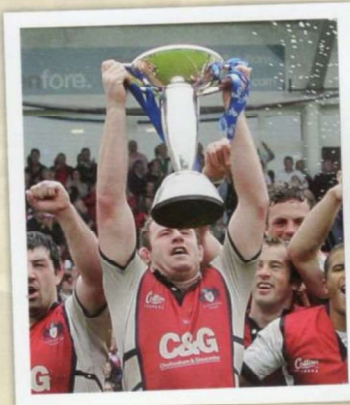


GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW: NOUGHTIES AND TEENS



PETER BUXTON

Pete Buxton was a hugely popular back rower, usually to be found on the blind-side, although he could and often did serve time in the second-row.

He had a long career with Gloucester stretching from 2002 to 2013. In that time he made 270 appearances, of which 176 were in the Premiership. He has made the most appearances (42) of any Gloucester player in the Heineken Cup.

"Bucko" was born in Cheltenham on 21 August 1978, and attended Cleeve School. He represented Cheltenham before playing one season in Australia for Brothers RFC in Queensland, then returning to this country to play for Moseley in August 1997. Unfortunately in his first training session he broke his leg.

After this setback, between 1997 and 2000, he made 67 appearances for Moseley, before being snapped up by Newport. It was whilst with the Welsh club that Pete was added

to the England 'A' squad, but his international career did not go further than that.

Buxton came to Kingsholm for the start of the 2002-03 season, his first appearance being off the bench against Newcastle on 15 September. He quickly established himself, and played as a replacement in the ill-fated Premiership final against Wasps that season.

In May 2004 he came off the England bench in a non-cap game against the Barbarians. The England starting line-up included Marcel Garvey, Mark Cornwell, Alex Brown and Andy Hazell, with Chris Fortey also on the bench.

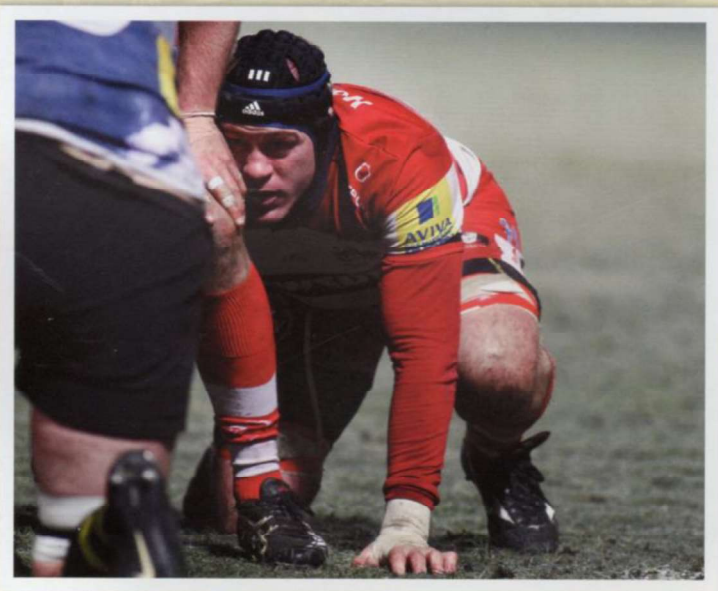
He captained the team to victory in the thrilling European Challenge Cup final against London Irish

in 2006. Gloucester made the Premiership final in 2007, but were well beaten by Leicester. To add insult to injury, Pete broke his hand early in the game. This was tragic, as he had been named in the England squad to tour South Africa that summer.

He was club captain for the 2007-08 season, when Gloucester yet again had the distinction of topping the Premiership but were pipped by Leicester, 26-25 in the play-off semi-final.

Pete was in another oh-so-near campaign in 2010, when a member of the team that lost the LV= Cup Final to Northampton 24-30 at Worcester.

