

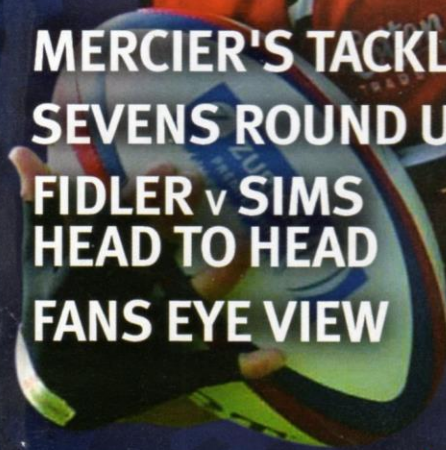
# Gloucester

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



**CHERRY**  
**CHRISTMAS!**

**MERCIER'S TACKLE**  
**SEVENS ROUND UP**  
**FIDLER v SIMS**  
**HEAD TO HEAD**  
**FANS EYE VIEW**



**vs Exeter Chiefs**

POWERGEN CUP FIXTURE  
SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2002  
KICK-OFF 3.00PM

**Baan** Club Sponsor  
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## NIGEL'S NOTES...

### Nigel Melville

Director of Rugby

Welcome to Kingsholm for our opening game in this season's Powergen Cup against Exeter Chiefs and our final home game of 2002.

The National Knock-out Cup continues to be one of the highlights of our season, it's a very simple, successful and proven formula for running a competition, no bonus points, try counts or home and away fixtures – just simply win or your out. Another unique quality of the Powergen Cup is the fact that all the National Leagues are included, the opportunity for the smaller Clubs to test themselves against the 'big guns' and also an opportunity to bring in much needed revenue.

Our guests this afternoon are well known to us, they certainly can't be described as minnows, sitting just three places below Newcastle in the National Leagues. Exeter Chiefs have been one of the most consistent First Division sides in recent seasons and possibly the only team actually putting the squeeze on Rotherham and Worcester. I hope that their players, management, coaches and supporters enjoy there day at Kingsholm this afternoon.

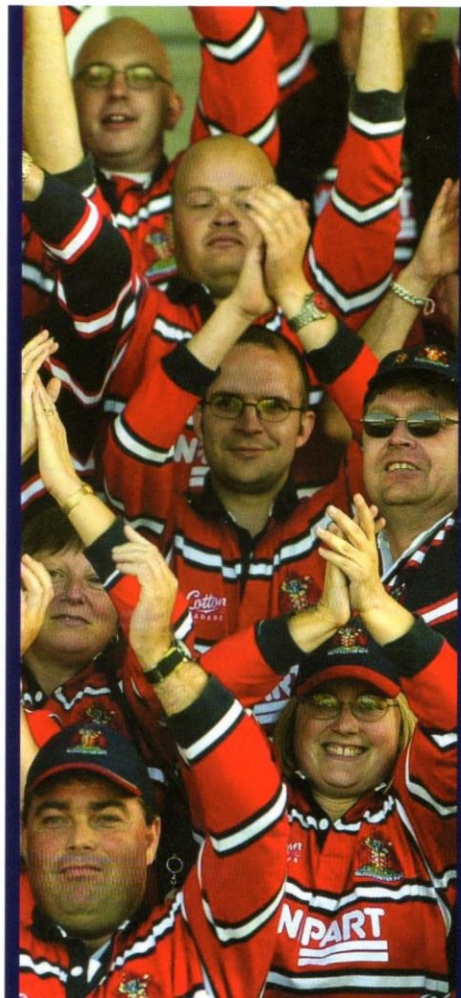
**“MY NOTES WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE THIS WEEK WITHOUT MENTIONING THE TRAVELLING SUPPORT WHO DID EVERYTHING THEY POSSIBLY COULD TO LIFT THE TEAM LAST WEEKEND”.**

Last week it couldn't have been more different, it was the South of France and another round of the Heineken Cup. The second leg away to Perpignan was always going to be difficult and so it proved! Take away the intimidating atmosphere and a number of other issues that hampered our preparation, we started poorly and only really got

going in the final stages of the match. Had we not gifted them relatively soft tries either side of the break the story would have been different, however, the two late tries scored will now play a crucial role in deciding our fate. Two more wins and there is a chance of playing Munster or Perpignan at home in the quarter final!

My notes would not be complete this week without mentioning the travelling support who did everything they possibly could to lift the team last weekend. On the day we didn't play well, but you were behind the team all the way. Those final two tries that may keep our European Cup dreams alive are undoubtedly down to our shared 'never say die' attitude. There will be even greater tests ahead this season, together I am convinced we can climb to greater heights.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas on behalf of all the players, coaches and management. ■





## CAPTAIN'S CORNER

### Terry Fanolua

Match Captain

Good afternoon to everyone and welcome to Kingsholm today. I would like to begin by saying what an honour and a privilege it is to have been asked to captain the side out here today.

Once I have done the job of leading the side out of the tunnel though, as far as I am concerned it will be business as usual. I am sure people will expect a different Terry Fanolua today, I admit that it has been a bit of a culture shock in training this week, but for me being captain will be about doing my job on the field nothing else.

As well as a change in captain, there have been some changes to the team for today's match, it will be a chance for guys who have been on the fringe of the squad to have a start and put their hands up for more rugby. They are all hungry and will all have a point to prove.

**"WITHOUT A DOUBT THE POWERGEN CUP IS STILL A BIG COMPETITION. IT IS A COMPETITION THAT EVERYONE WANTS TO WIN, US INCLUDED, SO WE ARE TAKING TODAY'S GAME VERY SERIOUSLY INDEED".**

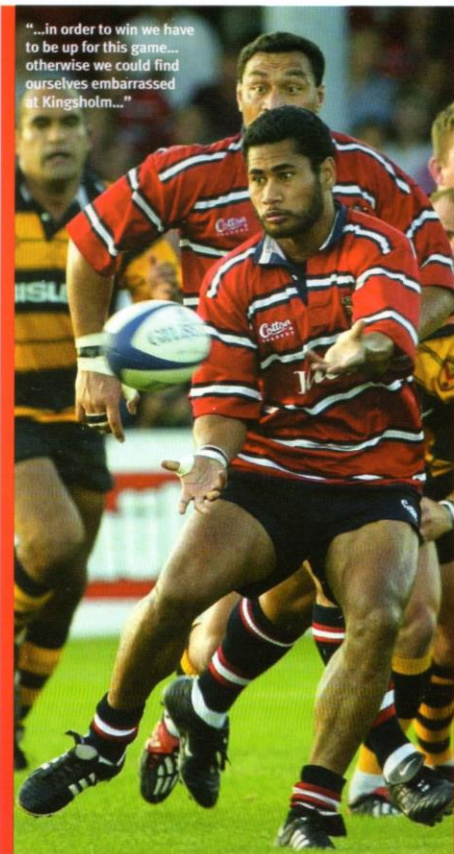
These changes though wont mean a change in the way we approach the game, or in the way we expect to play. This is another important game of rugby, we have set our standards this season and the guys coming in will be expected to perform to those standards, lets not forget these are not inexperienced guys, we have real quality in this squad.

Without a doubt the Powergen Cup is still a big competition. It is a competition that everyone wants to win, us included, so we are taking today's game very seriously indeed. It is a very special Cup competition and there is no point in playing if you don't try to win. We all want to be involved in it and all want the chance to play at Twickenham.

Our opponents Exeter will travel here today, basically with nothing to lose. They will have their chance against a Premiership side and will be up for this game. Lets not forget Exeter are not a bad side, so in order to win we have to be up for this game as well, otherwise we could find ourselves embarrassed at Kingsholm, I for one wont let that happen.

We are approaching a crucial stage in our season. After this weekend we travel to Northampton and then play Wasps in the Premiership, after that we have two massive, must-win games in the Heineken Cup. We want all our squad to be fit and hungry for these challenges, which is why today's game is so important. We want to use it as a platform for the next phase in our season.

**Enjoy the game and Merry Christmas. ■**





## RUGBY ROUNDUP

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### ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS MY TWO FRONT ROWS!

