

GLoucester Rugby Heritage

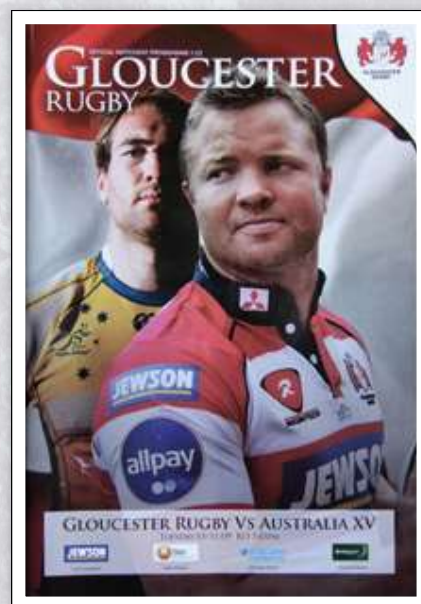
G'DAY TO AUSSIES AT KINGSHOLM

When Australia first toured the British Isles in 1908, their second match was at Kingsholm, on a roasting hot day. The British press initially referred to the visitors as the Rabbits, but the Australian players objected, and voted instead to be called the Wallabies. They took on Gloucestershire, who fielded six Gloucester players, including England internationals, Arthur Hudson, Dai Gent, Billy Johns and Harry Berry. Australia deserved to win, but the home side were hampered by a succession of injuries, with no replacements. The final margin was 16-0.

At the end of the Great War, Kingsholm hosted an Australian trial between a Trench XV, previously deployed in France, and an Australian Flying Corps team,

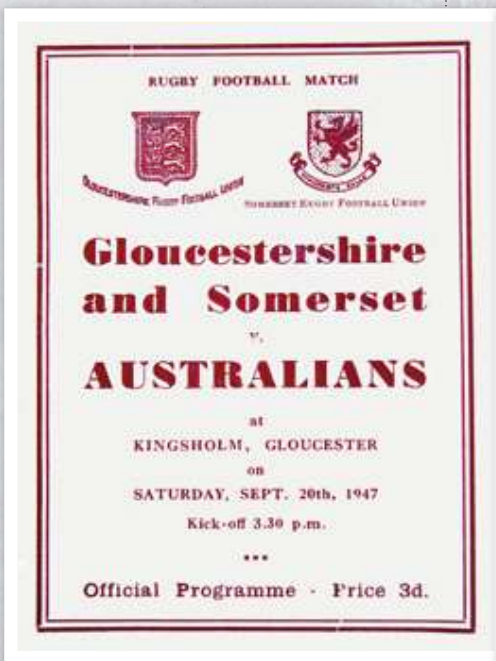
based locally at Leighterton and Minchinhampton Aerodromes. The Trench team romped home 50-0. The Australian team then returned to Kingsholm to play against the RAF in the Empire Services League. Australia were clear favourites, but the RAF came out on top, 7-3.

The Australians were due to tour in 1939, but WW2 broke out, and the visit had to be postponed until 1947, when they were greeted at Kingsholm by a crowd of 15,000. A combined Gloucestershire and Somerset side included Steve Davies, Tom Price, Johnny Thornton and Gordon Hudson from Gloucester. It was mostly one-way traffic as Australia coasted home 30-8, with injuries reducing the home side to 13 men in the latter stages.



In 1981, Australia lined up in Arctic conditions at Kingsholm to play the South and South West Division, who featured an all-Gloucester front row in Phil Blakeway, Steve Mills and Malcolm Preedy, as well as Mike Teague and Richard Mogg. But scrum dominance was lost when Blakeway went off injured at half-time with S&SW leading 3-0, and the Australian backs capitalised to win 16-3.

In 2009, Gloucester hosted Australia in a game designed to demonstrate the suitability of Kingsholm for matches in the 2015 Rugby World Cup. The large crowd and the hospitality served their purpose, but Australia were far too strong for a Club side, which went down 5-36, their only points coming from a try engineered by Carlos Spencer and Charlie Sharples, and scored by Freddie Burns.



Teams	
GLoucestershire and SOMERSET XV <small>Colours - Dark Green</small>	AUSTRALIAN XV <small>Colours - Dark Green</small>
1. S. T. J. Walter <small>Gloucestershire</small>	C. J. Windsor 2
2. F. Discombe <small>Somerset</small>	A. E. J. Tonkin 4
3. T. Hicks <small>Somerset</small>	T. Allan 6
4. S. H. Davies <small>Gloucestershire</small>	M. L. Howell 7
5. G. Green <small>Gloucestershire</small>	J. W. T. MacBride 8
6. I. Lumsden <small>Gloucestershire (Flourish)</small>	E. G. Broad 12
7. D. Roberts <small>Somerset</small>	C. T. Burke 13
8. T. Price <small>Gloucestershire</small>	E. H. Davis 30
9. M. Howell <small>Somerset</small>	W. L. Dawson 26
10. L. J. Griffin <small>Gloucestershire</small>	R. E. McMaster 28
11. A. Meredith <small>Gloucestershire</small>	N. Sheahie 24
12. W. J. Jenkins <small>Somerset</small>	G. M. Cooke 18
14. J. Thornton <small>Gloucestershire</small>	K. C. Winning 25
15. C. Price <small>Somerset</small>	C. J. Windon 20
16. G. Hudson <small>Gloucestershire</small>	W. M. McLean 15

