

A POTTED HISTORY

THE EARLY DAYS AT THE SPA

Frank Hartley, a founder member of the RFU in 1871, came to work in Gloucester, and advertised a meeting for anyone interested in forming a rugby club. On 15th September 1873, 45 turned up, and the Club was born.

At first the Club members mostly played amongst themselves, the first match against King's School was won, and the first against a club was a 0-0 draw against Hereford.

For several years, the Club was based on the Spa, sharing with Gloucester Cricket Club, but quickly grew to be one of the leading clubs in the country. In 1891, a match was saved against Swansea by the application of salt to a frozen pitch, but the grass was ruined for the coming cricket season, and it was agreed that the Rugby Club had to move. The committee recommended purchasing a ground on Sheephouse Road, but the members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the more expensive Castle Grim at Kingsholm.



Gloucester Rugby 1890-91

A NEW HOME AT KINGSHOLM

The Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Company was launched, and the full share issue of 3,000 £1 shares was taken up by 297 shareholders. Although the Club bought nearly all of the shares over the next 40 years, it was this company which Tom Walkinshaw bought in 1997 to secure ownership of the Club.

The first match at Kingsholm was an 18-0 victory over Burton on 10th October 1891. Within a couple of months an England trial and a county match were played there, and in 1892 a pavilion was



Harry Berry, Arthur Hudson, Dai Gent, Billy Jones

added. The 1900 England v Wales international was played at Kingsholm, seen as an honour for the club, but very damaging financially.

In 1905, the All Blacks were more impressed by the facilities in the new gymnasium (now the Lions Den) than the Gloucester team who were dismissed 44-0. South Africa and Australia soon came to Kingsholm, which became famous around the world.

Gloucester had started to produce international players in the 1890s, most notably Walter Jackson and the Stout brothers, Frank and Percy. In 1910, four won England caps – Harry Berry, Dai Gent, Arthur Hudson and Billy Johns.

THE GREAT WAR

There were no club matches played, with the Gloucester squad joining up en masse, most serving with the 5th Glosers. Thirty Gloucester players died fighting for their country.



The three clergymen

BETWEEN THE WARS

The Club flourished in the 1920s, when Tom Voyce was starring for Gloucester, England and the Lions; he revolutionised the role of wing forward by causing mayhem amongst opposition backs, and is the only Gloucester man to be elected President of the RFU.

In the 1930s, the most prominent Gloucester player was "Bumps" Carpenter, a miner from the Forest and the best hooker in the land, but only called up for England when they were confronted by a formidable South African front row.

Also in the Gloucester team were three clergymen – Mervyn Hughes, later canon at Gloucester Cathedral and Chairman of the Club; "Bill" Phillips, who started the war as a pacifist but floated down into Arnhem as chaplain of the Airborne Forces, and Kit Tanner who won the Albert Medal when giving up his life to save countless sailors off Crete.

AFTER WW2

Willie Jones kicked so many dropped goals that he was thought to have triggered the reduction from four to three points. Terry Hopson and Mickie Booth followed as a magical half-back pairing, playing in front of an immaculate full-back, Don Rutherford, a great tactician. Peter Ford was the first to join the 500 Club, later joined by Alan Brinn (with a record 573 appearances), Dick Smith, Bob Clewes and Richard Mogg.

CUP SUCCESS

The RFU first introduced a knockout competition in 1971-72, Gloucester were drawn away in every round at Bath, Bristol, London Welsh and Coventry, yet reached the final, where they beat Moseley under

their inspirational skipper, Mike Nicholls. Gloucester won the cup in 1978, playing the same XV in every round, defeating Leicester in the final, led by John Watkins, victorious with England in both New Zealand and South Africa. And in 1990, they were again drawn away in every round, but fell at the final hurdle against Bath.

Gloucester's most successful season was 1981-82 (played 48 won 41 lost 3 drawn 4), with Steve Mills as captain and Mike Teague as leading try scorer; and played out a draw in the final of the cup, which was shared with Moseley.

PROFESSIONAL ERA

In order to maintain their status as one of the leading clubs in the country, Gloucester was sold to Tom Walkinshaw to fund and run a professional operation, and he sold part of his holding to Martin St. Quinton, who later became the sole owner.



In the amateur era, players had been largely Gloucester born and bred. Suddenly recruitment spread world-wide, and new heroes arrived - Ian Jones, Terry Fanolua, Junlor Paramore and Jake Boer from the southern hemisphere, and Philippe Saint-André, Ludovic Mercier and Olivier Azam from France. New facilities were built at Kingsholm, the main stand being replaced in 2007.

The most successful season of this era was 2002-03, when Gloucester won the Premiership by 15 points, but this was the first season with play-offs, and they lost the final to Wasps. But they won the Powergen Cup 40-22 against Northampton, and later that year, the England team which won the Rugby World Cup was propped by Phil Vickery and Trevor Woodman, with Andy Gomarsall also in the squad.