As Gloucester entered the festive period Nigel Melville's Christmas list, amongst other things, will have asked for much needed front row cover for his squad.

Last week, London Wasps prop Darren Molloy completed a deal that saw him begin a loan period, initially for four months until March 2003, with the Cherry and Whites.

Gloucester will then have an option of renewing the loan on a one-month rolling basis until the end of May 2003.

Molloy arrived at Gloucester on Wednesday 11th December as his new team mates were preparing for a crucial Heineken Cup Pool game away at Perpignan. - and immediately set his sights on a long-term contract.

No sooner had he been unveiled at Kingsholm and introduced to the Gloucester squad than the Wasps loosehead was signalling his intention to impress director of rugby Nigel Melville enough in his four-month stay to earn an extended stay at Kingsholm.

Gloucester finally got their man when Wasps agreed to release Molloy from Adams Park to ease Gloucester's front row shortage that has deprived them of Trevor Woodman and Chris Fortey.

"It is a great opportunity for me and I would like to think I could help the team and then hopefully it could be a longer term situation," said Molloy.

"If I could convince Nigel, he might want to sign me for another year or two.

"With the situation at Wasps, Warren [Gatland] has come in and has his own ideas and players he wants to bring in. I have got an opportunity to prove myself at another club.

"I have been at Wasps for a long time - 12 years - and when Nigel rang me up I could not believe it. I was shocked at first but when it sunk in, it was amazing and is a great opportunity.

"I worked with Nigel for six or seven years and I respect the way he coaches.

"Gloucester have a great tradition of props and I like the way they are playing rugby.

"With the way they have played this year, who would not want to join.

Darren played his first game for London Wasps at the age of 19 and was part of the 1996/1997 Cup Winning team. After good performances for the club he was rewarded with a call-up to the Ireland A team tour to New Zealand in 1998. He was then selected for the England A squad tour to France.

During this time Players were eligible for dual selection and Molloy was one of the last players to have played for two countries at A team level.

Also rejoining Gloucester this month is former Gloucester Colt, Chris Collins. Fresh from varsity match success with Cambridge, Collins has been drafted into the Gloucester 1st team squad as hooking cover.

Whilst Molloy, who has featured in Wasps European campaign earlier this season, had to sit out Gloucester's trip to Perpignan last weekend, Collins was pressed into immediate action after being named in Gloucester's initial Heineken Cup squad.

Molloy though will get his chance this weekend.

"Darren is someone who will give us options and he is a good team man," Melville said.

"He is a solid old pro and is the sort of guy who really puts the work in. The lads already have a lot of respect for him because they have played against him. Darren has got great experience and is a solid man - there is an edge to him as well".

"We have signed him for four months to cover the period we need him for and then we will see how it goes after that."

Gloucester  
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



# GLOUCESTER

## SQUAD 2002/03



**Position:** Halfback  
**DoB:** 25.04.79  
**Height:** 169 cm  
**Weight:** 72 kg  
**Previous Club:** Cambridge University  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England 7's

### Simon Amor

The graduate in Management Studies has joined Gloucester to provide essential cover at both half-back positions. Amor made a name for himself last season by being the only non-contracted player to play regularly in the England 7's squad. He was a member of the squad that triumphed in Hong Kong, where he contributed 13 points, including a solo try, in the final, and is part of the Commonwealth games squad.



**Position:** Hooker/Prop  
**DoB:** 21.10.74  
**Height:** 187 cm  
**Weight:** 117 kg  
**Previous Club:** Montferand  
**Int'** France,  
**Honours:** France (A)

### Olivier Azam

Strong French forward who enjoys the game's physical nature. Can play comfortably in any of the front row positions. One of Azam's greatest assets is his strength in the loose. He is a recognised ball carrier who makes the hard yards. Became an instant favourite with the fans with his 100% commitment to the Gloucester cause, but has learnt in recent months how to curb his competitive streak.



**Position:** Wing  
**DoB:** 11.12.76  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 86.6 kg  
**Previous Club:** Sale  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England

### Tom Beim

Beim endured another season of injury heartbreak as he was sidelined for 11 months after a shoulder operation. His determination got him back to match fitness a month earlier than expected and he made a come back against Wasps in April 2002. Such was his end of season form that he claimed a place on England's summer tour to Argentina.



**Position:** Flanker  
**DoB:** 01.11.75  
**Height:** 187 cm  
**Weight:** 103.4 kg  
**Previous Club:** London Irish  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** -

### Jake Boer

Joined Gloucester after being named London Irish's player of the season 99/00. Bullocking South African who took a while to settle but has since earned the respect of players and fans alike with his honesty and commitment to the Gloucester cause. His desire to win gets him in to situations that are over and above the call of duty as his never-say-die attitude wins through. Strong tackler who works tirelessly in the loose.



**Position:** Back Row  
**DoB:** 21.08.78  
**Height:** 193 cm  
**Weight:** 108 kg  
**Previous Club:** Newport  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England A

### Peter Buxton

After chasing his man for some time Nigel Melville was very pleased to announce Buxton as the first of his summer signings. Can play either blind side or number eight. Started his career at Cheltenham before moving to Moseley. After a successful spell there, he moved to Welsh side Newport and was an ever present in the Heineken Cup for the Welsh side last season. Buxton was also called up for the England A Six Nations Squad this season.



**Position:** Full Back  
**DoB:** 17.06.76  
**Height:** 187 cm  
**Weight:** 90 kg  
**Previous Club:** Exeter  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England (A)

### Chris Catling

The supporter's player of the year in 2000-01, Catling missed much of last season with a shoulder injury sustained whilst scoring a try in the Premiership at home to Bristol in November. He has fought his way back to fitness and remains one of the Premiership's most devastating strike runners in attack and his defence is second to none. Very safe under the high ball and is a fearless tackler.



**Position:** Lock  
**DoB:** 22.03.73  
**Height:** 201 cm  
**Weight:** 110 kg  
**Previous Club:** Old Richians  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England A

## Mark Cornwell

Local boy who came up through the junior ranks. Last season 'Pasty' played some of the best rugby of his Gloucester career and played his way back into international contention until a broken wrist against Bath in May ended his season. Gloucester will, once again, look to the giant lock to secure lineout possession and help lead the younger players.



**Position:** Prop  
**DoB:** 01.01.82  
**Height:** 182 cm  
**Weight:** 111 kg  
**Previous GRFC Club:** Academy  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** -

## Nick Cox

Joined Gloucester after starring for the England U18 group. Because of his size and strength, Nick's promise was identified early and he made the break through into the first team against Roma in the Heineken Cup in 2000-01. Has had little 1st team exposure in recent times but was still good enough to gain selection for the England U21's SANZAR tour this summer.



**Position:** Prop  
**DoB:** 31.7.65  
**Height:** 188 cm  
**Weight:** 108 kg  
**Previous Club:** Longlevens  
**Int'** England A,  
**Honours:** Barbarians

## Andy Deacon

Former drayman, who was the first Gloucester player to receive a Testimonial year. Few players have made the transition from amateur to professional status so successfully and Deacon admits to being fitter than ever. Signed another one year extension to his contract and will provide excellent support and experience in the front row in his fifteenth season with the Club.



**Position:** Fullback / Wing  
**DoB:** 02.02.75  
**Height:** 188 cm  
**Weight:** 98 kg  
**Previous Club:** Sharks  
**Int'** South Africa  
**Honours:** 12 caps

## Thinus Delpoort

Twelve times capped Springbok with blistering pace and powerful running ability. He scored a staggering 20 tries in 22 matches for the Lions under Laurie Mains. At the beginning of this season's Super 12 series before moving across to the Sharks, Thinus Delpoort had achieved more caps (38) for the Golden Cats (Super 12), than any other player. He had also represented the Golden Lions provisional side 63 times scoring 47 tries.



**Position:** Lock  
**DoB:** 09.01.79  
**Height:** 196 cm  
**Weight:** 102 kg  
**Previous Widdien Club:** Old Boys  
**Int'** Eng A, U19,  
**Honours:** U21

## Adam Eustace

Former Colt who is one of the new breed of strong, mobile, second rows. Moved from the back row to his new position so successfully he was invited to join up with the English development squad last season. Was enjoying a great start to last season until he cruelly broke his leg against Ebbw Vale in the Parker Pen Shield. He has returned fitter and stronger and is keen to make a big impact this season.