Reference: Mr. T. N. Pearce (Chelmsford)
Gloucestershire: Mr. J. HILL (1947) and Mr. J. WALKER
 Somerset: Mr. G. H. GIBSON (1947) and Mr. J. WALKER

AUSTRALIA SCHOOLS

Australia Schools have visited Kingsholm on three occasions. In 1977, they played South West Schools, who selected Steve Baker and Mark Calver from Sir Thomas Rich's. The Australians proved too strong, had the star of the match in Glen Ella, and won 28-12.

When they next visited Kingsholm in 1995, it was the last match of a tour on which they were unbeaten, and Elton Flatley was their outstanding player. But the opposition was England Schools, who selected a future Gloucester player in Joe Ewens, who tackled his heart out, and England won decisively, 30-3.

In 2005 they played England U-19, who included future Gloucester players in Danny Cipriani, Joe Simpson, Jack Forster and Dave Attwood. The England pack stood up well, and Forster won scrum penalties, but the Australian backs, with Kurtley Beale and Quade Cooper to the fore, proved a bit too classy, and got their team home 24-12.

AUSSIE PLAYERS AT KINGSHOLM

Before Rugby Union went professional, no Australian had played for Gloucester. But in 1997, Richard Tombs arrived, having won five Australian caps, and quickly formed a potent centre partnership with Terry Fanolua. This, combined with the arrival of French star Philippe Saint-André, meant that suddenly the Cherry and Whites had a top-class back division. In March 1998 Richard became the first overseas player to captain Gloucester, when he led them in the quarter-final of the C&G Cup. Gloucester went on to win the competition that season and the next, and Richard was present on both occasions. Tombs made 76 appearances during his time at the club, and scored 19 tries.

Elton Moncrieff (1999-2001) was a busy scrum-half, who first played for Queensland Reds. He



scored two tries in his first game against Newcastle. He was also an excellent place kicker, but it will be an eccentric drop goal for which he will always be remembered. In a Heineken Cup game against Llanelli at Kingsholm, with the game in the balance, Elton miscued a drop at goal, which fortuitously struck a defender who diverted the ball over the posts. Gloucester won by a single point. Moncrieff scored 92 points in his 31 Gloucester appearances.

Great things were expected of Jason Little (2000-01). He won 75 caps for Australia, and was rated one of the best centres in world rugby. He ran in two tries in his first game against Bristol, and followed this up with another superb score in the following Heineken Cup game at Llanelli. Somehow this form did not seem to be maintained and he left the club after a single season.

Fly half, Duncan MacRae (2003-05), was a skilled performer, and excellent kicker although during his time at Kingsholm, Henry Paul was first choice kicker. He did, however, in his first season contribute strongly to a rare win at Leicester with a try and two drop goals,

and later three conversions, two penalties and a drop goal in a big win at Rotherham. In his second season he scored two tries in a crushing Heineken Cup win over Ulster. He was injured in that game, which limited his appearances later in the season. MacRae made 47 appearances, scoring 119 points.

Four times capped hooker, Huia Edmonds (2012-14) was very mobile and supportive around the field. In his first season he was part of the team which had a fine win in the Amlin Cup at Bourdeaux, and in his second, another at Perpignan in the Heineken Cup. He made 41 appearances and scored three tries.

Bill Meakes (2014-16) was a hard running centre or wing who played in 45 games, scoring seven tries. He played in the final of the European Challenge Cup against Edinburgh, but late on was red-carded for a late high tackle. However, Gloucester hung on to win.

James Hanson (2017-21), another hooker, made 38 appearances in his four season stay at Kingsholm. He also won 12 caps for Australia. He would have played many more games for Gloucester, had he not been so afflicted by injuries. He missed the whole of the 2019-20 season. He still scored nine tries, which for a hooker is not bad. In 2018, Hanson scored a try in the final of the European Challenge Cup against Cardiff Blues, which Gloucester lost by one point.

Other Aussies who have played for Gloucester are Tai Glassie (1999-2000), nine appearances, a wing; Jeremy Paul (2007-08), yet another hooker, who won 72 caps, but only made nine appearances for Gloucester. Salesi Ma'afu (2016-17) was a prop with 14 caps, and 11 appearances for the Cherry and Whites.

Of course, we still have an Aussie at Kingsholm, with Jordy Reid making a big impression and going from strength to strength in the back row.