

Inducted England v Australia (10/11/01)

Ronald Cove-Smith – England
Cyril Towers - Australia



It was 59 years after their 1927-28 tour of Britain, Ireland and France, and, sadly, a year after his death, that **Cyril Towers'** Test appearances for Australia moved into double figures.

In 1986 Mr John Dedrick, the then Australian Rugby Union Executive Director, confirmed that the Union had retrospectively granted international Test status to the tour and later matches against New Zealand were also upgraded taking Towers from nine to 19 caps with a couple of strokes of a pen. But at least the ARU did eventually see sense.

The reason for the elevation of the New South Wales Waratahs (as they were known when they toured) was that they were Australia's sole representatives in Rugby Union at that time following the withdrawal of Queensland from the ARU in the 1920s.

Towers, who died in 1985, was regarded as one of the finest centres Australia has ever produced, the pity of it was that he played so few times for Australia. He missed out on the 1933 tour to South Africa after a falling out with an administrator and made just four more appearances between 1934 and 1937.

He is described in one history of Australian Rugby as "... a player without weakness, with a rare blend of fierce aggression and bravado." Apparently though there was one minor flaw in this Antipodean gem. "His sole frailty was that he could only step off his left foot and could not cut back off the right."

No matter. He clearly did enough to warrant posthumous caps and the unstinting praise that preceded the acknowledgement of his 'one frailty', as well as his elevation to the Wall of Fame at Twickenham.

And at least the crowd at Twickenham in 1928 was able to witness Towers as he marked his appearance there – Australia's first official appearance at HQ and only their second Test in all against England – with his first try for his country.

Unfortunately it was not enough to earn victory, that went to England under the captaincy of Towers' co-inductee this week to the Wall of Fame at Twickenham, **Ronald Cove-Smith**.



This match on January 7 1928 marked the first of his seven games as captain – the opening six of which England won. Sadly after the

seventh, against Ireland the good doctor not only lost the captaincy, he never played for England again. But among those half dozen victories was a Grand Slam in 1928.

In all Cove-Smith, who made his debut in 1921 against Scotland, won 29 caps and captained the British Isles and Ireland on the tour of South Africa in 1924.

The Wall of Fame is signal recognition of great players and great contributors to a great game and although sited at the headquarters of English rugby, is one which is not confined to English players. Induction and elevation to the Wall of Fame is an all-embracing honour whose intent is to underline the global appeal of Rugby Union.

Article by Dai Llewellyn

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