

Gloucester

v MANCHESTER SALE

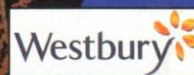
21st March 1999

Kick Off 3.00pm

£2.00



Inside:
John Brain
Tom Beim Interview
Views from the Balcony
and more...



John Brain's Brainstorm

Before I mention today's opponents Sale, a few words about last weekend at West Hartlepool. This was another bizarre experience at an away ground. When was the last time we scored five tries in a game and lost? When was the last time we played 40 minutes of rugby and were not awarded a penalty? These are freak statistics and at the time, the pain of losing in these

circumstances was very hard to bear for

players, management and the diehard supporters who made the long journey north (your commitment to the team is very much appreciated).

Talking of long journeys, the one back from West represented 'Fidler's Tragedy Tours' at their best. First of all, Simmo started to feel the worse for wear, so a couple of hours parked up at Leeds Royal Infirmary ('Jimmy's') was called for. At this point I rang my other half to explain the situation and tell her I'd be late home. Now, years of experience have made her distinctly wary of phone calls like this and she didn't sound impressed by the explanation, but I think she just about believed me.

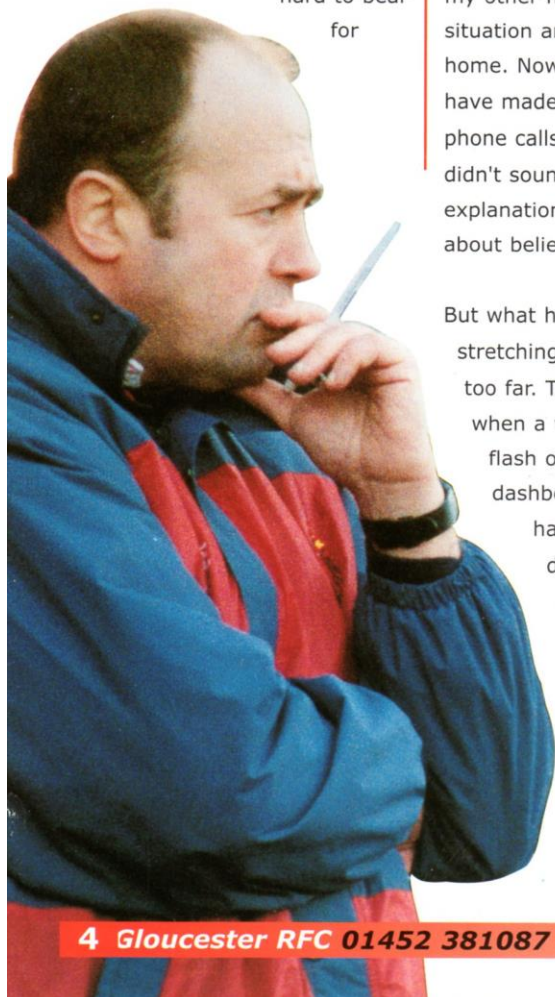
But what happened after this was stretching the bounds of belief too far. Things were going OK when a warning light began to flash on the driver's dashboard. The result: We had to stop at the coach depot in Redditch to change buses. At this point we were all seeing the funny side. Before I dialled my home number again I thought 'she's never going to believe this'. Sure

enough, my view was confirmed when she picked up the receiver and cut me short with one single sentence: "don't tell me, the bus has broken down and you've been kidnapped by aliens." As I said, years of experience have bred cynicism. The seven-hour journey ended at 1am and I'm still married - just.

Going back to the game, the results suggested that we weren't good enough to win on the day, but I think if we stick to our guns and continue to develop and work hard at our overall game plan we will win away and Steve Ojomoh will cut his hair before the end of the month.

Today we welcome Sale who, I am told, have targeted the C&G Cup as a competition they particularly want to win. The game will also mark Phil Greening's first appearance at Kingsholm in a Sale shirt; this will be a strange feeling for him - and for us. Sale have a well drilled set of forwards and a powerful back division which put paid to Saracens last week. The West Hartlepool result, allied to the fact that we currently hold this trophy and are at home will provide us with sufficient motivation to do well.

