

GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
HERITAGE[www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk](http://www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk)

## GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW

## PART 5

THE SEVENTIES  
AND EIGHTIES**JOHN SIMONETT**

At 6ft 5ins John was a formidable No.8, and very useful line-out forward. He captained the Scotland Under 19's, St.Paul's College and British Colleges XV's. In 1978-79 he was a member of the senior Scotland squad.

He played in every round of Gloucester's 1978 cup campaign culminating in the win over Leicester at Twickenham. He also played county rugby for Gloucestershire.

John was born on 18 August 1950 in Trinidad, and was educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh. From 1972 to 1976 he played for and captained St.Paul's College and whilst there appeared for Gloucestershire in the second row against Monmouthshire.

He became a PE teacher at Beaufort School and made his debut for Gloucester on 4 September 1976 against Broughton Park, and proceeded to play three seasons in the back row at number 8. The cup campaign of 1978 included a sweeping win over Gosforth (now Newcastle), who were the current holders, and John made a significant contribution to the team's success.

In what proved to be his final game against Sale in April 1979 he broke his thumb. Soon after, he took up a teaching post at King's School, which involved weekend work, so he informed the club he would no longer be able to play on Saturdays. He had made 98 appearances for Gloucester.

John was and still is an outstanding amateur magician and is a member of the Inner Magic Circle.

**MIKE LONGSTAFF**

Mike attended Sir Thomas Rich's School, and represented the South-West Schools at full back against London Schools. He then played for Old Richians, before first appearing for Gloucester in one game in October 1973 against Cheltenham at full-back.

In the following season he appeared eight times, again at full-back before returning to Old Richians for the 1975-76 season. In 1976-77 he reappeared at Kingsholm but played most of his rugby for the United, and was a very reliable kicker, scoring over 250 points in the 1977-78 season. By this time he was playing in the centre, but first team opportunities were rare.

Gloucester had a shaky start to the 1980-81 season when in

October successive games to Moseley and Newport were lost 11-27 and 6-38 respectively. Next up was a daunting Wednesday evening game at Pontypool. For the first time a back row of Mike Longstaff, John Gadd and Mike Teague was selected. Gloucester posted a famous 17-15 victory, due in no small measure to that back row. This was the first win at Pontypool by an English club since September 1978. Mike was now established and went on to make 162 appearances for the firsts, scoring 23 tries. The same back row appeared in the drawn RFU Knock-out final of 1982 against Moseley.

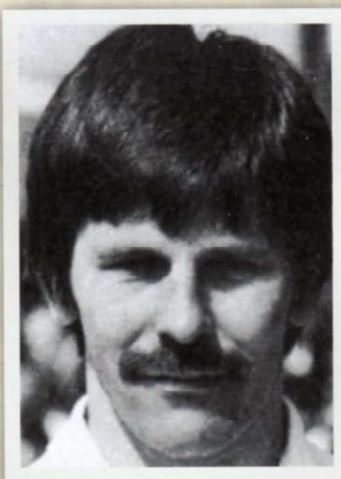
Towards the end of his career at Gloucester, Mike started to be plagued by injuries and played his last game against Cheltenham in November 1986. He went on to play for Stroud and Old Richians.

**JOHN GADD**

John was one of those players who was extremely unfortunate not to gain a full England cap. He played in an England trial game in 1981, and for England 'B' in 1981 and 1982.

He did actually play for the England team which beat Fiji in 1982, and scored two tries, but no caps were awarded for that game. In 1983 he again pulled on the England shirt to play against Canada, but no caps were awarded.

John was born in New Zealand, but came to this country at an early age and attended Newent School. He went on to play for Newent, and Gloucester Old Boys before making his first appearance for Gloucester





on 13 September 1978 against Cheltenham.

However, it was not until the 1980-81 season that he became a regular selection, and that game against Pontypool which was a defining moment for Mike Longstaff, was no less important for Gadd who scored a try.

John was a player of great consistency, who did a lot of unseen work, winning balls on the ground, and generally getting his hands dirty. A quiet man off the field, he was dynamic on it and scored a lot of tries.

The 1981-82 season was a great one for Gloucester, and a fair part of that could be put down to the back row of Gadd, Teague and Longstaff. Of the 48 games played, 41 were won and only three lost. It was a major disappointment when the cup final against Moseley was only drawn. John was also in the team which lost the cup final to Bath in 1990.

John was a member of the South & South-West team which played New Zealand in 1983, and in the Gloucestershire County Championship winning team of 1983, which defeated Yorkshire.

From 1978 to 1991 John made 281 appearances for Gloucester, scoring 61 tries.

## MIKE TEAGUE

The third member of that famous back-row, Mike Teague, is one of the all-time greats of Gloucester Rugby.

He made 303 appearances for the Cherry and Whites between 1978 and 1995, scoring 76 tries, including 20 in the 1981-82 season, when he was in the team which shared the cup with Moseley. He also appeared in the losing cup final against Bath in 1990. He won 27 England caps, and three for the British Lions. He also played six times for the Barbarians.

Mike was born on 8 October 1960 and was educated at Churchdown Academy. He played local rugby for Gloucester All Blues before making his first appearance for Gloucester in November 1978 against Exeter University, scoring a try.

It was not long before Mike was on the England selectors' radar, and, after appearing for England Under 23s, he played for England 'B' against France 'B' in November 1981.

However, it was not until February 1985 when Mike came off the bench to replace John Hall that he gained his first cap against France. His full debut came on the England tour of New Zealand that summer where he played in both tests.

There was then nearly a four year gap and, determined to regain his place, Mike undertook extreme



training methods, including running with logs or rocks, known as 'Mad Dog' training.

Eventually the selectors again took interest and he was selected for England in all the home championship games of 1989.

Indeed his form was so good that he was selected to go on the British Lions tour of Australia that same year. He missed the first Test, which was lost, due to injury, but played so well in the other two Tests (won 19-12 and 19-18) that he was made 'Player of the Series'.

Rugby writer John Griffiths said, "Having nursed a troublesome shoulder injury for much of the visit, he tore into the tight and loose with shoulder dipped and with total disregard for personal safety."

Back home Mike was a key player in England's Grand Slam winning team of 1991 and later in the same year played in five of the six games England played in the World Cup, including the final against Australia which was lost 12-6.

In 1993 Mike again toured with the British Lions to New Zealand and came off the bench in the second Test. That Test was won, so Teague was unbeaten in his three Lions appearances.

From 1991 to 1994 Mike played for Moseley, but returned to Kingsholm for one final season, retiring after the last game against Harlequins on 29 April 1995.