

GLOUCESTER

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



FOUNDED 1873



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v BEDFORD

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1995

Kick off - 7.15 p.m.

OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME
£1

Peter Arnold ...

BLAST FROM THE PAST



Let's forget the trauma for a while. Let's just sit back and enjoy our rugby the way we always did. No worries about Leagues, no spectres of relegation shaking their skeletal frames over our shoulders, no fevered calculations about who's served their 120-day registration period yet. Let's just watch two sides playing the game for the love of it, and for no other reason whatsoever.

Time was when Bedford would undoubtedly have been rated among the top two or three in the country, and many of us can recall the time when this fixture was regarded as one of the toughest in a Gloucester fixture list which proudly featured all the top Welsh sides, as well as the cream of the English crop. And don't forget - tonight's respected and very welcome visitors are representing a club which is actually older than Gloucester, and we don't have to admit that all that often.

Remember Budge Rogers, the wondrous back-row man who won 33 Caps and served one of the longer terms as England's Chairman of Selectors? Remember Jacko Page, the best scrum-half behind a beaten pack I have ever seen? He moved from Bedford to Northampton, and only a few years ago, was still turning out for one of the Midlands clubs, well into the time of life when most of us have taken up knitting. Remember David Wyatt, the trenchant and dangerous wing who would run through a brick wall, if he couldn't run round it?

Closer to home, you may also recall that Richard Pascall came to us from Bedford, and after a distinguished career in cherry-and-white, went back there, taking John Brain with him. I suppose that one of the reasons he is so fondly remembered at Kingsholm lies in his famous remark, quoted in the press, that he knew he had become accepted at Kingsholm when the Shed started shouting "Come on Pasc!", rather than, "You Bedfordshire poofter!"

Until very recently, one of our most cherished friends and opponents would certainly have been along this evening. It was a shame that Mike Rafter - the 'Grafter' himself - felt that he had to relinquish his post as Bedford's Mike Coley. No doubt he had his own, very good, reasons, and it's an awfully long and wearisome drag from Bristol to Bedford. Still, it would have been nice to see him here, the scene of some of his most effective exploits, both for Club and County. I suppose he might have trotted up the A38, just for old times sake. It's to be hoped so, anyway.

All in all, it's great to see such long-standing and respected opponents at Kingsholm once again. The whole game is in such turmoil, at the moment, that I suppose such so-called 'friendly' fixtures must be in jeopardy. Right now no one knows how things are going to shake down once all the tumult and the shouting has died, but it would be sad if such valued regular fixtures were to fall victims to the unstoppable professional tide.

But let's forget all about such considerations, just for this evening. Let's just wish Bedford all the best in the equivocal future, and hope that they have a highly enjoyable evening with us.

LOOKING DOWN THE GUN BARREL

It wasn't the loss at Sale which was so damaging last Saturday. If we were honest, I suppose it came as no surprise at all, given the heavily changed side, which was always going to take time to settle, and the fact that the Cheshire side are on something of a roll, at the moment. No - the factors which left us looking down the gun barrel of relegation at the weekend was Saracens' win over Leicester, and Orrel's victory against Harlequins.

The lesson in that is that our fate isn't entirely in our own hands. I'm not sure if Leicester had an off day, or whether Saracens played out of their skins, but the fact remains that the underdogs won. No logic would have dictated that result beforehand, no analyst would have forecast it. Any more than they would have backed Gloucester to beat Leicester and tie with Bath at the Rec. last season.

In that lies some grains of comfort. Until last Saturday, we could possibly have muddled through by winning our games against the lower-placed clubs at Kingsholm after Christmas. Bearing in mind that a win over Saracens at Kingsholm would, in effect, be worth *four* points, I suppose that, mathematically, that could still be true, but for all practical purposes, we now need to beat one or more of the leading sides to avoid the dreaded drop.

That's the debit side of the balance sheet, but we don't do anyone any favours by wringing our hands and going into a fit of the vapours about it. Let's try to think positively. What have we got going for us?

