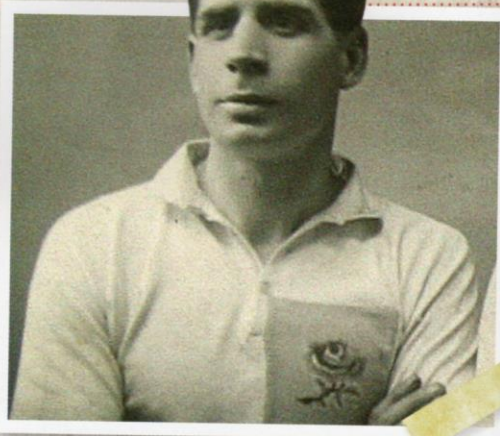


SID SMART

SID SMART WAS A SPECIALIST NO 8, A LOCAL LAD WITH A STARTLING TURN OF SPEED, WHO BECAME AN ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL AND ONE OF THE BEST LOVED MEMBERS OF THE GLOUCESTER CLUB.



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Sidney E J Smart was born in January 1888 at Kingsholm, the son of a labourer. Sid was educated at Deacon's School, and started his rugby career with Gordon League.

He played his first game for Gloucester on 23 March 1911 at Kingsholm against Bream, by which time he was employed as a driller at the Gloucester Wagon Works. During the following season, he scored his first try for Gloucester against Cinderford on 2nd October 1911, and became firmly established in



the Gloucester side. Very quickly, he attracted the attention of the county selectors, and within a few months of starting to play first class rugby, was selected for Gloucestershire against Monmouth on 12th October 1911, and immediately became a permanent fixture in the side.

In 1912-13, Sid was available for only half of Gloucester's fixtures, because he was in such demand for representative rugby. In the County semi-final at Kingsholm, he was singled out as "a rare worker in all phases", as he helped Gloucestershire to a hard fought 6-0 win. They went on to win the County Championship for only the second time with a 14-3 victory in the final against Cumberland at Carlisle.

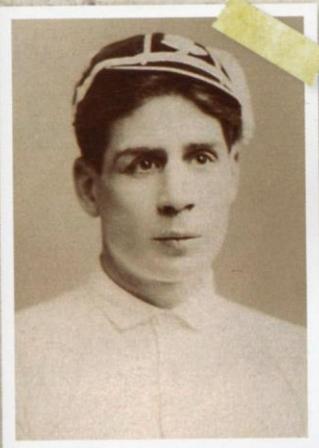
The impact he was making had also been noted by the England selectors, and he was selected for the England side in both trial games, and in all of England's internationals that season. He made his international debut in a 3-9 loss to South Africa at Twickenham, thus earning his first England cap less than two years after his first game for Gloucester. Sid retained his place in the side as England went on to Grand Slam success, defeating Wales 12-0 (England's first win in Cardiff since 1895), France 20-0, Ireland 15-4, and



Scotland 3-0. In 1913-14, county and international rugby once more limited Sid's appearances for Gloucester, as he again played a full set of Five Nations internationals.

The Great War then intervened, causing a long break in Sid's rugby career when he was at his peak. In September 1914, the 5th Glosters held a recruitment drive at a hall in Gloucester, at which they hoped to sign on some forty men. Sid went

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along, and following the speeches, he jumped up on the stage and announced that he would be joining up. His team mates followed on behind him, and the stage was then swamped with volunteers, who wanted to serve alongside their heroes. When order had been restored, so many signed on that the 5th Glosters went through the war with two battalions rather than one, and even then some were still left over, so were sent off to join the Worcesters, much to their dismay.

Sid landed in France on 29th March 1915, was promoted to Lance-Corporal and subsequently to Sergeant. He qualified as a Brigade Grenadier, and was wounded in April 1916. When he had recovered, Sid was transferred to the Royal Munster



Fusiliers, but was wounded for a second time, and discharged from the Army.

In 1919, Sid married Selina Sandford at Lydney, and they had a son, Sydney, born in 1920, who later became a back row forward and played 133 games for Gloucester between 1945 and 1950.

When rugby resumed at Kingsholm in the 1919-20 season, Sid resumed his career with Gloucester, Gloucestershire and England, helping the County to further Championship glory, beating Yorkshire in the final, and winning the last three of his twelve international caps, but how many more might it have been but for five seasons lost during the war?

In 1920-21, Sid scored a try in a famous 10-8 victory over Harlequins at Twickenham, and Gloucester inflicted defeats on all four of the big Welsh clubs, a very rare feat for an English club. Sid was still a fixture in the County side, contributing to their retention of the County Championship, beating Leicestershire 31-4 in the final at Kingsholm.

Sid was Club captain for the 1921-22 season, and kept his place with the County, playing in the 8-8 draw against Surrey at Richmond in the semi-final, in the 30-0 win in the replay at Kingsholm, and in the final at Villa Park, Birmingham, where Gloucestershire selected nine Gloucester players and defeated North Midlands 19-0. This completed Sid's career with the County - 26 appearances and four county championship winners' medals, three of them in consecutive seasons.

Sid played in 34 of the Club's 43 matches in 1922-23, but this was effectively his last season. He played only two matches the following season, but was persuaded to turn out for a final appearance on 20th March 1926 against Bath at Kingsholm, more than two years after his penultimate game - Gloucester won 17-3. Sid's playing career for Gloucester thus spanned 10 seasons either side of WW1, during which he made 192 appearances.

Sid was much loved as a personality at Kingsholm, both during his playing career and after. The crowd took him to their hearts for his tremendous enthusiasm and commitment - he



trained hard, and always gave of his best. He once demonstrated his fitness by walking from Gloucester to Pershore to take part in a sports meeting, won the race, and "footed" it all the way back home.

He was made a life member of the Gloucester club, retained his association with the Club throughout his life and was a popular figure around Kingsholm.

Even when he was in his eighties, he continued to serve the Club he loved, as a steward in the grandstand at Kingsholm. And that is where he died on 25th January 1969, aged 81 - just before half-time in the Gloucester v Cambridge University match, he collapsed, fell down the steps, and was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. He was buried in Coney Hill Cemetery.