**Position:** Centre  
**DoB:** 03.07.74  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 87 kg  
**Previous Auckland Club:** Otahuhu  
**Int'** Manu  
**Honours:** Samoa

## Terry Fanolua

One of the cult figures of the Gloucester side. He shaved off his distinctive dreadlocks after the Championship final at Twickenham, but has retained his hunger for the game. As distinctive as his appearance was his commitment in the tackle. Has played in every position in the Gloucester back line except scrum-half although prefers a role at centre. He seemed to enjoy a resurgence in form at the end of last season.



**Position:** Lock  
**DoB:** 21.09.74  
**Height:** 196 cm  
**Weight:** 112.5 kg  
**Previous Club:** Cheltenham  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England

## Rob Fidler

Excellent number two jumper who has started to come of age in the last two seasons. Gloucester look to the ever dependable Fidler to continue his great work in the line out and in the tight as he admits to doing much of the donkey-work during a game. His form was consistent enough last season to gain selection on the England tour to Argentina this summer.



**Position:** No.8  
**DoB:** 09.02.81  
**Height:** 195 cm  
**Weight:** 98.4 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bicester  
**Int'** Eng A, Eng  
**Honours:** U21, Eng 7  
 Eng v  
 Barbarians

## James Forrester

Enjoyed many highlights last year including an England sevens cap and a try for England against the Barbarians last June. A tall, agile player who can play in any of the positions in the back row. James is an excellent ball handler who can provide the essential link between forwards and backs. Has shown he is more than capable this season, and has a great knack of scoring tries.



**Position:** Hooker  
**DoB:** 25.08.75  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 106 kg  
**Previous Gordon Club:** League  
**Int'** England A,  
**Honours:** Eng Tour  
 Squad 2001

## Chris Fortey

Local born hooker who continues to make the grade at first team level. His consistency last year undoubtedly helped Gloucester in the set piece. Has an excellent command of the basic hooking skills and his accuracy and tireless work will be a great asset, once again to the Cherry and Whites. As long as he and Azam stay fit, the competition to be the number one, number two will be intense.



**Position:** Wing / Scrum Half  
**DoB:** 23.02.80  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 90 kg  
**Previous:** GRFC  
**Club:** Academy  
**Int'** England Students  
**Honours:** Students

### Josh Frape

Josh's bid to make the break through was held up last season but judges say it will not be long. Has a unique ability to play at either scrum half, or because of searing pace, on the wing. His versatility will serve him well this year.



**Position:** Wing  
**DoB:** 21.04.83  
**Height:** 177 cm  
**Weight:** 80.3 kg  
**Previous:** Widdien  
**Club:** Old Boys  
**Int'** Eng U19,  
**Honours:** Eng Schools

### Marcel Garvey

A former U19 international whose power and pace belie his size. His greatest asset is his pace and has been described by many coaches as 'A natural try scorer'. He has made a huge try-scoring impact every time he has played this pre-season and recent form suggests that the best is yet to come from this former St Peter's schoolboy. Will provide extra competition out wide.



**Position:** Fly Half / Full Back  
**DoB:** 26/02/81  
**Height:** 186 cm  
**Weight:** 84 kg  
**Previous:** GRFC  
**Club:** Academy  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** Eng U21

### Jon Goodridge

Rangy Full Back who made his debut against 2000-01 against London Irish. Played his early rugby at Fly-Half but made the very successful switch whilst playing for the GRFC Academy. Is very strong in defence and under the high ball but also has the ability to counter attack effectively, given space. Toured with the England U21 to the SANZAR tournament this summer, but a shoulder injury



**Position:** Scrum Half  
**DoB:** 24.07.74  
**Height:** 177 cm  
**Weight:** 86.2 kg  
**Previous:** Bedford  
**Club:** Bedford  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England

### Andy Gomarsall

Joined Gloucester two seasons ago from relegated Bedford. In a dismal season for them he was a beacon of light and joined Gloucester to re-establish himself with the England selectors. Towards the end of last season he has recaptured his international form by going back to basics and toured Argentina as first choice for England last summer.



**Position:** Flanker  
**DoB:** 25.04.78  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 9.20 kg  
**Previous:** Gloucester  
**Club:** Old Boys  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England A

### Andy Hazell

Former Gloucester colt who, this season, will hold the mantle as Gloucester's senior open side. Last season was curtailed by a cruel knee injury but after six-months out he has returned fitter, stronger and a yard quicker. Needs match practice to get the full benefit of his training regime but hopes to make a big impression this season.



**Position:** Prop  
**DoB:** 25.08.81  
**Height:** 184 cm  
**Weight:** 101 kg  
**Previous:** Gloucester  
**Club:** Bridgwater  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** Eng U21

### Mark Irish

Former England U21 prop, who toured with the SANZAR squad this summer to South Africa. After impressing in the Club's U21 side, Irish signed professional terms this season and many are interested to see what effect a full season of training and coaching will improve this former Bridgwater player.



**Position:** Fly Half  
**DoB:** 01.11.76  
**Height:** 179 cm  
**Weight:** 85 kg  
**Previous:** Aurillac  
**Club:** Aurillac  
**Int'**  
**Honours:**

### Ludovic Mercier

Left footed French Fly-half who joined Gloucester from little known Aurillac with a glowing reputation. Finished as second highest point scorer in the Premiership and has topped 500 points in all competitions last season. Under the tutelage of Nigel Melville he has started to develop his running game to increase Gloucester's attacking options. Can turn defence into attack with one hefty blow.



**Position:** Centre  
**DoB:** 22.10.81  
**Height:** 184 cm  
**Weight:** 94 kg  
**Int'** Eng Students,  
**Honours:** Welsh School U18, Welsh Youth U18, Welsh U21 squad.

### Duncan Murray

The former Welsh Schools captain has continued to go from strength to strength. The culmination of a season of hard work, came when he made his 1st team debut against London Irish last year. Has a physical approach to the game and his willingness to fight for the hard yards when attacking and defending have certainly impressed. Reads the game well and can create space for those around him.



**Position:** Wing  
**DoB:** 27.06.73  
**Height:** 182 cm  
**Weight:** 91 kg  
**Previous:** Harlequins  
**Club:** Harlequins  
**Int'** England A, 7's,  
**Honours:** England U16, U18, England Students.

### Darren O'Leary

Described as a Rolls Royce of a winger, O'Leary's record speaks for itself. He remains the Premiership's all time top try scorer, proving that, not only can he score tries, but that he can do it consistently. He has lost none of his pace and his experience and nose for an opportunity make him still one of the game's most lethal finishers.



**Position:** Back Row  
**DoB:** 18.11.68  
**Height:** 199 cm  
**Weight:** 104 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bedford  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** Manu Samoa

## Junior Paramore

Talisman of the Gloucester pack. With a smile as broad as his shoulders Paramore remains one of the games most popular players. Converted from centre, he still binds the Gloucester pack in the tight and in the loose he remains one of the games strongest runners. Has aged well and continues as one of the elder statesmen of the side. Gloucester will look to Junior to utilise all his experience this season.



**Position:** Utility back  
**DoB:** 10.02.74  
**Height:** 180 cm  
**Weight:** 94.6 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bradford Bulls  
**Int'** Eng, Eng A  
**Honours:** Eng 7

## Henry Paul

Rugby League legend, who won almost every honour in the league game. Joined Gloucester at the end of last season's Super League competition. Enjoyed a prolific time with the England sevens squad at the end of last summer and his form this year suggest that Gloucester fans may be in for a treat. Has revelled since his move to full back as his counter attacking and kicking ability come to the fore.



**Position:** Back Row  
**DoB:** 02.09.75  
**Height:** 201 cm  
**Weight:** 118.5 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bath  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England A

## Ed Pearce

A giant of a man, who, after a season in the wilderness worked extremely hard last year and returned fitter and stronger than ever. Was determined to make an impact last year and has revelled in a new role of lock. Was rewarded with a place in the England squad for the tour match against the Barbarians and but for injury would have toured Argentina.