First of all, of the eight League games we have left, five of them are home fixtures. They are, Bath, immediately after Christmas, West Hartlepool, Orrell, Bristol, and Saracens on the final day of the League season - and what an occasion that could turn out to be!

Of the three away fixtures, Wasps and Harlequins look beatable, with a bit of luck, and if Saracens can beat the 'Tigers', who's to say that Gloucester can't? A starry-eyed view? perhaps, but you and I have seen stranger things happen, and as I say, this is no time to be pessimistic.

The fact is that very little separates any of the ten sides in the First Division. A few unlucky bounces, a bad run on the injury front, a referee having an off-day, or any one of a number of relatively minor circumstances, can decide a match these days. While I'd be the first to admit that we haven't always deserved to win our games this season, I think we do have to say that the luck hasn't always run with us this season, and that those things have a way of levelling themselves out.

The preponderance of home fixtures could be important too. Perhaps clubs don't view a game here with quite the level of fascinated trepidation that they once did, but Kingsholm is still a pretty intimidating place to play when the old Kingsholm roar gets going. And remember: we're now coming into the bad weather time of year. We've had the driest Autumn for many years, but things are breaking up now.

We may not have the Fidlers, the Blakeways and the Boyles to heave away mightily in the thick-and-dirty boiler room, these days, but our present pack, on a roll, on heavy ground, is still a pretty awesome sight to behold with the mud anchoring some of the celebrated opposition fliers' boots to the ground, and a home crowd screaming Gloucester on, just about anything can happen. That, of course, is traditional Gloucester rugby. It may not be pretty, it may not be fashionable, but I'm sure that Richard Hill and Viv Wooley, shrewd tactical animals that they are, will be very alive to the potential of playing to a strength which a century of experience has gifted to Gloucester. By all means keep up with modern thinking and apply what techniques you can, but don't throw an effective baby out with the trendy bath-water.

Those of us who have been coming to Kingsholm since before any of the current players were born, or even thought of, have seen all this before, of course. The difference, these days, lies in the stakes we're playing for. You used to be able to have a poor season, write it off to experience, and come back next season, refreshed and rarin' to go. In the larger scheme of things, a bad run didn't matter a damn, although it did dent pride a little. What we're playing for nowadays is, let's face it, money.

I don't have to tell you about the present state of flux in which the game finds itself. There is, waiting in the wings, a whole series of pots of gold in the hands of people and organisations who see Rugby Union as a potentially very lucrative investment. But that cash, in its great preponderance, is going to go to the clubs in the First Division. Herein lies the fallacy of the siren voices which are already starting to murmur that "It wouldn't do any harm for Gloucester to spend a season in the Second Division."

Of course it would. With money around to buy players and improve facilities, and with a seven-day registration period looking almost certain to arrive next year, it's going to be very difficult to get out of the Second Division once you're in it.

So what can we, the loyal Shed dweller, or Tump Ender, not to mention the posh types in the Stand, do about it all?

One thing we emphatically *don't* do, is wring our hands, cry into our beer, and bemoan our fate. What we *do* do is get behind the lads, and shout our bloody heads off, whenever they take the field. And we can do more.

It can't do players' (or coaches' and officials') confidence any good if they're out and about, and hear folk saying, over a drink or wherever, that Gloucester are a bunch of no hoppers, fit only for the knackers yard. Wherever we are, whenever we get the chance, we should all be talking the side up, telling people that all is not lost, that we have one of the best clubs in the country, that there's nowhere quite like Kingsholm, and that it is never wise to write Gloucester off before the final whistle blows.

Peter Arnold, cont.

Let's see what the second half of the season brings. Some injury problems will, hopefully, resolve themselves. A new-look side could well gel into a formidable outfit. One or two newly-registered players will become available.

Bath, December 30th, is the first test. And it's a test for all of us, not just the players. If we're expecting one-hundred per cent from them, they have a right to expect no less from us. Let's make sure that, if Gloucester lose that one, it won't be through lack of support.

We ain't dead yet. Not by a long chalk.

JONATHAN MEADOWS

It was with a great deal of sadness that I read of the death of Jonathan Meadows, at the tragically early age of 48. He had been seriously ill for some considerable time, but it still comes as a great shock when an old friend leaves us in such a manner.

