

REAR-ADMIRAL ERNEST WILLIAM ROBERTS OBE RN (1890-94)

He was born on 14 November 1878 in Lowestoft. After leaving Framlingham he joined the Royal Navy in 1895 as an Engineer Cadet and progressed to become a Rear Admiral. Served in South African War and World War 1 where he was in the Grand Fleet and received the thanks of the Lords of the Admiralty for special services at the Battle of Jutland.

Played rugby for England winning six international caps and was Captain of the England XV in 1907 against Scotland. He was an England Selector for 4 years from 1920 to 1923 and was given an OBE in 1923.

Perhaps the most famous match he played for England was on 2 December 1905 at Crystal Palace. This was the day that England met New Zealand in a Rugby Test for the very first time, and some things don't change!! The All Blacks ran away with the match scoring 5 tries to England's none.



They were the first side to be called the All Blacks - a serendipitous error by a journalist, it seems, who was so impressed by their 15-man game that he wanted to say that it was as if they were 'all backs'. It came out as 'All Blacks' and, after all, black was far and away the predominant colour in their uniforms. There is a more prosaic explanation of the nickname. On their arrival a reporter is said to have asked the New Zealanders what colours they would be playing in and the laconic New Zealand answer was: all black.

See http://www.rugby365.com/LATEST_NEWS/story_47440.shtml for a full report on the game. I like the fact that this section of their website is called "Latest News" even when reporting on a game over 100-years ago!!

He died in November 1933 in Manchester, England.