**Position:** Prop  
**DoB:** 16.02.77  
**Height:** 178 cm  
**Weight:** 108 kg  
**Previous Club:** Buenos Aires  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** Argentina

## Rodrigo Roncero

Dr Rodrigo Roncero is quickly developing a reputation as one of the most versatile props in international rugby. Equally at home on both sides of the scrum, Roncero has filled both tight head and loose head positions at international level. The Argentinian's technique in the scrum is exemplary, aided by his considerable strength, and his pace and tackling ability make him a formidable opponent in the loose game.



**Position:** Fly-half  
**DoB:** 30.05.82  
**Height:** 182 cm  
**Weight:** 78 kg  
**Previous Club:** GRFC Academy  
**Int'** England 7's,  
**Honours:** U21, U19,  
 England v  
 Barbarians

## James Simpson-Daniel

Joined GRFC Academy as an 18-year old. Last season, his rise was nothing short of meteoric. Became an integral part of the England Sevens squad, scoring a match winning hat trick in the final of the Hong Kong tournament. His performances throughout the season lead to selection in the non-cap international against the Barbarians, in which he scored the try of the match, rounding Jonah Lomu on his way to a touchdown by the corner flag.



**Position:** Scrum Half  
**DoB:** 17.05.83  
**Height:** 173 cm  
**Weight:** 80 kg  
**Previous Club:** GRFC Academy  
**Int'** Eng U19,  
**Honours:** Eng Schools.

## Clive Stuart-Smith

A local boy who signed professional terms last season. His strengths lie in his dedication to the arts of scrum-half play. His service is excellent and his box kicking and sniping at the base of the scrum have made him a formidable opponent. England U19 Captain, missed the FIRA World Cup through injury but fought back to fitness and earned a start against Newport. Nigel Melville is an admirer of the youngster and much is expected of him in the future.



**Position:** Centre  
**DoB:** 19.04.71  
**Height:** 180 cm  
**Weight:** 96.6 kg  
**Previous Club:** London Irish  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** -

## Robert Todd

Missed much of his first season at Kingsholm with a cruel foot injury. Came back fitter, stronger and desperate to succeed last year. His strength in the tackle make him a formidable opponent and his defence is very solid. Shows a versatility and agility that belie his size and build.



**Position:** Tight Head Prop  
**DoB:** 14.03.76  
**Height:** 191 cm  
**Weight:** 125 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bude/Redruth  
**Int'** Eng, British  
**Honours:** Lions 3 Caps

## Phil Vickery

Monster of a prop born in Cornwall, whose reputation was further enhanced after leading England to victory in Argentina this summer. Was part of the British Lions tests team in Australia in 2001, and is fast becoming one of the best Tight Head's in the game. Is a powerful scrummager and has handling and running skills that would make the best three-quarter jealous. Second season as Gloucester Captain.



**Position:** Loose Head Prop  
**DoB:** 04.08.76  
**Height:** 183 cm  
**Weight:** 115 kg  
**Previous Club:** Bath  
**Int'**  
**Honours:** England

## Trevor Woodman

One of the gems of the Gloucester side. Has skills and ability to be one of the best loose-heads in the game. Has a great turn of pace in the loose that has caused the England management to try him out as hooker. One suspects that this should be a big season for Woodman and if he remains injury free he may reach new levels in the chery of Gloucester and White of England.



# HEAD 2 HEAD

## Rob Fidler

### Strengths

It is Fidler's consistency at the top end of the game that has served Gloucester so well over the years. His is a banker for lineout ball and in tight situations he is the lock Gloucester turn to, to alleviate the pressure. Over the years he has developed his game as the role of a lock evolved from just set piece play to ball handling linkman. He is also one of the bodies last up from a ruck or maul as he fights for the hardest of yards.

### Weaknesses

It is hard to find a weakness in Fidler's game. His mastery of the basics have served him so well, but now as he is being asked to contribute more his ball handling, one-on-one attack and ball retention have come under the Fidler microscope. "I work on having quick feet when I have the ball in hand, I work on my ball handling and all round game. Now locks are being asked to learn things that four or five years ago we just didn't do", says Fidler.

### High Points

"Reaching the Semi-Final stage in our first season in the Heineken Cup was special. Also it is always an honour to be asked to play for your country and it is never a dream you lose. But to play for England I have to play well for Gloucester, Club form is vital and in the Championship Final to win at Twickenham was a great day for this Club and its supporters".

### Low Points

"The last week has been a low point with my wife and little girl so ill. It puts things into perspective. I missed the Perpignan games, but, while I would have loved to have been involved, family comes first in some situations", say Fidler.

### Fidler on Sims

"When I first came to Gloucester, he was Captain and so had a lot of influence. He was a bit of a father figure and lead by example. We looked at him as our leader and we followed. At the time we were doing well to be off the

bottom of the league table not at the top so he was someone to look up to", says Fidler on his second row mentor.

### Fidler on the Powergen Cup

"The Cup is still special for the player, a day out at Twickenham in the final is enough of an incentive for anyone. The success of your season is usually measured on League position or now the Heineken Cup but the Powergen Cup is the only competition that every Club is involved in and that makes it special".



Today's head to head focuses on two players that down the years have become synonymous with Gloucester Rugby Club.

Both have contributed above and beyond the call of duty for the Cherry and White shirt but whilst one will hope to continue where he left off and lend his efforts to another Gloucester win this afternoon, the other will be hoping for an away victory.

Rob Fidler, following in his father's footsteps, continues to be Mr consistent in the Gloucester second row. His teak like toughness has seen him drive on in the Gloucester engine room for more seasons than he cares to mention.

His counterpart today Sims, a former team mate and even one-time mentor of Fidler's is a Gloucester legend in his own lifetime. Their battle today will be key to the outcome of this Powergen Cup tie.

## Dave Sims

Since his departure from Kingsholm, Dave Sims is still making a big impact on the game - this time with today's opponents Exeter Chiefs where he was made vice-captain on arrival and is now acting skipper in the absence of Rob Baxter, coincidentally another former Gloucester player.

### Can you recall your first game for Gloucester?

"Yes, it was in 1986 playing for United away to London Irish. The team was full of characters - Pete Jones, John Braine, Nigel Scrivener and captained by Mike Wagstaff".

### What are the highlights of your Kingsholm career?

"Almost too many to remember. Winning two Cheltenham & Gloucester Cups meant a lot especially as they meant giving something back to the supporters. You can't forget being a winning captain.

Beating Leicester was memorable but more especially beating Bath when they were considered invincible. I'll also never forget the day my son Nathaniel was born, six years ago in April - we stuffed Saracens that day 9-6."

### Was there a low point during your time at Kingsholm?

"The day I left the club".

### What was your first game for the Chiefs?

"Competitively it was a 51-15 win over Wakefield on the opening day of the National Division One season, but there was a pre-season match at Penzance when I found myself opposite none other than Martin Haag. I suppose a mass punch up after 10 minutes was inevitable".

### Have the Chiefs met your expectations?

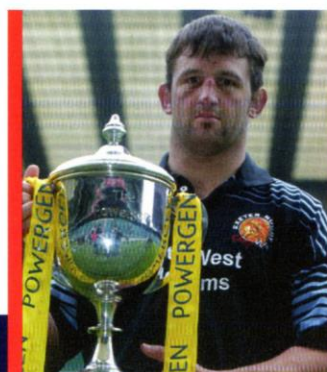
"Definitely. I already knew a lot of the guys from the National Division side and I had immense respect for Ian Bremner. He was the main reason for me going to the County Ground. I felt at home and comfortable straightaway and I'm pleased to be playing for a club with ambition

and where team spirit is important. It's a very close-knit club with tremendous support for the players throughout from the tea ladies and the ticket sellers to the terraces and beyond to the sponsors.

I like the Chiefs way of working - it's run the way a rugby club should be and reminds you of your roots".

### Any messages today?

I'd like to wish everyone at Kingsholm a very happy Christmas and would invite them all to come to Exeter at any time to support the Chiefs.



Alastair Downey of  
**The Citizen**

## SIMply the best

You will have to bear with me here. This is not just a nostalgia trip.