Jonathan, known as 'Joe' to a very wide circle of friends, was a member of the famous Meadows rugby family, and an ever-present at Kingsholm. One often saw him either manning a turnstile or acting as a Steward.

My own, personal, memories of Jonathan revolve largely around Westgate Street's 'Tailor's House', formerly the 'Union', on a Sunday evening. He was a very keen participant in pub quizzes, and together with Stan Pritchett and Paul Wood, we used to represent that pub in the old Whitbread Quiz League, now sadly, discontinued.

And very good he was too, on a whole range of subjects - although he never quite lived down the evening when he couldn't name the colour of the neutral wire in a standard three-pin plug.

More than that, Jonathan Meadows was a very amiable and pleasant companion, and one whose friendship we all valued highly. He had a facility for the occasional dry remark, delivered in a self-deprecating fashion which simply added relish to the amount of wit concerned. It was always worth being in his company, if only for the sheer good fellowship which he invariably displayed. We can't afford to lose people like Jonathan, especially at such an early age, when he had so much more to contribute to the general well-being of all who knew him.

Peter Arnold (cont.)

You would want me to convey sincere sympathies to his wife, Sylvia, and to all his family. Gloucester, and not just the rugby club, is the poorer without him.

LOT TO LOOK FORWARD TO

We may have run out of League matches for six weeks or so, but there's plenty of activity to get your teeth into, starting with the away game at Northampton next Saturday.

Unfortunately, there simply hasn't been enough support to run a coach on this occasion, so the proposed one has been cancelled. Pity, but there are special circumstances, notably the South West v. Midlands match at Kingsholm on the same day. That's obviously a big rival attraction in itself, and could also involve leading players from both Gloucester and the Saints.

Tickets for the Divisional game are available from the office right now. They cost £8.50 for the stand, reduced to £5.00 for OAP's and Juniors, while you can get on the ground for £6.00 (£3.00 for the same concessions).

While on the subject, tickets for the other big Divisional attraction, South West v. Western Samoa at Kingsholm, on December 9th, are also available. That one's a bit more expensive, as befits the South West showpiece game of the year. Stand seats cost £12.00, with no concessions, while Ground tickets are £8.00; OAP's and Juniors, £4.00.

PLEASE NOTE, by the way, that kick-off for the Western Samoa game will be at 7.00pm, for reasons not unconnected with a certain satellite TV channel.

However, you shouldn't be misled by that into thinking that United and/or the Under 21's will be slipping in to play at Kingsholm during the afternoon. Hopefully, they'll both be at Oxstalls. Not only do they not want to damage the pitch before the big game, but CIS and the South West authorities take over the whole ground for the day, so there would be nowhere for our lads to change, not to mention eat and drink.

BATH

The first League game after the break is the visit of Bath on December 30th. Obviously, that is going to be quite an occasion, even by the standards of Gloucester v. Bath matches at Kingsholm.

I can Now Reveal, as they say, that, kick-off for that game will be at 2.15, because Sky Sports are covering the game, their first visit to Kingsholm this season. That adds even more spice to the occasion, if any were needed. Wouldn't it be nice if we could spring a surprise!

This is an 'ordinary' (it says here) League fixture, so you can use your Season Ticket, or pay at the gate as usual, but purely to minimise congestion at the turnstiles, tickets, for both Ground and Wing Stand are available from the office. Might be worth getting yours in advance.

GOLDEN GAMBLE

Could well be worth having the odd flutter on the Golden Gamble this evening. The crowd at last Tuesday's Cheltenham game was pretty minimal, due largely to the filthy weather we endured just as people were setting out from home. The decision was made, therefore, to hold over the Golden Gamble draw until this evening, just so some lucky soul would have a worthwhile payout. Obviously, all tickets sold on Tuesday will go into tonight's draw. Best of luck!

WELL DONE THE LADS!

Best of luck, too to Ian Smith on his appearance for Scotland tomorrow afternoon. And similar congratulations and good wishes to the boys who turn out for the South West against the North on Sunday.

