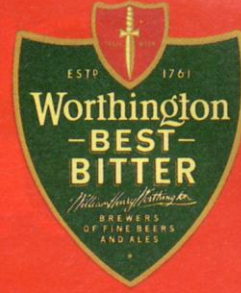




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Welcome
to
Kingsholm



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GLOUCESTER

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

v

LYDNEY

MONDAY DECEMBER 27th, 1993

KICK OFF 2.15 pm



Official Programme
£1.00

Peter Arnold

You should have been here last year!

Why, what happened? Absolutely nothing, that's what. You may recall that the Weather Man, while, I suppose, acting seasonally, did rather overdo it with the result that we were deprived of one of the most fondly anticipated features of the Kingsholm season.

Although the Boxing Day game against Lydney is one of a string of traditional games played up and down the country at this time of the year, it has never quite been just a holiday kick about. Sometimes the demands of the Festive Season have produced some fairly eccentric sides, but the long tradition of local pride has always ensured that there is a vein of seriousness about the occasion. It goes without saying that Lydney always dearly love to beat Gloucester, and that Gloucester aren't going to let that happen if they can help it. Santa Claus has never devalued the 'Glos.' v. 'Lyd' match.

This year we could well find that factor even more significant than usual. Not only has there been a two-year gap between fixtures, but to a reasonably sporadic observer of Lydney's fortunes, our respected neighbours appear to be having their most successful season for years. They could well achieve promotion this season, and all of us at Kingsholm will be wishing them well in that endeavour. Everyone who has come up against the Severnside club this time round has found them a handful, and there's no reason to think that things will be different today.

Briefly. Lydney are on a roll, and it will take a bit of stopping.

Be that as it may, we welcome them to Kingsholm today, hope they have a thoroughly enjoyable visit, and wish them all they would wish themselves in the New Year.

PUTTING US IN THE PICTURE

As you probably know, the 'Citizen' are sponsoring today's game and among other efforts, have run a competition to provide the Match Mascot. We've also persuaded them to

make the occasion more festive by supplying us with the photographs which you will find scattered throughout today's programme.

The captions to each picture have been written by Katie Coker, still, so far as we know, the only official newspaper rugby correspondent of the female persuasion.

We're very grateful for their help in this way, which we gladly acknowledge, and for the comprehensive coverage which the 'Citizen' give us match in, match out, and season after season.



Winger Paul Holford. This time last season he had not played a single Courage League game for Gloucester, but now he is not only a first team regular, he has also played for the South West and the England Emerging Players side. Holford's natural talent has impressed everyone who sees him play - just ask the New Zealanders how it felt to be tackled by him!
Photo: The Citizen

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HARDER**



WISHES GLOUCESTER R.F.C ALL THE
BEST FOR THE 1992/1993 SEASON
AND WELCOMES ITS GUESTS
TO KINGSHOLM

Peter Arnold cont.

MUSTN'T PLAY FAVOURITES

It wouldn't be right to thank our local daily newspaper without similarly acknowledging the coverage we receive from other media, including Central South TV and HTV. We're also grateful to BBC Radio Gloucestershire, coupled with the name of (as they say on the toast lists) John Hawkins, and Severn Sound.

(I have to give the latter a mention or Archie Hartshorne will thump me.)

GORDON HUDSON

It's said to have to record the death of a Kingsholm stalwart at this time of the year, and particularly so when the passing is that of such a legend of Gloucester RFC as Gordon Hudson. His achievements on the field, right up to international level, are too well known for me to detail here, and have in any case been recorded more than adequately elsewhere. I shall, therefore indulge myself with a highly personal account of a man whose friendship I valued, and who I admired more than most.

I'm certainly by no means unique when I recall that my first contact with Gordon was as quite a small boy, patronising the famous shop on the corner of St. Aldate Street, until the advent of Bill Hook's store in Westgate Street, the only specialist sports shop in the City.*

Gordon sold me my first decent table tennis bat, my first cricket bat, my first tennis racquet and or course, my first pair of rugby boots, not to