When 'Our Dad' walks up the tunnel at Kingsholm today, he will turn left and then carry straight on. It will take him to the away dressing room.

He will not have a specific corner all of his own - like he did in the 'home' changing room - but Dave Sims will feel perfectly at ease. There will be no Cherry and White on his back this afternoon, but a true giant from Gloucester's past will be guaranteed a tremendous reception.

Sims' presence was almost tangible from the moment he led his team on to the field. He was a true giant of the modern era - the pillar that was Gloucester's strength in the advent of professionalism and their dangerous flirtation with relegation.

But it is not for me to talk about his virtues. That is left to a former Kingsholm second row of considerable legion who saw Sims as a 17-year-old when he joined the club from Longlevens, John Fidler.

"There is no doubt Dave Sims was a true great Gloucester forward for a long, long time," said Fidler, the former England lock and team manager.

"He was the pillar of the pack and held it together - it's as simple as that. On his day, he was one of the best line-out forwards going and was one of the first modern day locks.

"Every time players came up against Dave, no matter where it was, home or away, they knew they would be in a game.



"England have always had good second rows - Wade Dooley, Paul Ackford, Martin Johnson, Danny Grewcock to name only four - but there is no doubt Dave was a fantastic lock." Sims was the epitome of the club in the early struggle of professionalism and the only injustice is that he was passed his best by the time Gloucester had stabilised. Even with the riches Nigel Melville has at his disposal now, a Dave Sims at his best would be some proposition in the modern game.

There are many stories of yore about the man who simply breathed the life of the city club. You would find him shopping in local supermarkets not opening them and today, he will relish the contest. That he won only two caps for England was one of the rugby crimes of recent history, but his dedication to his beloved club knew no bounds.

I remember him extracting one of the loudest roars Kingsholm has produced when he led his team out to face Saracens a good few years ago. He had sat up the entire night with his wife before she gave birth to his first son. Two hours after the birth, he was at the front of his team. Sarries did not stand a chance. In the Shed that day, a voice from the back of the stand shouted 'one for the boy Simo' as they formed a line-out in front of the stand. Dave duly delivered as I am sure he will today.



The Powergen Cup



Chris Catling	15
Daren O'Leary	14
(c) Terry Fanolua	13
Henry Paul	12
Tom Beim	11
Simon Amor	10
Clive Stuart-Smith	09
-----	
Rodrigo Roncero	01
Chris Collins	02
Andy Deacon	03
Adam Eustace	04
Mark Cornwell	05
James Forrester	06
Andy Hazell	07
Junior Paramore	08
-----	
Andy Gomarsall	15
Marcel Garvey	17
Thinus Delpport	18
Darren Molloy	19
Rob Elloway	20
Rob Fidler	21
Peter Buxton	22

**TODAY'S MATCH OFFICIALS**

**Referee:** Martin Fox - RFU  
**1st TJ:** David Grashoff - RFU  
**2nd TJ:** Ashley Reay - RFU



en Cup Sixth Round



- 15
- 14
- 13
- 12
- 11
- 10
- 09
- 01
- 02
- 03
- 04
- 05
- 06
- 07
- 08
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22

Ben Thompson

Ed Lewsey

Alistair Murdoch

Stephen Ward

Piran Trethewey

Tony Yapp

Richard John

Altan Ozdemir

Keith Brooking

Phil Sluman

Dave Sims (c)

Ian brown

Gary Willis

Chris Hanson

Richard Baxter

Sam Blythe

Jason Hobson

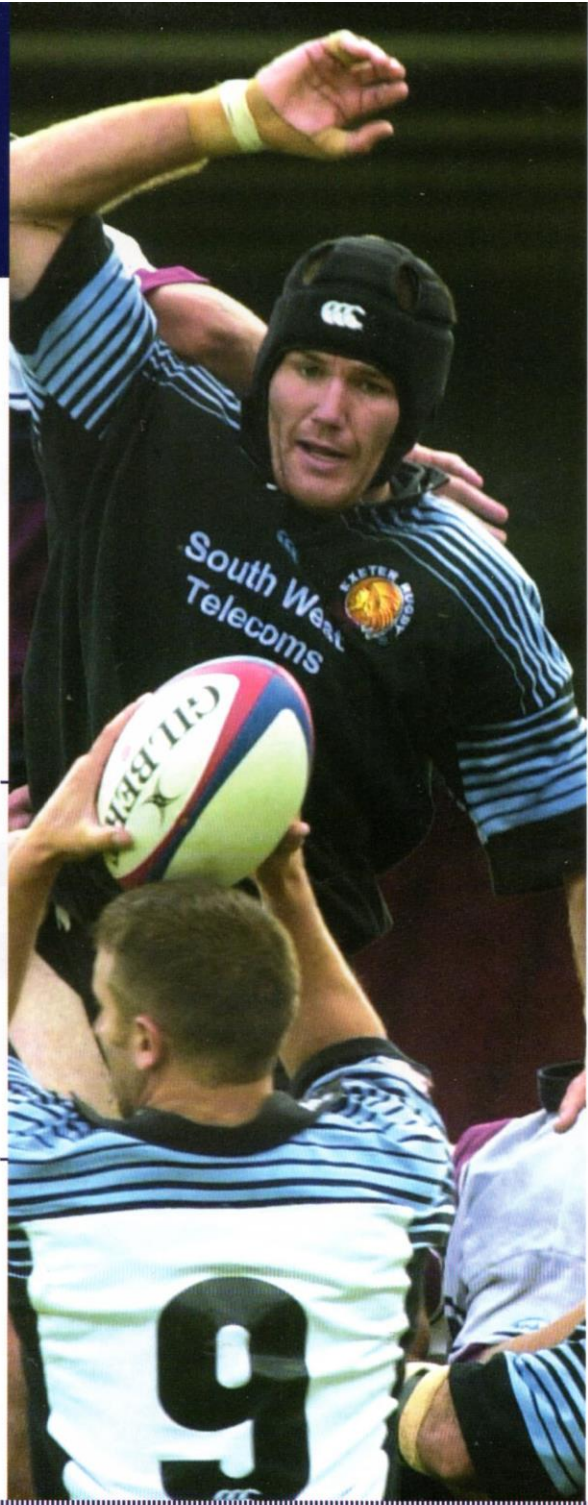
Adam Harris

Ben Cole

Simon Etheridge

Phil Williams

Glenn Bunny



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Gloucester RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

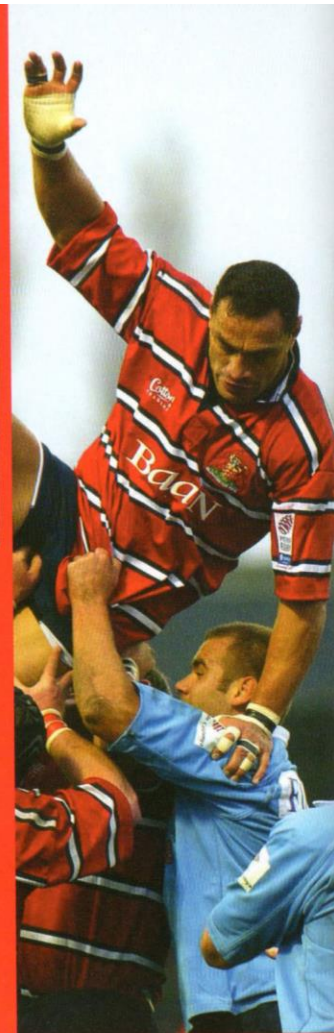


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KINGSHOLM SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER 2002



# GLOUCESTER 33

TRIES: MERCIER, GARVEY (2)

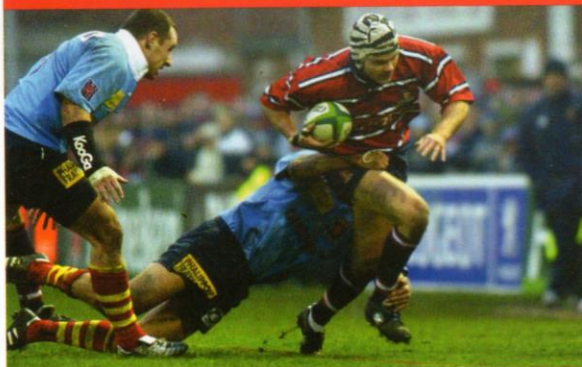
CONVERSIONS: MERCIER (3) PENALTIES: MERCIER (4)



# PERPIGNAN 16

TRIES: KAIRELIS

CONVERSIONS: EDMONDS PENALTIES: EDMONDS (3)



(Top Left) Ed Pearce breaks out of a tackle from Perpignan Jean Marc Souverbie.

