

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

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WELCOMING WELSH

The London Welsh club was founded in 1885, and has since been based at the Old Deer Park in Richmond. But, with their entry into the Premiership for the first time this season, home matches have been played at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford. The club boasts 126 players who have won caps for Wales.

Of the 45 matches against London Welsh, Gloucester have won 36, lost 6 and drawn 3, scoring 677 points against 324. All but nine of these games have been played at Kingsholm, which has undoubtedly contributed to the one-sided nature of the series.

The clubs met every season from 1922 to 1953, but all these matches were played at Kingsholm, usually on Easter Monday, with London Welsh stopping off in Gloucester on the way home from their tour of South Wales. It's a distinct possibility that they were not fully sober when they returned across the border.

The biggest winning margin by Gloucester was 40-8 on 13th April 1925, with three tries by the vice-captain, Sid Brown, a prolific attacking three-quarter, who would die of injuries sustained in a match at Kingsholm less than a year later. Lt Wood and Sid Crowther scored two each, and Milliner, Triggs-Herbert and Hughes one each. Tom Millington converted five of them.

The biggest defeat for Gloucester was 3-14 on 22nd January 1983 in the John Player Cup.



▲ Sid Brown



▲ Sid Crowther



▲ "Whacker" Smith

FIRST ENCOUNTER

The first fixture was played at Kingsholm, and came about because London Welsh were looking for fixtures on a tour.

The match took place on a Friday afternoon on 28th March 1902, and attracted a big crowd, not only because of the novelty, but also because London Welsh included three Welsh internationals, Llewellyn, Gabe and E Morgan, and the weather was kind.

London Welsh scored first with a try by Williams, and came close on several other occasions, having another try disallowed for a foul on the Gloucester fullback. They kept up the pressure to maintain their 3-0 lead at half-time.

The **Citizen** then reported that: *Gloucester started the second half in fine style, and a splendid punt by G. Hall placed the home team in a good position for scoring. The City half-backs were not long in taking advantage, for a short pass by Hall to Goddard saw the latter dash down the blind side of the scrum. Cutting inside a couple of opponents, Goddard transferred neatly to "Whacker" Smith, who dodged Gabe and Thomas, and ran over with a splendid try. Romans converted, and Gloucester led by two points.*

This changed the course of the game, and thereafter Gloucester were increasingly dominant. Purton scored from a line-out,

then "Whacker" dashed over for a try in the corner with Morgan hanging on his back, and Parham rounded it off with another try from a line-out. The final score was 14-3.

GLOUCESTER WELSH

The visit of London Welsh gives us the chance to look at four of the great Welsh players who have worn the Cherry and White shirt:

DAI GENT

Scrum Half and Sunday Times rugby correspondent

David Robert "Dai" Gent was born in Llandovery, Carmarthen, on 9 January 1883. He trained as a teacher at St Paul's College Cheltenham and joined Gloucester in the 1903-04 season. He went on to play 140 games for the club, and soon formed a successful half-back pairing with the great Jim Stephens.

Dai was only 5ft 2 ½ in but was a gifted and courageous footballer, and is generally acknowledged as one of the greatest Gloucester scrum-halves. He captained Gloucester in 1906-07 and Gloucestershire from 1908-11, leading them to their first County Championship title in 1910.

Qualified for Wales by birth and England by residence, he won 5 England caps, making his international debut at Crystal Palace against the 1905 All Blacks. Dai Gent became a legendary rugby correspondent of the Sunday Times, retiring in 1955 at the age of 72.

CANON MERVYN HUGHES

Open Side Wing Forward and Gloucester president

Harold Mervyn Hughes was born in Cambridge on 12 July 1913 of Welsh parents. His father became Vicar of Chepstow and he played rugby for Chepstow as a schoolboy before studying divinity at St David's College, Lampeter.

Hughes went up to Oxford in 1934 and won blues in 1935 and 1936. After the 1936 varsity match, he played with great success for London Welsh. Hughes was described by **The Times** as "one of the most promising players of his type in the British Isles" and appeared in the final Welsh trial of 1936-37. Ordained as a deacon in Gloucester in

▼ Willie Jones



October 1937, he joined Gloucester RFC and played 55 matches for the club until war intervened. Canon Hughes was Gloucester RFC Chairman from 1949 until 1971 and Club President from 1979 until 1995.

WILLIE JONES

Outside Half and Glamorgan cricketer

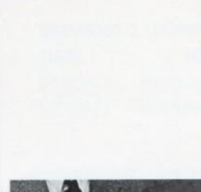
W E "Willie" Jones was born in Carmarthen in October 1916. He played fly half for Neath from 1937-1940 and was a Welsh trialist and wartime International.

Following service in the RAF, he played 76 games for Gloucester from 1945-1949, breaking the club points-scoring record twice and scoring 38 dropped goals.

Described by **The Times** as a "kicking genius", his prodigious kicking feats for Gloucester in the 1946-47 and 1947-48 seasons are said to be one of the main reasons why the dropped goal was reduced in value from 4 to 3 points in 1948-49.

Willie Jones was also a noted cricketer for Glamorgan from 1938-1958 and appeared in an England test trial in 1949. On retirement he became cricket coach at Dean Close School, Cheltenham

▲ Dai Gent



JOHN GWILLIAM

No 8 or Lock and outstanding captain of Wales

John Albert Gwilliam was born on 28 February 1923 in Pontypridd and educated at Monmouth School.

After serving in the Royal Tank Regiment in WWII he won blues at Cambridge in 1947 and 1948. By the time he left university he had already been capped six times by Wales and was a Barbarian.

After Cambridge he taught at Glenalmond School and played for Edinburgh Wanderers. During that time, he captained Wales twelve times, winning two Triple Crowns.

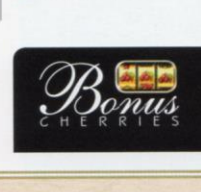
John Gwilliam joined Gloucester in 1953 and spent the last two years of his playing career with the club. He played 49 games and won a further five Welsh caps.

The first Gloucester player to captain his country, he was one of the great Welsh captains - very influential and greatly admired.

▲ John Gwilliam



▲ Mervyn Hughes



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