There were other national and Anglo-Welsh cup successes, but, despite some stirring performances in the European Cup, most notably against Toulouse in 2012, only the Challenge Cup has been won, in 2006 and 2015.

THE RECORD AGAINST EXETER

Of the 80 games played, Gloucester have won 57 and lost 19, with 4 drawn, scoring 1748 points against 948.

THE EARLY YEARS

The first fixture between the Clubs was on 4th October 1890 at Exeter, where Gloucester eased home 6-3, with tries scored by Tommy Bagwell and Trevor Powell, both converted by Arthur Hughes (a try earned one point and a conversion two). The return match in Gloucester was played on the Spa – Kingsholm was not acquired until the following year – and resulted in an overwhelming 14-0 victory for Gloucester – ten tries, including four for Walter Taylor and three for Trevor Powell, and three conversions. The teams met occasionally up to the Great War, Gloucester's sequence of wins being disturbed only by one draw.

WITHIN LIVING MEMORY

Thereafter, there were no fixtures between the wars, and indeed a gap of nearly forty years before they met again at Kingsholm in 1946, when Gloucester yet again prevailed, 12-6, with two tries from Douglas Kear his last for Gloucester; one was converted by Willie Jones, who also added one of his trademark dropped goals.

Although the teams then met nearly every season, Exeter had to wait until 1963, after 73 years of trying, and in the 22nd meeting between the clubs, for their first win, 5-3, which came in the final match of Gloucester's end-of-season tour to the West Country, when maybe Gloucester were a bit the worse for wear.

Indeed, Exeter did not enjoy their first victory at Kingsholm until 2012, a wait of 122 years after



Bob Clewes

their first visit to Gloucester. Many will remember a nail-biter of a game, with Gloucester finally going down 27-28.

The biggest win in the series came on 8th November 1975 at Kingsholm, Gloucester enjoying a massive victory, 76-6. It should have been more! – Gloucester scored 18 tries, which equalled the Club record, but managed to convert only two of them. The ball went out wide a lot, so the leading try scorers were John Dix with five and Bob Clewes with four.

ROB BAXTER

On this Gloucester Rugby Heritage Day, we welcome back to Kingsholm many former Gloucester players, including Rob Baxter, the Chiefs Director



Arthur Hughes, Trevor Powell and Walter Taylor



of Rugby. In a brief spell away from Exeter, he was a Gloucester player in 1993-94. A No 8, who turned out mostly for the second team, he made six appearances for the 1st XV, his debut coming against Blackheath and scoring a try against Stroud.

THE PROFESSIONAL ERA

From the start of the professional era in 1996, Gloucester were in the top flight, but Exeter were not, so the teams did not meet for many years, except for one cup encounter. The Powergen Cup came into being in 2002-03, Gloucester came into the competition in the sixth round, and were drawn at home to Exeter, who were captained by a former Kingsholm favourite in Dave Sims. Terry Fanolua led



Gloucester to a comfortable 35-6 win, with Chris Catling (2), Jake Boer, Peter Buxton and Darren O'Leary scoring tries, and Henry Paul converting all of them.

Following Exeter's promotion to the Premiership at the expense of Bristol in 2010, their first match was at home to Gloucester. Most pundits predicted a successful jaunt down the M5 for the Cherry and Whites. But Exeter had other ideas and made an early mark at the top level with a convincing 22-10 victory, and they've remained a tough proposition ever since. In the last ten years, league fixtures have seen eight wins for Gloucester and nine for Exeter with one draw. Last season the teams met four times, with two wins apiece.

The teams met in a European Rugby Challenge Cup semi-final in 2015. The first half was played at a blistering pace, a try by Bill Meakes being the difference when it was 13-6 at half-time. Exeter got back to within a point thanks to four penalties from Henry Slade, but Tom Savage scored a try on his birthday, and although Taione caused a few jitters with a try for Exeter, Jonny May intercepted and raced away for the clinching score. Greig Laidlaw's boot contributed 13 points to the 30-19 scoreline. Gloucester went on to win the trophy by beating Edinburgh 19-13 in the final.



The teams were drawn in the same European Champions Cup group and played back-to-back games in December 2018. This time Gloucester travelled to Sandy Park as clear underdogs, and soon went behind to a Don Armand try, but Ollie Thorley ran 70 metres at dazzling pace to set up Willi Heinz for a try. Jaco Visagie, on a short-term loan at Gloucester scored, but the teams registered three tries apiece, and it was the boots of Danny Cipriani and Billy Twelvetrees which made the difference with the final score 27-19. A confident Gloucester stepped out at Kingsholm a week later, but this time Exeter overturned the odds. Jason Woodward scored two tries, and Tom Hudson added a magnificent third, but these were flashes in the pan as Exeter scored four and steam-rolled their way to an impressively powerful win, 29-17.