I suppose pride of place must go to Phil Greening, who makes his first appearance at hooker at Divisional level. It's nice to see his progress continuing in this way, and it's a significant milestone in his career.

But I'm not forgetting Pete Glanville, who has done very well to force himself into the reckoning in a position where the competition is very fierce indeed, and to skipper Dave Sims and winger Paul Holford, who both richly deserve their inclusion.

TAILPIECE

I don't often quote soccer stories in these pages, but I was tickled by the answers which an earnest young TV interviewer received from people associated with the Canvey Island side which took on second-division Brighton in the FA Cup, just recently.

First of all, the Captain responded with a nonchalant, "We're just a drinking side!", which flummoxed the interviewer somewhat. Then the club manager announced "The lads are all on a £50,000 win bonus if we win the FA Cup."

Obviously not recognising a wind-up when he heard it, the interviewer then asked if that were really on. "Oh, no!" came the answer. "If it were, they wouldn't be on the bonus!"

I wholeheartedly approved of the attitude. If nothing else, it proves that you can be professional, and still have a sense of humour.

How Damian Cummins Sees



They say that the onlooker sees most of the game, but there are circumstances in which he doesn't want to. Take the case of the highly talented Damian Cummins, for example. He's been sitting on the sidelines through injury for the whole of last season, and most of this. I have the word of no less an authority than his Lady Wife that he's a 'dreadful invalid, and has been like 'a bear with a sore head', (her words, not mine), at not being able to get back on the field.

But it has given him time to do some thinking, and I thought it would be interesting to see how a chap in his situation views the current situation.



DAMIAN CUMMINS, sidelined through injury, but hoping to be back in the near future.

WILL MONEY BE AN INCENTIVE?

Whatever people say, unfortunately money does make the world go round! The big question is will it effect the performance of the Gloucester side, to keep us in the first division next year. The answer is unquestionably yes it will affect the performances and hopefully in time to keep us up!


Of course, players of yesteryear and today have, and do, play the game for the pride of the club and the city for that matter, but when there is an extra incentive at the end, psychologically, players performances will improve.


This year the side have lost a number of league games by one score, only beaten convincingly by Bath and Orrell away. Whatever people may suggest about the club dropping to the second division, and not being good enough, only look at the Saracens v Leicester result. In the first division, there is not a lot of difference between the sides. What we are lacking is that finishing touch, and that elusive 10-15 minutes in a game where it usually turns against us.

Motivation to win, and win well is a major part of this game and we will see if money is the answer. Players should train more due to these incentives, and subsequently compete harder and practice more, which will certainly improve performance.

If a win bonus is introduced for league and cup games and we win, the positive reinforcement can only be good for the club and hopefully lead to the "winning way" again. Will Gloucester go down this year? No! However, an optimistic betting man, from the city would put his money on the last league match Saracens at home! Lets hope it doesn't go that far.


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GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Gloucester Rugby Club use

GILBERT MATCH BALLS

GLOUCESTER (Cherry/White)

15.	Gareth Fenwick
14.	Mike Lloyd
13.	Cass Hannaford
12.	Jerry Perrins
11.	Tom Beim
10.	Martyn Kimber
9.	Bruce Fenley
8.	Colin Gibson
7.	Rob York
6.	Andy Stanley †
5.	Rob Fidler
4.	Mark Cornwell
3.	Andy Deacon
2.	Hilton Brown
1.	Tony Windo

Replacements:

James Broady	7-0
John Hawker	7-3
Paul Salter	14-3
Greg Keyse	21-3
	28-3
	31-3
	42-3
	42-10

NEW SCOREBOARDS

Unfortunately Installation at present on the scoreboards has not been completed. We have two more which are currently being manufactured. When installed everyone in the ground will have a clear view. We will be using the system at the moment for experimental purposes only.