John Brain



Peter Arnold

Birds of a Feather

In many ways, today's very welcome opponents represent a club which is more akin to Gloucester than any other in Premiership One.

To start with, they play on a 'proper' rugby ground, and don't perform in an echoing, half-empty, characterless soccer stadium. Second, like Gloucester, they have pursued a sensible player acquisition policy, bringing in players where they perceive their squad is weak, but not simply throwing money in all directions in the hope that it will attract a world-beating bunch of mercenaries. They are obviously very aware that you can buy a team but can't buy a club.

Third, they have a committed and noisy crowd of supporters, and don't rely on spurious drumming noises and other artificial aids to enthuse their equivalent of our own Shedheads. That is one reason why, like Gloucester, they are proverbially difficult to beat at home, although, again like us, they can find that that particular

bubble can burst, now and then. Manchester Sale are therefore very welcome here at any time, and it's nice to note that whatever happens today, they'll be back here again in a Premiership match on May 1st.

They do appear to have differed from Gloucester in one respect, at least as far as the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup is concerned. Although they have almost as many players as we do involved with the various levels of International competition, they don't seem to have taken the opportunity to rest so many senior players during the weekends of the competition. That appears to be one of the reasons why they have scored a quite indecent 257 points in Cup games so far, against a miserly 27 conceded. That must give them a fair amount of confidence today.

They shouldn't be too complacent though. Things may not be what the figures indicate. To start with, Gloucester, as the Cup holders, were given a bye in the first

round, which was played over two legs. So they have played two more games than us, accounting for 109 points at the expense of poor old Orrell.

They might also like to remember what happened to Bath up at Newcastle the other week, when they took along a team featuring nine Internationals, and went down to a young, green side with fire in its belly.

I suspect, also, that Gloucester will still be smarting over the West Hartlepool result. To go down by the odd point in 65 while scoring four tries to the home side's two, must have been infuriating, if you'll pardon the understatement. It almost makes one long for the Welsh bonus points system.

Should be a fascinating game. Pity it had to happen in the same week as we took on Cardiff. Be that as it may, we hope everyone who has ventured down from Heywood Road has a thoroughly pleasant visit.





CHEESE ROLLING BACK

I'm given to understand that there is a good fighting chance that the ancient sport of cheese rolling will be back at Cooper's Hill this Spring Bank Holiday. For the benefit of uninformed visitors, I should explain that the activity consists of rolling a whole cheese down a very steep hill, and releasing a crowd of hardy, even foolhardy, souls to run down after it. The chap, or girl, who catches it, wins it.

Last season, the Powers That Be stopped the event on account of the risk to life and limb. Admittedly, the event usually results in a few broken limbs, but the ban did seem hard after a couple of centuries of holding the event.

I only mention the affair here, because there was a time when significant numbers of Gloucester players used to enter, and I believe, one or two actually won a cheese.

But can you imagine today's professional players being allowed to participate in such a hazardous activity? Not on your life. Far too dangerous.



Peter Arnold

Bad Luck, Skippy!

What a shame that Richard Tombs' remarkable record had to come to an end at the West Hartlepool match. In case you didn't know, 'Skippy' is the only Gloucester player to have started every single Premiership game since August 1997. The whole run came to a shuddering halt when he injured a knee in the Harlequins Tetley Bitter Cup game.

