

# THE 1987 BARBARIAN ETA FOODS JUBILEE TOUR OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

*by Kevin Barry*

The desire to tour the British Isles has always been with club members. From the day Hugh McLean and Ron Bush established the Barbarian club in New Zealand, to play the mother club has been a fond wish. For this meeting to take place in our jubilee year has made 1987 a more significant year in the club's history.

The doggedness of our Past President, Murray Reid and the forbearance of Micky Steele-Bodger, Vice President of the Barbarians club, our hosts, ensured the tour never foundered in the face of World Cup, Hong Kong Sevens and South Pacific Championship pressures. The wretched weather in Britain then proceeded to force the postponement of an early round of the Five Nations Championship, and their subsequent unscheduled playing during early April which presented venue, itinerary and selection problems for our hosts.

It has been a criticism of New Zealand representative sides selected for promise and development that the team does not contain the more experienced international players to impart knowledge. The New Zealand Barbarians and like clubs do not have strict selection criteria based on merit which means the club's philosophy of selecting rugby players of promise and experience produces outstanding results.

The New Zealand Barbarian team for the ETA Foods Jubilee tour was no exception with a crop of young provincial players that included Mark Weedon (Bay of Plenty), John Schuster (Wellington), Michael Jones (Auckland), Stephen Bachop (Canterbury) and David Halligan (Waikato). This group with so much promise could only gain form touring with men like McDowell, Kirwan, Kirk, Green and the Whetttons.

It was expected that the itinerary would be demanding, having to play in Leicester, Dublin, Belfast, Cornwall and Cardiff. With the exception of the match against Cornwall (kick off 3pm)

the other four matches were played under lights which meant the formal aftermatch receptions never concluded before midnight. Players (and management from time to time) seeking further excitement experienced great difficulty in coinciding their early movements with the departure of the bus next morning.

The inability of our hosts to put together a Scottish selection was initially received with disappointment but the replacement games (not one but two) with Cornwall and the Wanderers club of Dublin was pure genius.

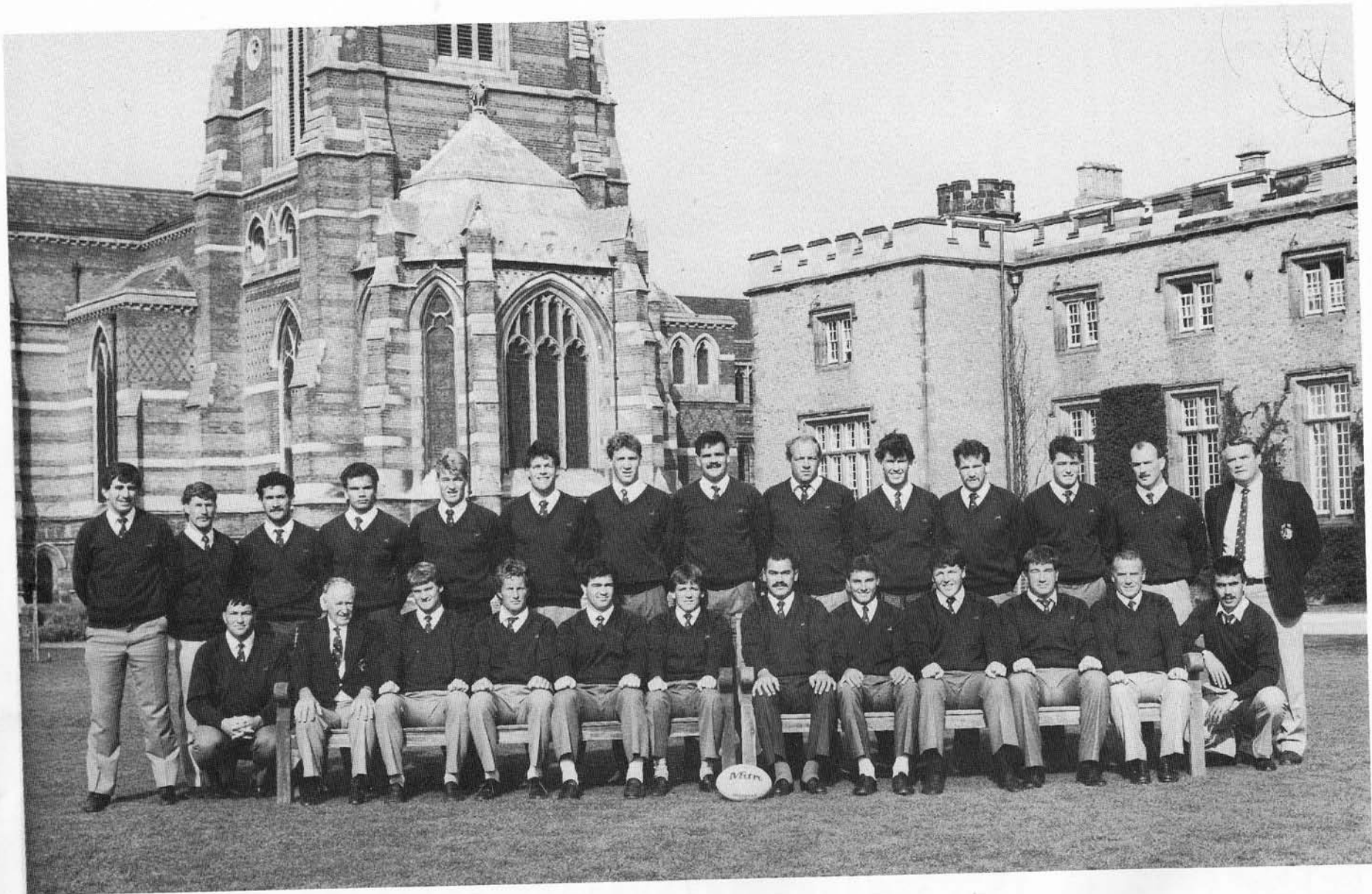
The supporters tour 17 strong and led by the 'head Alikadoo', life member Allen Rogers were a very special group containing members and their wives including Eric Boggs and Eric Grant who had played for the celebrated Barbarians in the 1940's.

