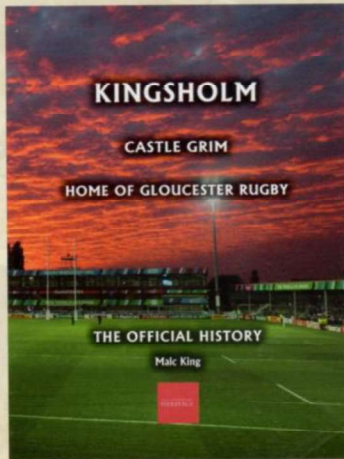


GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
**HERITAGE**

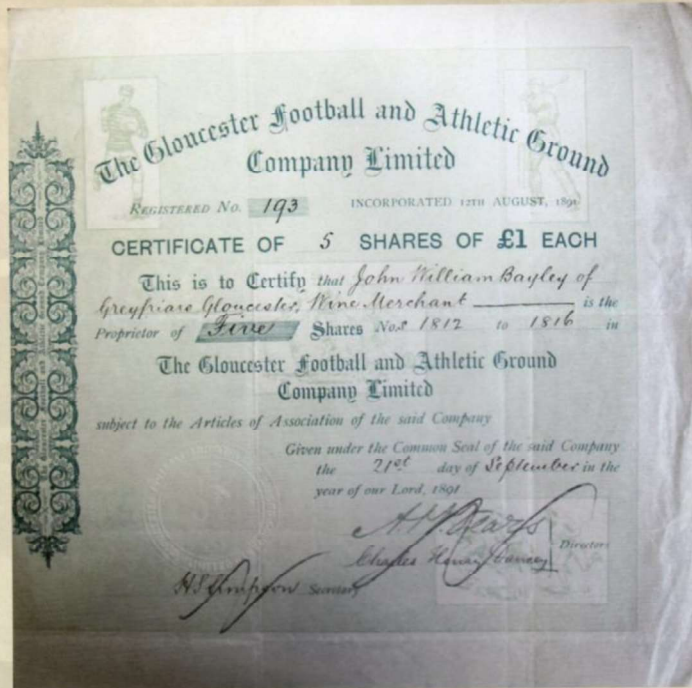
www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk



**TO MARK THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MATCH AT KINGSHOLM, GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE HAVE PRODUCED A BOOK WHICH RECORDS THE OFFICIAL AND AUTHORITATIVE HISTORY OF THE GROUND.**

The scene is set with a short history of the Kingsholm ground before rugby, and the 18 years after the Club was founded when matches were played on the Spa, which included the first visit by a New Zealand team and the Club's first floodlit match.

The book recounts the occasion when a match against Swansea was able to go ahead on a frosty day in January 1891, only because of the



application of a large quantity of salt. The grass died and the Rugby Club was invited to leave.

**THE ACQUISITION OF KINGSHOLM**

A detailed account is given as to how the Club came to move to Kingsholm, even though the committee originally favoured a site on Sheephouse Road, and how the Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Company was set up to purchase the land then known as the Castle Grim estate.

The players, officials, supporters and investors who bought shares to float the company are listed, and the original documents relating to the purchase and development of the ground are reproduced.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE GROUND**

From the initial levelling and laying of a pitch, to the building of a pavilion, to the addition of a gymnasium in 1905 (now the Lions' Den and the oldest building still standing on the ground), to the history of the Tump, to the new

stand erected amongst the ashes of its predecessor in 1933, to the erection of the Shed in the 1930s, to the addition of floodlights and spun steel posts from Fielding and Platt in the 1960s, and on to the development of the present modern stadium, the many changes to the ground over the years are described and richly illustrated.



**THE OFFICIALS**

Credit is given to the many officials who have cared deeply about Kingsholm and devoted themselves to nurturing its growth. From "Commodore" Vears and Jimmy Boughton who masterminded the purchase of Kingsholm, to Arthur Hudson, "Doc" Alcock, John Brooks and Tom Voyce which carried on their work for several generations,



Left - "Commodore" Vears and Jimmy Boughton

Below - Kingsholm today



to Gordon Hudson, Peter Ford and Doug Wadley, who oversaw many developments post-war, and to Tom Walkinshaw, Ryan Walkinshaw and Martin St Quinton who took over the mantle and ownership of Kingsholm in the professional era.

### THE CHARACTERS

Some of the characters who have inhabited Kingsholm are recalled. Perhaps most notably the first groundsman or "curator" of Kingsholm, Harry Dyke, who was fondly remembered by many of his contemporaries.

Arthur Hudson, Gloucester and England player of the early 1900s, and subsequently Club Secretary wrote:

"I wonder how many can recall Harry Dyke, immaculately dressed and complete with a cheese-cutter hat, who tolled a bell to signalise the start of play and other occasions?"



Likewise, Dai Gent, Gloucester and England player of the same era, reminisced that, "...it would be a funny old Kingsholm to me, without Harry floating about, and his famous horse not far away. They were inseparable, and were often to be seen holding earnest conversations with each other".



### BIG MATCHES

Over the years Kingsholm has been selected to host many big representative games of rugby and the arrangements made to accommodate these matches have been thoroughly researched, including the international between England and Wales, visits by the Barbarians, the wartime internationals, the many County successes and hosting Rugby World Cup matches.

### QUOTES

Many quotes from the great and the good of rugby are included to illustrate what Kingsholm has meant to so many people.

From Bob Hiller who said:

"I've played Rugby in South Africa, New Zealand, Wales and other odd spots where the supporters are a bit fanatical, but I'd rather play at any of those places than at Kingsholm. Brother, that crowd is unique!"

To Keith Richardson who remembered that:

"We ran the Cherry Pickers rugger golf charity day for blind golfers, and the first time, one of the blind golfers, the Chairman I think, is from Gloucester and he's a Cherry and White supporter. And he told this lovely story of how he started supporting rugby and he lost the sight in one eye. But he went in the Shed and he suddenly found that he was with three thousand others just the same."

And Mike Tindall:

"I have always been aware of the heritage at Kingsholm, which runs through Gloucester as a club. It is an old school ground with old school values, as long as you leave 100% of yourself on the pitch it will always look after you."

The book is now on sale at £19.95, but a discount of £4 can be obtained in the Club shops at Kingsholm and the Quays.