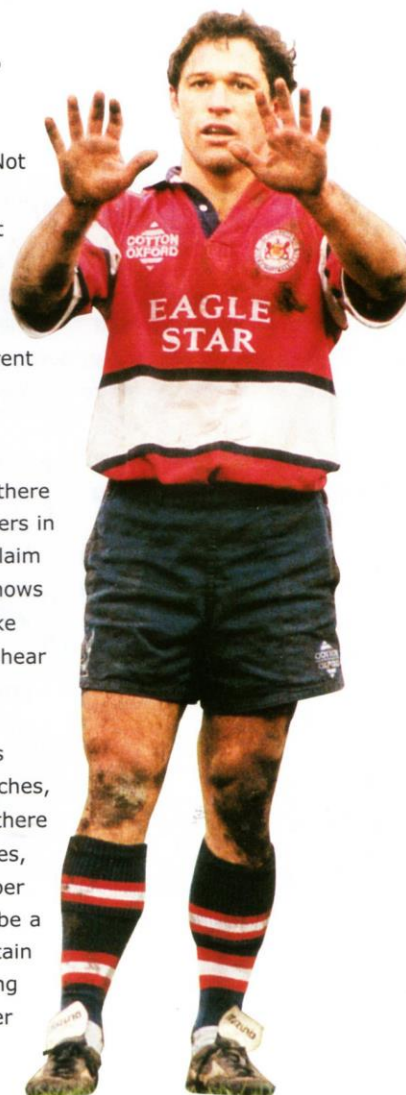
It's one heck of a record. Not only has he had to avoid injury over that period, but there's always the danger of loss of form to consider, and that can happen to anyone, often for no apparent reason.

It's a unique record for Gloucester, of course, but there can't be many, if any, players in the Premiership who can claim a similar one. If anyone knows of another player with a like claim, I'd be interested to hear about him.

Richard hasn't confined his efforts to Premiership matches, either. He's usually been there for the various Cup matches, too. You may well remember that he proved himself to be a more than competent captain during last season's winning Cheltenham and Gloucester run.

I'm told we can expect Richard back in action in a couple of weeks, and it won't be a day too soon for us.

Best of luck 'Skippy'. Come back soon!



Peter Arnold

Good News at Last

Clubs going belly-up, Clubs being unable to fulfil fixtures, clubs getting themselves suspended en bloc....most of the news from around the local scene appears to have been fairly depressing this season, so it's a pleasure to be able to write something positive for a change.

Talking to Charlie Matthews of Hucclecote Old Boys the other evening, I was pleased to learn that the club's new clubhouse is nearing completion, and could, fingers crossed, even be in use by the end of the season.

The Old Boys have been struggling to acquire their own facilities for two decades to my knowledge, so for the project to be nearing completion is good news indeed. From next season the lively club will be operating from the old Hucclecote School (now a teachers' centre) playing field, which is highly appropriate because they were originally founded, around 30 years ago, for the benefit of former pupils of that school.

The new clubhouse is being funded by a "very nice" Lottery grant, and a brewery loan, but finance wasn't the only problem the club had to face. Because there are Roman remains under the site, the whole project had to be cleared by English Heritage before work could start.

As always happens in such cases, the various sources of finance don't cover the whole cost, so there is still a considerable amount of money to raise. One fund-raising idea in particular caught my eye. You can buy your own brick in the clubhouse. For a mere £50, the individual, company or organisation can have a handsome brass plate, complete with the appropriate names, attached to a brick inside the facility. It will look nice, and could obviously be a fairly cheap spot of permanent advertising for any commercial concern.