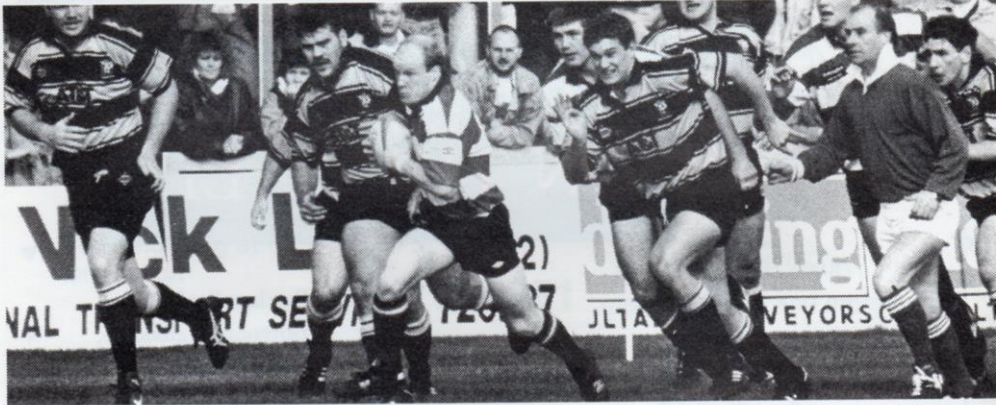
mention a whole host of sundries, including my first Staunton pattern chess set, which is still in the family. We always seemed to be in his shop on Saturday morning, if only to have a look round. Gordon didn't mind, partly I think, because he was an Old Cryptian and we were all wearing the maroon blazer. There must be hundreds of people around Gloucester who could make similar claims.

Years later, it was Gordon Hudson as Chairman of Gloucester RFC, who installed me as Programme Write, which you may or may not regard as a wise decision. In typical Hudson fashion, it was accomplished quietly over a pint in the Clubhouse, and nothing was ever put in writing. To this day, Peter Ford consistently tells me "We never appointed you, so we can't sack you!"

The passing of Gordon Hudson isn't just a sad occasion, it's the end of an era. His father, the great Arthur Hudson, had just as distinguished a career, on and off the field, as Gordon. While Hudson Junior never had a full England Cap, his father never played for the Barbarians, so the balance is level. Arthur played for England as long ago as 1906, so the Hudson connection at Kingsholm spans virtually a century.

Now that has ended, and we are all the poorer for it. Gordon was both a gentleman and a gentle man, and we shall feel his absence keenly. Our sincere sympathies go out to his children, John and Jane, and to his four grandchildren.

**Yes, I know there was Fletcher's, but they sold other things too.*



Scrum-half Bruce Fenley (third left) makes a break for Gloucester. Fenley - who played youth rugby in Gloucestershire - joined Gloucester at the end of last season after a spell with Moseley. He broke into the first team as soon as his transfer qualification period was over, and he is winning many friends at the club with his entertaining play. Photo: The Citizen

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ENDING ON A HIGH NOTE

It's nice to be able to finish my efforts for 1993 on a cheerful note. We've won our last three League games after having been written off by quite a few pundits. We've set the record straight as far as Nottingham is concerned, and progressed in the Pilkington Cup in the process.

Paul Holford, Dave Slms and Richard West have won places in the deciding Divisional Championship game against London next week, and richly deserve their inclusion. The United keep on keeping on, and so do the U21's.

Roll on 1994!

Gloucester prop Andy Deacon (front right), who has come into terrific form as the season has progressed. He is now the first choice tighthead at Gloucester, with more than 60 first team appearances to his name, and at the age of 28 he has many good years still to come.

Photo: The Citizen



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Peter Arnold cont.

WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND

Well, well, well! Wouldn't you know it! After the drama of November 20th, it's Northampton again in the Cup on January 22nd. But at least it's a home draw.

CITIZEN BOY

As mentioned earlier, the "Citizen" has run a draw to provide our Match Mascot today. The name which came out of Terry Phillips' natty deerstalker was that of Thomas Davis.

Young Tom comes from Rodborough, and his Mum, Claire, describes him as "Gloucester's No. 1 fan." There's some justification for that too; many of us can claim to have been coming to Kingsholm for half our lives, but I doubt if we could have said so when we were just six years old. Obviously a circumstance for which we can thank Brian, who is Thomas's Dad.

When he's not at Kingsholm, Thomas is into judo. At other times he's keen on drawing, watching cartoons and often has his nose stuck in a book.



Lock forward and now temporary number eight Dave Sims is having a storming season. His high standard of play for Gloucester earned him a place in the South West Divisional squad and from there he stepped up to England A and was called in to deputise for the injured Alex Snow in the England Emerging Players match. His is in such good form that he took a temporary change of position to number eight in his stride with ease and he has put himself very much in the reckoning for one of the England lock forwards' places.

Photo: The Citizen

Good on you Thomas. Try boning up on the Laws of Rugby. They may come in handy the next time you run out at Kingsholm.