Bucko was awarded a testimonial season in 2011-12. At the end of the 2012-13 season he signed for





Bristol, but soon changed his mind to stay at Kingsholm as Academy Manager, a post he retained until 2015.

It was nice to see him playing for the Gloucester Rugby Heroes team against South Africa Legends a few weeks ago, and getting around the field just like the old days.



AKAPUSI QERA

Akapusi Qera was a devastating open-side flanker or sometimes number 8. He was a deadly tackler and penetrative attacker in the traditional Fijian style. His all action displays made him a firm Shed favourite. In all he made 138 appearances for the Cherry and Whites, scoring 33 tries. He was a

longstanding captain of Fiji, and up until 2016 had won 52 caps.

'Q' was born on 24 April 1984 in Suva, Fiji. His father had played international cricket for Fiji. His early rugby was played at home for Coastal Stallions, where his promise was rewarded by appearances for Fiji Under 21's.

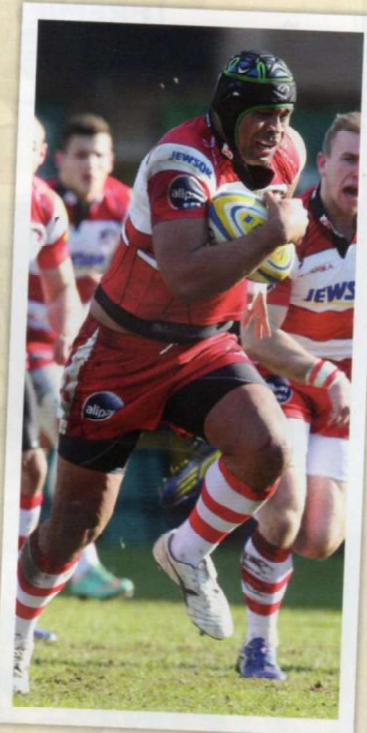
In season 2006-07, he played for Pertemps Bees (now known as Birmingham/Solihull) in National Division 1, scoring 16 tries, the most by a forward at that level. He attracted the attention of Gloucester and he signed a contract to start the following season at Kingsholm.

His first appearance was off the bench on 13 October 2007 against Sale, and he made his first start in the following game against London Irish. He had a very successful season, scoring a hat-trick of tries against Leeds, and was a regular member of the team which topped the Premiership, only to lose at home to Leicester in the play-off semi-final. So outstanding was he that he was a nominated player for the Premiership Player of the Year Award. He finished third to Ollie Barkley and James Simpson-Daniel.

Before the start of the following season Qera had to have surgery on his anterior cruciate ligament, and did not play until March, when in his first game he scored a try against Bath. He also played in the losing EDF Energy Cup Final against Cardiff.

Fully restored for the 2009-10 season, Akapusi scored another hat-trick against Newport Gwent Dragons in the Heineken Cup. That season Gloucester made it to the final of the LV= Cup, and he was in the team, along with Peter Buxton that lost to Northampton. In acknowledgement of his fine form that season, he was elected Player of the Season, by the Gloucester supporters.

In March 2011 he was an important member of the side which finally took that extra step to win some



silverware, when Gloucester defeated Newcastle 34-7 in the final of the LV= Cup, with Akapusi contributing a try.

At the start of the 2013-14 season Qera found it difficult to gain much game time, and in mid-season, with the agreement of the club he signed for Toulouse. By the start of the 2014-15 season he had moved on to Perpignan, where he signed a new two year deal in October 2015.

For Fiji, Akapusi has had a long outstanding career. His first cap was against Samoa in 2005. Further caps followed and in 2007 he was voted Fiji's Player of the Season. He made four appearances in the 2007 World Cup, and scored the opening try in a famous 38-34 win over Wales. Fiji made it through the from the group stage, but lost to South Africa in the quarter-final.

He played in all four of Fiji's games in the 2011 World Cup, and in the 2015 competition he was captain. In fact, he is still the leader of his country, the last game being against England in November 2016.