



## History of Gloucester Rugby Ground

Gloucester Rugby now play their home matches at the Kingsholm Stadium in Gloucester. The club originally played at The Spa in Gloucester, but had to leave this site in 1891 after being given notice to quit by Gloucester City Council. In a short space of time, the club found a suitable site for a new ground on land belonging to the Castle Grim Estate in Kingsholm. The land was subsequently purchased by the club for the sum of £4,000 and the new ground became known simply as Kingsholm.

Like the clubs of the Welsh mining valleys, Gloucester Rugby traditionally drew its support and its players from local working-class communities. To cater for this audience and to increase the capacity of the ground, the club opened the "Sixpenny" stand in 1891. This structure would later become known as "The Shed" (because it is alleged to look like a cow shed) and it is famous throughout the world of rugby. Gloucester Rugby's fanzine refers to it as 'the cauldron of fear' for opposition teams. It is comprised of standing-only terracing that runs continuously down one touchline, opposite the point where visiting teams emerge from the dressing rooms. Its low tin roof amplifies the effect of the passionate and vocal home support and this is often mentioned by radio and television commentators sitting above it during live broadcasts.

In 1905 a new clubhouse, in the north-east corner of the ground was built (which in later years became the club gymnasium and then a bar). In 1926 this was followed by a new grandstand which contained 1,750 seats and cost £2,500 to build. However, six years later, in 1933, it was destroyed in a large fire. Proposals to rebuild the stand included plans to increase the capacity of the stadium to 20,000, with seating for 7,000. These plans never came about although the burnt out grandstand was replaced.

Apart from the addition of a new clubhouse in the south-east corner of the ground, little else was done until 1990, when the west end of the ground, known as the 'Tump', was improved with a new stand and terracing being added. In 2004, a new grandstand, the East stand, was erected and soon afterwards, in 2006, the club announced it would be making an extension to Kingsholm, aimed at bringing the stadium capacity up to 17,000 to cope with higher levels of spectators. As well as to increase income, these improvements were also to comply with Premier Rugby's minimum seat number requirements. As part of this, the old main stand was replaced by a new all seater structure.

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In January 2007, the Club announced that it planned to redevelop The Shed. This was to enable the stadium to become all-seating. A large number of supporters did not want to see this happen, and a campaign under the banner of "Save Our Shed" or "SOS" was begun. Posters were held up during a protest before one game and T-shirts were made with the slogan "Save Our Shed" on them.

A suggested compromise was for the Club to replicate the design of Northampton RFC's ground, Franklin's Gardens, where terracing runs in conjunction with a large seated area. In September 2008, Chairman Tom Walkinshaw confirmed that the plans for the Shed would see it remain as a terrace (with an increased capacity of 6000), with hospitality units above it.

2007 also saw the Club reject the proposal of a new 20,000 all seater stadium in an area of the city nicknamed "The Railway Triangle". This proposal also called for the new ground to be shared with the local football side, Gloucester City A.F.C. In October of the same year, Kingsholm was also suggested as a possible temporary home for the football side after their Meadow Park stadium was flooded and then abandoned following the extreme summer flooding. However, this move was rejected by the then owner Tom Walkinshaw.

