

From the Citizen:

Gloucester rugby legend digs out memories

Thursday, December 31, 2009, 07:02

He is remembered by Mike Burton as the man who took Gloucester United out on strike, but Harold Symonds has many more memories of his rugby days.

The pensioner from Minsterworth has been digging out his memorabilia after hearing about Gloucester Rugby's new heritage project.

He wants the United's achievements to be recognised alongside those of the first team.

Harold, 71, was among the legends welcomed back to Kingsholm to celebrate the official launch of www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk a joint project between Gloucester Rugby and Gloucestershire Archives.

He said seeing the project come to life had sparked memories of his days playing for United.

"You had Gloucester and you had United," he said. "The first team relied on us for replacements.

"Mike Burton always comes up to me and introduces me as the player who took the team out on strike. I did that in the 60s but that is a another story."

Inspired

Harold, who still gets to every match he can at Kingsholm said he had been inspired by the project which was the brainchild of Gloucester Rugby's community manager Gary Little.

He said: "The display at Kingsholm is great and I have been digging through my photos ever since. I have been in touch with Gary Little and the staff at Gloucestershire Archives.

"I will be taking all of my stuff in to Gary soon. I am a big watcher of Gloucester still but it is not the same game I played."

During his time on the pitch, Harold, who played at number eight, played alongside some big names.

He said local lad Mickey Booth was one who really impressed.

"Mickey Booth was the most underrated player," he said.

The former Sir Thomas Rich's pupil made more than 471 appearances for Gloucester and a further 42 for the county.

He went on to become club captain and was also a good cricketer and bowls player.

For Harold, the heritage project and the launch event has been a happy reminder of his playing days.

"It's nice to look back through all my old cuttings and pictures," he said.