The kindness and hospitality extended to our team and supporters throughout our stay was overwhelming. It confirms the measure of goodwill, friendship and mutual respect that exists when two clubs with similar ideals meet.

Apart from an incident in Cornwall entirely out of context with the game, in which one of our players was ordered off, the discipline of our players on and off the field was of a standard that we come to expect in any New Zealand Barbarian team.

Peter Murdoch, Club Captain, and coach of the team and David Kirk provided the right balance of direction and freedom for the players to develop their own style. It was important for the team to understand the pattern early on a short tour. Of the first four games the players were guaranteed not less than two. It provided an excellent platform for the 'test' side to be selected for the final match.

With the team winning convincingly and with so much class in all the games it was easy to forget the number of internationals participating



*The ETA Foods 1987 Barbarian team in Britain photographed on the historic ground at Rugby School.*  
 Back row: K. E. Barry (manager), C. I. Green, J. N. Schuster, M. N. Jones, J. J. Kirwan, A. J. Whetton, M. Weedon, G. W. Whetton, B. L. Anderson, M. R. Brewer, D. A. Williams, D. J. Halligan, B. McGrattan, B. T. Thomas.  
 Front row: J. A. S. Buchan, C. Murdoch (masseur), B. J. McCahill, I. B. Deans, S. C. McDowell, D. E. Kirk (capt), J. T. Stanley, G. J. L. Cooper, S. B. T. Fitzpatrick, W. G. Bunn, P. H. Murdoch (coach), S. J. Bachop.

for the opposition. For example nine internationals took the field for the Barbarian at Cardiff and five for Leicester.

'Doc' Murdoch and Barry Thomas provided an invaluable medical and back up service. Their experience and interpersonnel relationships with our club hosts created an empathy not easily attained.

Thanks goes to our sponsors ETA Foods Ltd whose enthusiastic approach to the sponsorship

was particularly gratifying and to Bob Robertson of Amco Jeans whose leisure sportswear drew very favourable comments on tour.

Finally to The Barbarian club with special praise to Micky Steele-Bodger, Geoff Windsor-Lewis and Gordon Ferguson we extend our heartfelt thanks for receiving our club with goodwill and generosity. We hope that when we are able to reciprocate we can do it with the same measure of Barbarian class.

For the record:—

**1987**

18 March	v Leicester at Leicester .....	won 33-3
22 March	v Wanderers club at Dublin .....	won 36-3
25 March	v Ballymena club at Ballymena .....	won 29-4
28 March	v Cornwall at Redruth .....	won 63-9
1 April	v Barbarian Football club at Cardiff .....	won 68-16