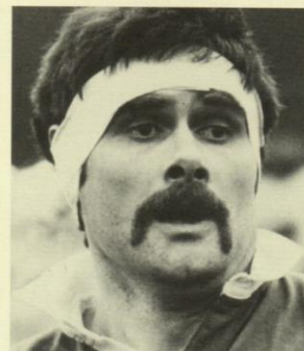
He was now on the England radar and he won three England caps in 1972. That was quite a season for Alan as he was in the Gloucester cup winning team in the same year. He also played for Western Counties against South Africa in 1969, Fiji in 1970, New Zealand 1972 and for the South & South-West against Australia in 1973.

When his playing days were over, Alan became an England Rugby Associate Selector, was Gloucester Club Chairman when the game went professional, and he and David Foyle negotiated the sale of the club to Tom Walkinshaw.

JOHN FIDLER

JOHN was a big, solid second row who commanded the line-out and was a formidable scrummager.

He was born on 16 September 1948 in Cheltenham and played for his home town against Gloucester in 1970 and 71. He had already caught the eye of



the Gloucestershire selectors, as he played in a friendly for the county against Monmouthshire in 1971.

He moved to Gloucester for the start of the 1972-73 season and was an immediate success. Later in the season he made his competitive debut for the county in the quarter final against Oxfordshire, retained his place and went on to play in the losing final against Lancashire.

His county career was outstanding. He played in no fewer than nine finals and was on the winning side in five - 1974,75,76,83 and 84. In all he played 43 times for Gloucestershire.

In October 1973 John played alongside Alan Brinn in the South & South-West team which beat Australia 15-14. He played for Western Counties against Australia in 1975.

John won four England caps, all obtained abroad, two against Argentina in 1981 and two at the very end of his career in 1984,



when 36, against South Africa.

For Gloucester he was a permanent fixture, whose opponents had long fruitless afternoons trying to wrestle the ball from his limpet-like grasp in the line-out. He played throughout the successful cup campaign of 1978 culminating in the win against Leicester at Twickenham.

From 1972 to 1984 John made 287 appearances for the Chery and Whites. After hanging up his boots he became Gloucester Team Secretary and then Team Manager during the transition to professional rugby.

STEVE BOYLE

STEVE was a very proficient front jumper, who was devastating with the ball in hand. He scored many tries from tapped penalties close to the opposition line. In his career he played 303 games and scored 78 tries, an outstanding try rate for a second rower. In three seasons, from 1979 to 1982, he scored 43 tries.



Steve was born on 9 August 1953 and educated at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. He played for Old Richians before making his first appearance for Gloucester in the last game of the 1972-73 season against Camborne away.

Gloucester won 70-9!

At that time it was difficult for Steve to play for the first fifteen regularly, because he was up against Alan Brinn and John Fidler. He broke through to earn a regular place in both club and county teams in 1976, making his first county appearance against the touring Japan team.

He went on to play 34 times for Gloucestershire and appeared in two county finals; losing to North Midlands in 1978, but scoring a try in the winning team that defeated Yorkshire at Bristol in 1983. He was present for every game in the Gloucester cup campaign of 1978, when Leicester were beaten in the final, and again in 1982 when the final with Moseley was drawn.

Steve was capped by England three times in 1983, and was selected for the British Lions tour of South Africa later the same year. He made six appearances, but did not play in any of the tests.

JOHN ORWIN

JOHN, who was born on 20 March 1954, was a rugged, hard tackling forward who in his early days played at No.8, but soon moved up a row.

He played his early first-class rugby for the RAF for whom he gave gallant service over many years, beginning in the 1975-76 season. He played for Combined Services against the All Blacks in November 1978, and in December 1981 against the Australian tourists.

In 1982 he was in the RAF team which won the Triangular Tournament defeating both the Army and Royal Navy.

John had made his debut for Gloucester in September 1976 against Bristol and in the next game against Cheltenham he kicked seven conversions in a 62-7 win. After that season he

never scored any more points from kicks for Gloucester.

At that time Gloucester were well blessed with second row forwards, such as John Fidler and Steve Boyle, so it was not until the 1978-79 season that



he became a regular. He was a member of the record breaking 1981-82 team, which lost only three games in the season and won 41, plus drawing with Moseley in the final of the John Player Cup. He captained the club from 1984 to 1986, and made a total of 203 appearances.

John first played for Gloucestershire in the 1981-82 season, having previously played his county rugby for Oxfordshire. In 1984 he was in the team which defeated Somerset in the County Championship Final.

In January 1985 John won the first of his 14 England caps against Romania, and proceeded to appear in all four of England's championship games that season. He was then selected for England's tour of New Zealand and played in both tests.

In 1986 John moved to Bedford to be a pub landlord and played three seasons for Gloucester's longstanding opponents, captaining the club for the final two. Whilst at Bedford he won more caps and even captained England in 1988.