(Top Right) Junior Paramore.

(Middle Left) Andy Hazell breaks out of a tackle.

(Middle Right) James Forrester breaks through the Perpignan defence.

(bottom Left) Thinus Delpont passes to Henry Paul.

Pictures courtesy of Bruce Seabrook - GPA



STADE AIME GIRAL SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER 2002



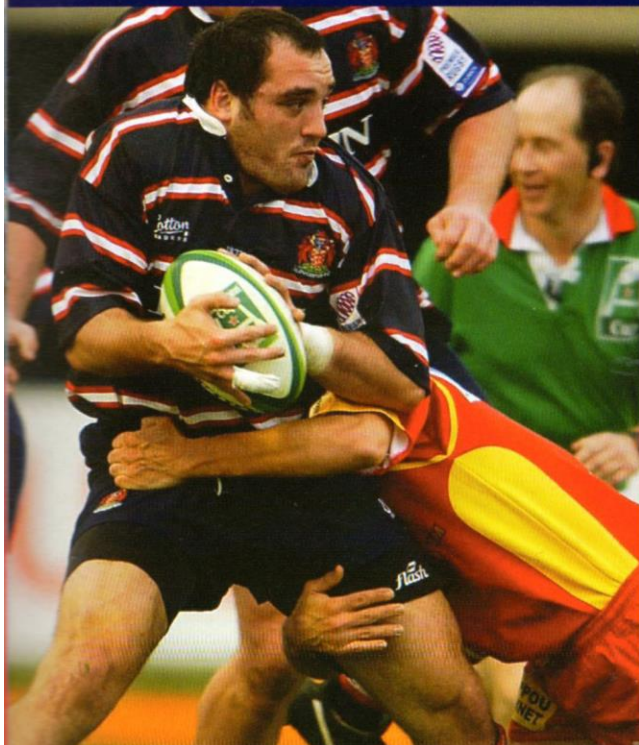
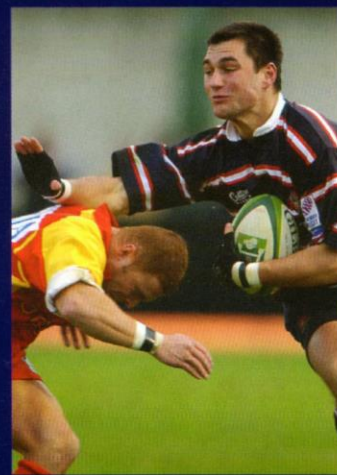
## PERPIGNAN 31

TRIES: MAS, GIORDANI, EDMONDS  
 CONVERSIONS: EDMONDS (2) PENALTIES: EDMONDS (4)



## GLOUCESTER 23

TRIES: BOER, MERCIER  
 CONVERSIONS: MERCIER (2) PENALTIES: MERCIER (3)



(Top Left) Junior Paramore takes on Christophe Manas.

(Top Right) Andy Gomarsall is tackled by Gregory Le Corvec.

(Middle Right) Thinus Delpont holds off Pascal Bomati.

(Bottom Left) Rodrigo Roncero.

(Bottom Right) Ludovic Mercier is tackled by Manuel Edmonds.

Pictures courtesy of Dave Rogers - Getty Images

# Fans Eye View

With Bob Fenton

At the time of writing I am in the process of packing me thermals, filling the hip flask and thermos, checking the tent and making sure that the waterproofs are waterproof.

No I'm not going on some sort of wild adventure holiday (who wants to go on holiday in the middle of the Premiership season?) - I am about to go and join the queue to get my tickets for the Munster game next month. Contrary to some rumours (and my own misplaced hopes) writing a few hundred words each week for the programme does not qualify me for free tickets. In fact I don't even get a free programme!

After all the comings and goings the things are going on sale, though not without a bit of controversy. The rules of the competition seem pretty straightforward - the visitors are supposed to receive a quarter of the tickets for each of the venues.

So given that Thurmond Park has a capacity of around 12,000 you would expect our allocation to be somewhere around 3,000 tickets. Err, unfortunately not. It looks like Munster have 'interpreted' the ruling as saying a quarter of the capacity once they have accounted for their season ticket holders (around 5,000), therefore we get 25 per cent of 7,000 - that's 1,750 tickets for those who struggle with their maths, by the way.

I am assured that this was not the way we handled things from this end when the match was played here. Munster were given an allocation of tickets equating to a quarter of the capacity of the stadium, Gloucester season ticket holders were accounted for among the remaining three quarters retained by the club.

Clear as mud this - I'm writing it and even I don't understand it. What I'm getting at is, while it appears that once again Gloucester did the right thing by its visitors, Munster are not reciprocating in the same spirit. Yet another example of the games administrators leaving loopholes in the regulations big enough to drive a coach and horses through.

And they wonder why the average supporter gets just a tad hacked off with it all. It cannot be beyond the wit of ERC to make a rule that stipulates that a visiting side gets 25 per cent of the ground capacity regardless of how many season tickets they have sold. All we want to do is to get our tickets, get over there and have a massive party - oh and watch the game as well. Why does it have to be so difficult?

Mind you, Leicester apparently claim that their entire capacity is taken up by season ticket holders, and don't let visitors have any tickets at all. Typical Leicester - always one step ahead when it comes to err... bending the rules to suit themselves.

And if you needed further proof that ERC have a few administrative difficulties, check out their website and the appalling photograph of our very own Roman transvestite and ladyboy from the Quedgley garrison, Wurzel Roberta as we must now call him - sorry her. Have you seen the size of his gob! Close up it's bad enough, but that picture looks like one of those snakes that swallows its prey whole - opposition hookers venturing near the touchline round about half way should be afraid... very afraid!

Do ERC not realise that kids can use the web and see that picture? My advice for them is to sell it as a poster for mothers to hang above the fire place or cooker, that'll scare the kids enough to keep 'em away from it!

Anyway having conjured up that stomach-turning image, on to more pleasant matters - today we welcome back one of our prodigal sons - Dave 'Simmo' Sims - former club captain, the Club's first professional player and veteran of over 250 first team games. Despite moving on to Exeter via Worcester and a loan spell at Bedford, I suspect that if you cut him in half he would still have 'Gloucester RFC' running through him like a stick of seaside rock.

Simmo never really got the recognition he deserved - outside of Gloucestershire that is, picking up just a couple of England caps, although he did turn out regularly for England. A. Sims and Fidler formed a second row partnership against





the All Blacks on the now-infamous 'tour to hell' and between them contrived to score a try that could have had 'Made in Gloucester' stamped all over it - clean catch at the lineout, and a rugged drive over the whitewash.

Unfortunately, like many who made that particular trip when more illustrious names chickened out, their reward was to be dropped from the future England reckoning. Dave did get to pick up a trophy at Twickenham, though - when he captained the county side to a 26-23 victory over Cheshire in county cup final a few years back.

He epitomised the spirit of the Gloucester side of the time - I remember speaking to him before a cup game at Bath and asking him if the players felt the same as the supporters about our err... colleagues from down the A46. "We don't like 'em much either..." was his diplomatic reply - that is before launching a few choice expletives (that I dare not reproduce here) which more ably demonstrated his own feelings towards the shamateurs from the Rec.

And who will forget the mad dash he made from Gloucester Royal to lead the side out against - I think - Saracens just a few hours after his first child was born. I won't because he damn near ran me over as he screeched into the car park at about 2:45 before leaping out leaving John Fidler to find a parking space for him. From the minute he walked into the dressing room, victory was assured and duly gained in a vital relegation showdown.

