



## **GREAT HASELEY, NEW ZEALAND AND RUGBY UNION!**

What is the connection? A certain Alfred St. George Hamersley. Hamersley was born in Haseley, we believe at Haseley Manor House, in October 1848 and spent his early years in the village. He was then educated at Marlborough College and the Royal Military College Woolwich, both of which he represented at rugby. He was an England rugby union international who played in the first ever international rugby union match, between Scotland and England at Edinburgh in March 1871.

He emigrated to New Zealand where he played a pivotal role in establishing the game around Canterbury in the South Island. Nearly ninety years after his death the senior rugby union competition played in Canterbury is for "The Hamersley Cup". He then moved to Canada but returned to the UK in 1905 where he eventually became Unionist MP for Mid

Oxfordshire, Woodstock which he held until the constituency was abolished in 1918. He died in February 1929. He is buried in St Mary's churchyard, Pyrton.

Whilst in New Zealand recently, we visited South Canterbury Rugby Club to see if we could find out about the cup. We were informed that it had been won by Timuka and that it was being paraded around the town the next morning in their Christmas carnival. Having gone so far, the next morning we went to Timuka and found the float with the cup, hence the picture above. The Hamersley Cup has been previously had other forms including Senior Flag (1880-1910), Skinner Cup (1911-1995) and Club Shield (1996-2009). It became the Hamersley in 2010 and the trophy has been won 40 times by Timuka, its nearest rival, Celtic, only winning it 19 times. The cup has been around for such a long time every few years, a new base is added to put the latest winners on.

We were given a great welcome by the Timuka team who were extremely proud of the cup. The inscription reads as follows:

Presented in recognition of  
Alfred St George Hamersley  
And his pioneering contribution to  
South Canterbury Rugby  
1875

Jane and David Simcox  
(and thanks to John Andrews for the research that inspired this quest)