Ashley Johnson, Gloucester's new fly-half has formed a new-look half-back partnership with Bruch Fenley. Johnson also arrived at Kingsholm during the summer and has made a good impression, moving swiftly up into the first team. Johnson plays for the RAF and the Combined Services.

Photo: The Citizen

TAILPIECE

You may recall that I had occasion, a week or two ago, to mention Frank Lewis, genial host of the 'Court yard' in Eastgate Street. In that piece I wrote 'If you don't know Frankie, imagine a Gloucester version of Tuigamala and you won't be far wrong.'

Frank took issue with me on that. "I may look like Tuigamala," quoth he, "but I played like David Campese!"

HAVE A GREAT 1994, EVERYONE.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR.



Ed Martin — IN PERSPECTIVE

Back in the early Fifties, the record number of wins that Gloucester had posted in a single season was 29 — set in 1937-8 from 36 matches played (81.94 per cent winning record) and equalled in 1947-8 which saw 40 matches played (73.74 per cent). Prior to that, the record was 27 wins in the 1898-9 season from 34 matches (80.88 per cent) and equalled in 1933-4 after 37 matches (75.68 per cent).

In 1951, Gloucester went into their traditional match with the Old Merchant Taylors with 13 wins and three draws from their 18 matches. And with the 12-6 win against OMT's, the goal of breaking the record was very much on — 16 wins were needed and there were 25 matches remaining on the fixture card.

Five wins were added by the beginning of February and by the end of March things were looking somewhat dodgy as only three more victories were recorded. Eight wins were needed, but there were only nine fixtures remaining.

Harlequins, Cheltenham, London Welsh and Bradford all visited Kingsholm in a four-game home stand. And all four opponents were seen off by an aggregate 68-13.

The fixture list was rather crowded — it was Easter, Cheltenham visited on Thursday April 10, on Saturday came London Welsh, with the Bradford match the Bank Holiday Monday match.

Then there was the little matter of a visit to Regentsholme on Tuesday April 15 along with more than 2,000 spectators . . .

"Still hoping to set up a record number of victories this season, Gloucester suffered a severe setback yesterday evening when a fighting Lydney fifteen defeated them 10pts-5 at Regentsholme," wrote Brian Gilshenan in the Wednesday edition of the Citizen.

"It was an exceedingly hard game in which the exchanges sometimes became heated, but although the standard of rugby was seldom very high, excitement was maintained right to the end. On the run of play, Lydney merited their win . . . (their) pack, with Miles always outstanding in the loose, held the formidable Gloucester eight in a manner which must have exceeded their supporters' widest hopes. And tackling like demons, the Severnsiders just would not give the visitors' backs any rope at all . . ."

In the "excuses" department, Gloucester were without most of their regular backs (Gordon Hudson played at centre) and Lydney did have a guest in "Nim" Hall, the England captain.

"Lydney," Gilshenan reported *"forged ahead within ten minutes of the start when Betterton gained possession from a line-out and charged over for a try about halfway out. Hall put the ball plumb between the posts and Lydney were five points up."*

Within minutes, Gloucester had levelled the score — Charlie Crabtree scored after following-up a Hudson kick ahead and Trevor Halls converted. As half time approached, the match was deadlocked at five points each.

Both sides *"then went at it hammer and tongs and Lydney drew ahead again . . . This time Miles was quick to snap up a loose ball, when it cannoned off a player not far out from the Gloucester line, and dived over for a try wide out. Hall's conversion was a beauty,"* Gilshenan remarked.

Although there was no further scoring, the second half was a thriller. Gloucester came close to breaching the Lydney line on many occasions. But the home side defended superbly and were rewarded with the win.

For Gloucester, the loss meant that they had to win all of their four remaining matches — including the final home game against Llanelli. The Welsh were dispatched 8-5 and all hinged on a three-match tour of Cornwall and Devon — a tour that had to be taken seriously! At the County Ground, Exeter were beaten 13-8, then two days later Gloucester squeezed home 8-6 at Penzance and Newlyn thanks to a late Bob Hodge try.

The record was tied. And on Gloucester went to Teignmouth who were trounced 19-3. A new record of 30 wins was posted in the final match of the season that is also remembered as the Diamond Jubilee of Kingsholm.

The current record for the number of wins in a season is 41, recorded in the 48-match 1981-2 season. This equates to an 89.58 per cent winning record — itself a club record just ahead of the 89.29 per cent mark of 1882-3. Gloucester's sole unbeaten season.

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