He said at the time that his missus chucked him out and made him come, she couldn't stand him pacing nervously around the hospital!

One of the most poignant pictures I can remember is of Dave and Scotty Benton standing in the Worcester Street end watching a united game just after they were both told that they were on their way out. Neither wanted to leave, and you could see that in their faces. But that's professional sport for you - sometimes what you want is not the same as what a team wants, and you can't help feeling that there are an awful lot more players who have found themselves in similar boats.

Dave seems to be enjoying life at Exeter - he was on the score sheet again a week or so ago and was named man of the match. He'll be looking forward to this trip and is set to lead the side out. Even though it's not his first appearance back here (he played in the blue of Bedford a couple of seasons back) he should get the returning heroes welcome he deserves. So welcome back, Dave - hope you have a 'mare though!

Finally, apologies to Darren Malloy who has joined on loan from Wasps - I seem to recall writing some particularly stinging comments about him in Shedhead a while back, I just hope he either didn't see it or has forgotten. These new transfers are making my life hell - I had to apologise to Dean Ryan who fixed me with a steely glare before hissing "Oh it was you, was it!" I left at that point. Quickly! Much more of this and I am going to have to seek some kind of fanzine writers protection plan to give me a new identity...

Just enough room to say happy Christmas everyone - have a great one and see you all at Northampton on 28th!

# Peter Arnold

## GETTING IT IN THE NECK

*"It is to be hoped that the best medical advice will bring him back to full fitness as soon as possible. He must be absolutely gutted, but I think he'd be wise not to rush things at all. It's better for Gloucester to struggle on without his services so as to have him back at his fit and formidable best in the fullness of time.*

*After all, we do want to see him doing the business in the World Cup next year, don't we?"*

Trevor Woodman? No. That's a slightly edited version of something I wrote in these pages exactly four years ago, for the Leicester match on December 19th 1998, and I was commenting on a nasty neck injury sustained by Phil Vickery

There's nothing new under the sun. But what is it about Gloucester forwards and neck problems, especially when they've just acquitted themselves nobly on the international stage?

I don't have to list the current crop of similar injuries for you, but there have been so many of them that one is tempted to wonder if some perverse fairy has got it in for Gloucester players. Mere coincidence is more likely, of course, but if so, it's a particularly vicious one.

There's nothing new about the syndrome. Some of us will recall that Phil Blakeway, one of the strongest scrummagers in England history, actually broke his neck at the height of his career, and came back to win a further clutch of Caps afterwards. There's no reason in the world why Trevor shouldn't do likewise.

Moving outside the pack, older supporters will recall that the aggressive centre, John Bayliss also played on for a long time after breaking his neck.

Among the opposition, the Captain of the Exeter University side once broke his neck playing against Gloucester. That worked out well too, because he took a turn for the nurse tending him at Gloucester Royal, and then went off and married her.

So there is life after neck injuries. In Trevor Woodman's case, an awful lot of it, I'm sure.

## WHY 'THE CHIEFS'?

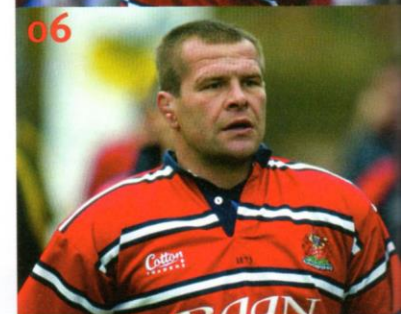
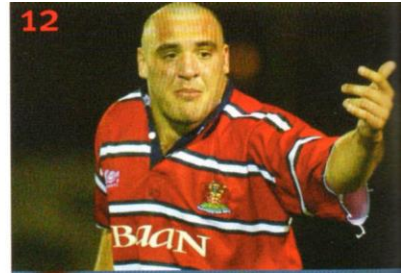
Of course, we've seen Exeter at Kingsholm on many occasions, but only recently have they acquired the title of 'Exeter Chiefs'. It occurred to me to wonder why.

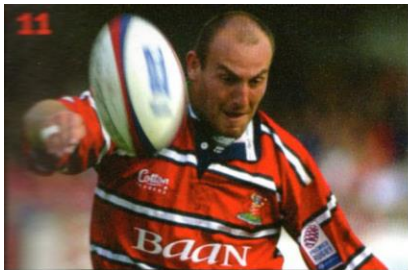
According to Neil Devons, the club's version of our own James Bennett, "there is no deep reason". Apparently it was a nickname used by Exeter's senior side back in the 1930's, and when the club was "reinventing itself in 1997/8" it was decided to revert to the old sobriquet. Fair enough. At least it wasn't something plucked out of the air.

Perhaps, one day, Gloucester might once again become 'The Elver Eaters'.

## DICKIE'S GONE

Twenty years ago I paid an official visit to Gloucester prison. When shown down to the main floor, the first bloke I clapped eyes on was Dickie Timbrell. "Hello Pete!" he chortled, and shook my hand like a long lost brother. As it





happened, I knew one or two of the other inmates, who gathered around, taking their lead from Dickie

"I'm getting a bit worried about you, Mr. Mayor," commented the Governor. "You know more of these chaps than I do!"

"Born and bred in the briar patch, Governor." I said and we proceeded on our way.

Of course, Gloucester prison was a second home to Dick Timbrell. He was a layabout and a thoroughly bad man - a frightening one in his young days - but I suspect that many people will feel a twinge of regret at the news of his passing.

Whatever else Dickie may have been, he was a lifelong supporter of Gloucester RFC, and would talk to you for hours about his boyhood heroes at Kingsholm When at liberty and in funds he rarely, until recent years, missed a home game. In fact, he was a fair player, himself, in his youth, having been a member of the legendary 'Ragged Assed' school side, more politely Archdeacon Street School, which went undefeated for five seasons back in the pre-War days.

On one occasion he was ejected from the ground for making a nuisance of himself before the game. At final whistle, we made our way to the Clubhouse, only to find it locked and the police in charge. There had been a telephoned bomb scare. Sheer coincidence, of course...

Dickie Timbrell was, whatever else he may have been, a real Gloucester character, and we don't have enough of those. Perhaps, at this time of goodwill, we should spare a thought for Dick.

## SCROOGE LIVES !

People find surprising ways to make money out of Gloucester RFC. The last time the club featured in a televised match, Joe Lynch, landlord of the 'Vauxhall' in Barton Street, made sure that his patrons were able to watch the game in the comfort of his premises.

All the usual suspects were there, a good time was had by all, including the Management who were very happy at the way till receipts were clicking over. Nothing unusual about that, you might think: just good business, reflecting a scene which was taking place in pubs all over the City.

The bonus arrived when Joe was cleaning up afterwards. He found no less than £5.39 in loose change, dropped under his bench seating.

However, he tells me that, if anyone calls in demanding the odd quid which the customer definitely remembers dropping in the heat of the moment, he will blandly deny any knowledge of any such occurrence.

Bah ! Humbug !

## TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY !

On the Twelfth Day of Christmas,  
Dean Ryan sent to me,

Twelve Rodders rucking,  
Eleven left-boot Ludos,  
Ten Jangos Jiving,  
Nine Pasties poaching,  
Eight outrageous Ollies,  
Seven Sinbads swerving,  
Six Deacons driving,  
Five Raging Bulls,  
Four ferocious Fids,  
Three tough Todds,  
Two Gommersalls,  
And a team on the top of the tree !

God rest ye merry Shedheads all !  
Let nothing you dismay.  
Remember that we lead the rest,  
Upon this Christmas Day.  
Whatever lesser breeds may do,  
That's where we're going to stay !  
Oh, Tidings of comfort and joy !

After that, there's only one thing to add.

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO BOTH MY READERS !**

# FLY HALVES SHOW OFF THEIR TACKLE

In the recent Heineken Cup fixture at Kingsholm between Gloucester and Perpignan Gloucester's fly half Ludovic Mercier was widely acclaimed as the star man and duly won the man-of-the-match award for his match winning efforts.

He scored a try in the first half that showed off his sublime running skills and, with seven out of seven successful shots at goal, Mercier's personal tally of twenty-three points laid the foundations for a crucial Gloucester victory against tough French opposition.