BEDFORD (Blue/Cerise)

19.13.	Marcus Cook
14.	Giles Witheat
13.	Paul Allen
12.	Mathew Oliver
11.	Mark Redrup
10.	Ashley Tapper
9.	Mark Sharp
8.	Paul Alston †
7.	Jim Chandler
6.	Mathew Wright
5.	Ross Thomson
4.	Karl Simpson
3.	Singh Basra
2.	Mark Sharp
1.	Pete Garrett

Replacements:

Ben Hyde	49-10
Matt Roach	49-15
Trevor Howard	56-15
	63-15

Referee: Tom Ashworth
London Society

Touch Judges:

† = Captain

SPANNERS SPIEL

First of all I must congratulate the United Boys who worked so hard to earn their first team call ups at Sale. They have all been putting in extra work this last month, and fully deserved their chance to perform in Division One.

Ideally it would have been nice to have introduced them more individually and gradually into a winning environment at the top, but unfortunately life is not that straightforward. So today they stake their claim en bloc, and hopefully will take their United form and success with them. We all wish them and the team well today — **GOOD LUCK BOYS!**

Onto the visit of the northerners second team. With the United regulars moving up to the first team, we are a new look United with the inclusion of **Martin Kimber, Tony Windo, Johnny Hawker, Rob Fidler** and, last year's skipper, **Andy Deacon** who all found United training to be just as intense as the 1st XV build ups to big games, I'm sure that they will easily adjust to the free-flowing style which we have developed over the past month without the pressures of Courage league rugby. **Mark Nicholson** also returns after a short spell away and brings pace and experience in on the wing. A new name in the United side is that of **Herbert Conradie** who joins us from Cape Town in South Africa. He has played his rugby for Stellenbosch and Bellville, and could be with us till the end of the season while on a working vacation at Hartpury College.

Welcome Herbert hier in Gloucester en ons hoop dat alles goed gaan vir jou.

Dave Spencer, United Coach

Ed Martin ...

Oh that the headline of the Citizen Football Final just 70 years ago were true today. The match report for Saturday November 14, 1925 was headlined: "GLOUCESTER'S FIRST HOME DEFEAT". If it were, then Gloucester would have a further eight Courage points!

But back to reality - and 1925. It was Devonport Services who snapped Gloucester's undefeated home stand that went back to January. After a 13-11 defeat by Swansea early in the year, Gloucester went unbeaten for 15 consecutive games at Kingsholm. And scalps claimed included Cardiff (8-6), Llanelli (8-5), Newport (8-0), London Welsh (40-8) and Swansea (15-14) - the Swansea win coming the week before Devonport Services' visit. Alas, this was not a "winning streak" as there was a tied encounter with Cardiff (8-8) in October.

The very first visited by Devonport Services to Kingsholm was in 1921, with Gloucester winning 32-3. Then came the run of three wins by the service team from Plymouth. The 9-0 win by Devonport in 1925 set Bill Bailey's quill going...

Devonport Services may well consider Kingsholm one of their lucky grounds, for today's victory was the third in succession gained by the visitors, Bailey wrote in the Citizen. I cannot recall any English Club having previously accomplished such a feat, and the Services can take full credit for a remarkable achievement.

The Services captain M.A.A. Luddington kicked a penalty to give the visitors a 3-0 edge at halftime. Sub Lt. Lee, playing at centre, ran-in for an unconverted try and in the final minutes the other centre, A.B. Knapman, also scored an unconverted try.

One interesting aspect of the November 14 issue is that the fixtures for the following season were announced. *A very interesting programme has been arranged by the Secretary (Mr. A. Hudson) Bailey wrote. A total of 39 matches will be played, and of these 23 will be decided at Kingsholm.*

There was also a preview of the following week's game - a visit to Kingsholm by Newport. In the six seasons following the end of the World War One, each team had claimed three wins each at the annual encounter at Kingsholm, in those days one of the top matches of the season. The previous three confrontations had been won by no more than four points - and a close encounter was expected in the 1925 fixture.

Alas, what was not known then was the result of the Devonport Services match was the start of a four-game losing streak at Kingsholm, Gloucester also falling to Newport (3-17), Cheltenham (6-7) and Harlequins (10-14 - the 'Quins first-ever win at Kingsholm) before mending their ways with a 39-10 win on Boxing Day against OMTs.



*Teamtalk during a break in action at the Harlequins match
(photo: Tony Hickey)*