Mercier's attacking skills were evident for all to see and the records will show that his personal tally of points were a match-winning return. It was however his work in defence that caught the eye, particularly of Dave Ellis, Gloucester's coach who knows a thing or two about defending.

It is representative of the game of rugby today with defensive patterns and multiple phase-play that more so than ever before the role of the fly half is crucial to his or her teams chances for success.

Not only is the standoff the traditional link between backs and forwards and considered the midfield general in attack, but because of opposition attacking plays he, or she, is also the linchpin in the defensive structures employed by teams.

The role of the fly half has evolved from the position of relative safety where a standoff would dictate play from the comfort of an imaginary pocket five or six meters behind the gain line .

Now his job is to join his colleagues in the front line and meet attacks head on and often be the first defender into the breach.

Indeed, according to Dave Ellis, because of the crucial role that he plays in attack he will also be the first person

targeted for 'extra defensive work' by opposition coaches as they try to minimise his threat.

"The number ten becomes a pivotal player as far as opposition tactics go. Once opponents identify a key tactical player in the your team they basically try to tire him out, and try to make him work overtime on defence. Then when he is on attack mode, he is fatigued, his decision making is not so good, he is not so fresh", explains Ellis.

Sending back rows marauding into the space occupied by a smaller fly half is not a new exercise. Teams have sought to isolate the stand off and use strong runners to gain ground for years. The change however, comes as the fly halves are now fighting back and turning a potential weakness into strength for a defending team.

"In the past, teams played a lot of one-phase play. They would win a line out or a scrum and kick it or ship it out to the wings straight away, now teams are looking for multiple phases so teams take the ball into contact to recycle the ball. What they want to do is take the ball into contact into an area where you know you are going to be able to go forward".

"From scrums and lineouts, the number ten is isolated so the number ten channel is very useful. If teams identify that the number ten is a weak defender then they will continue to put runners into this channel. By missing tackles it puts pressure on the defensive game", says Ellis.

"Everyone knows how good a kicking game Ludo has so they target him and send runners at him because if he concentrates on his attacking game and kicking game more than his defence then he will boss the game."

Ludo now though is comfortable with tackling and able to put strong back row runners to ground, it asks more



questions of the attacking side because the weakness no longer exists. They have to change their game plan".

So the role of the fly half has evolved from a tactical leader to including his job as defensive kingpin. As the first point of defence the fly half's actions can literally mean the difference between conceding or scoring crucial points.

"In the past Gloucester tens have not had to tackle as much as Ludo and probably haven't had to do as much attacking play either. But this is the style of play put in place by Nigel (Melville) and Dean (Ryan) so Ludo is a better player on attack and defence, by doing that though he puts himself up to be shot at", says Ellis.

"The job of the ten is to put the ball carrier down, but put the ball carrier to ground on his terms. If he is pushed back five yards then the attacking side have momentum and are going forward. So Ludo's job is initially to go forward and

put the ball carrier to ground so we are in control of the situation", he adds.

The top exponent of this type of offensive defence at fly half is Jonny Wilkinson. The England stand off is probably the best player in his position in the world at the moment, not just because of his metonymic kicking ability of his devastating running and handling but because when he hits attackers he pushes them back and gives the defending English team the momentum.

"Jonny Wilkinson is an exception as a number ten because he is an exceptional tackler. Phil Larder and Clive Woodward have done a massive amount of work on Jonny Wilkinson so it (tackling) is now a strength of his game and there are not many defenders in the world who tackle like him at number ten".

Ellis' praise for Wilkinson though is not boundless, as he feels that his strength in an England shirt comes for those ►►



Ludovic Mercier  
Zurich Premiership - 2002/03

12	Appearances
63	Tackles
20	Misses
33	Ball Carries
241	Metres
222	Passes
14	Defenders Beaten
2	Tries Scored
49	Goals Kicked
135	Points Scored



Ludovic Mercier  
Heineken Cup - 2002/03

3	Appearances
22	Tackles
5	Misses
14	Ball Carries
96	Metres
81	Passes
5	Defenders Beaten
2	Tries Scored
24	Goals Kicked
65	Points Scored



All Statistics courtesy of Opta Index 2002

### TACKLING FLY-HALVES

Player	Club	Tackles	Missed Tackles	Tackle Percentage	Matches	Tackles per Match
Barry Everitt	London Irish	95	19	83.3	12	7.9
Jonny Wilkinson	Newcastle Falcons	89	28	76.1	8	11.1
Jos Baxendell	Sale Sharks	82	17	82.8	9	9.1
Gordon Ross	Leeds Tykes	77	21	78.6	9	8.6
Paul Grayson	Northampton	75	28	72.8	12	6.3
Alex King	London Wasps	70	18	79.5	11	6.4
Andy Goode	Saracens	66	24	73.3	10	6.6
Ludovic Mercier	Gloucester	63	20	75.9	12	5.3

### GLOUCESTER'S BACK LINE

Player	Position	Tackles	Missed Tackles	Tackle Percentage	Matches	Tackles per Match
Andy Gomasall	Scrum Half	85	10	89.5	11	7.7
Robert Todd	Centre	79	20	79.8	12	6.6
Ludovic Mercier	Fly Half	63	20	75.9	12	5.3
Terry Fanolua	Centre	59	15	79.7	12	4.9
Henry Paul	Full Back	45	11	80.4	11	4.1
Thinus Deport	Winger	24	5	82.8	11	2.2
Marcel Garvey	Winger	19	4	82.6	11	1.7
James S-Daniel	Winger	15	4	78.9	7	2.1

### GLOUCESTER'S TOP FIVE PERFORMERS

Player	Position	Tackle Percentage	Carries	Total Metres	Defenders Beaten	Tries Scored
Ludovic Mercier	Fly Half	75.9	33	241	14	2
Terry Fanolua	Centre	79.7	80	585	18	3
Andy Gomasall	Scrum Half	89.5	52	276	18	0
Jake Boer	Flanker	91.7	73	360	12	7
Junior Paramore	Number 8	95.9	76	389	5	6

around him. Ellis feels that the Newcastle Falcons captain is not as indestructible when in Club colours.

As with the England standoff Mercier thrives on the help of the players who line up on his inside in a defensive pattern. Jake Boer and his back row colleagues must take credit for Mercier's defensive muscle. Mercier and Boer have developed an almost telepathic understanding in defence, which makes Ludo's efforts against Perpignan all the more impressive when Boer was missing from the squad.

"Wilkinson is a competent defender for England but not for Newcastle. It is the players around him that help him do that and the system that Phil Larder has put in place means a line of English defenders going forward. Wilkinson is a good tackler, but if you take the support players away from him like at Newcastle he is not so good because he is isolated".

"With Jake Boer working with Ludo, Ludo feels comfortable because he has Jake on his inside. From scrums and lineouts, if runners come into his channel he knows his job is simply to put his man down and then Jake Boer will come in over the top and compete for the ball. Ludo knows he has to concentrate on his tackle when he is isolated".

Mercier's development into this sound defensive stand off certainly surprised members of the Perpignan team who remembered a less staunch Mercier of old from his time with Aurillac. Whilst Mercier has developed his game under the tutelage of Dave Ellis though, the French defensive coach feels that there are still members of the old standoff brigade whose defensive skills are sometimes found out.

He points an accusing finger at London Irish's Barry Everitt, who whilst being deadly with the boot sometimes comes unstuck in defensive situations

"In the two games we played, when you get runners going at him or into his zone, he is not one that is comfortable in contact in defence or attack. London Irish tend to cover him out on first phase play from scrums by moving Venter into ten and moving Everitt to centre. In general play they will detach two back rows to act as cover. He is an excellent goal kicker and tactical kicker but has a lack of confidence in contact situations.

Ellis is determined that this is not a situation he would be comfortable with.

"All fifteen need to stand up and be counted; you can't have weak defenders like you can't have weak attackers, because you get found out. We need fifteen players on the pitch who will tackle".

"Ludo is now a very good leg tackler, we will wait and see if he becomes a big hitter like Wilkinson. Ludo has the basics right and once you can tackle around the legs you can move forward". ■