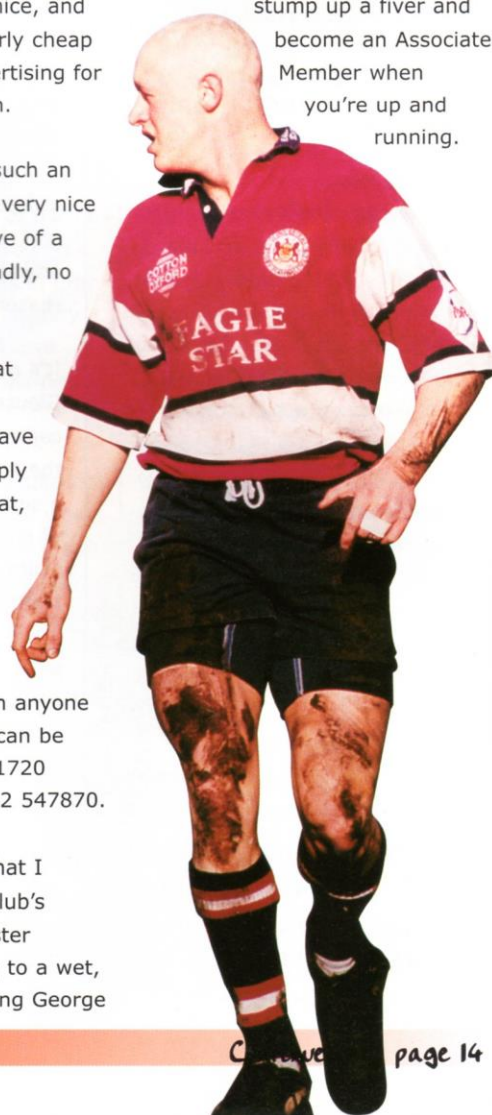
It also strikes me that such an initiative would make a very nice memorial for any relative of a rugby person who is, sadly, no longer with us.

Charlie also tells me that there are already little groups of people who have banded together to supply a brick. He also says that, if anyone can't see themselves clear to providing £50, then he'll happily accept any donation, or consider any proposition anyone likes to put to him. He can be contacted on 01452 711720 during the day, or 01452 547870.

Finally, Charlie insists that I publicly thank, on the club's behalf, the four Gloucester players who went along to a wet, inadequately lighted, King George

V Playing Field a little while ago, and ran a coaching session for the club. "They were great !" he told me. "We can't thank them enough."

As you know, support for local clubs is a declared policy of Gloucester RFC, and it's good to see it in action. As for Hucclecote Old Boys - best of luck in your ambitious new endeavour. I certainly won't be the only one to stump up a fiver and become an Associate Member when you're up and running.



Peter Arnold

More to it than Meets the Eye

I imagine I'm like most people. If I thought about it at all, I suppose I considered that a referee's job is to control the game for 80-plus minutes, do enough roadwork to ensure one is fit enough to keep up with the play, and spend a fair amount of time swotting up on rules and changes thereto. The rest is down to experience, personality and authority. At least, that's what I thought until I read an excellent article by Katie Coker, in a recent *Pink 'Un*, detailing an interview given to her by our own Chris White.

If you haven't caught up with the facts, I should inform you that Chris White, a member of the Gloucester and District Society, is one of the first three full-time professional referees appointed by the RFU. Chris used to combine his rugby interests with a career as a primary school teacher, a lifestyle which became more and more difficult as he climbed the referee's ladder. He doesn't have that balancing act to contend with now, but points out that he hasn't yet had a full day off since he adopted his new career on January 1st.

It isn't just a match-controlling role. Quite apart from having to

endure the slings and arrows of outrageous supporters each Saturday, he has to fulfil a development role, which consists of such activities as running courses for aspiring officials, giving talks to local Societies, and conferring regularly with other first-class refs on current trends and developments. There is also the paperwork and the training.

His current big ambition is to be selected as one of the sixteen referees appointed by the International Board for the World Cup, and that would have been quite impossible in his previous existence. Taking six weeks off at the beginning of the school year would have ruled the whole thing out for a start. Even to be considered, Chris had to pass a speed test of running 40 metres in 5.59 seconds with a two-metre rolling start, and do ten metres in 1.85 seconds. Most of us would only aspire to that while getting up to the bar after the match.

Having run the line at the Wales v. Ireland game, his next big engagement is doing the same job at the reperchage match between Portugal and Uruguay on April 3rd in Lisbon.

Chris would seem to be a reasonable bet for making the final World Cup pool, and we wish him all the best in that regard.

TAILPIECE

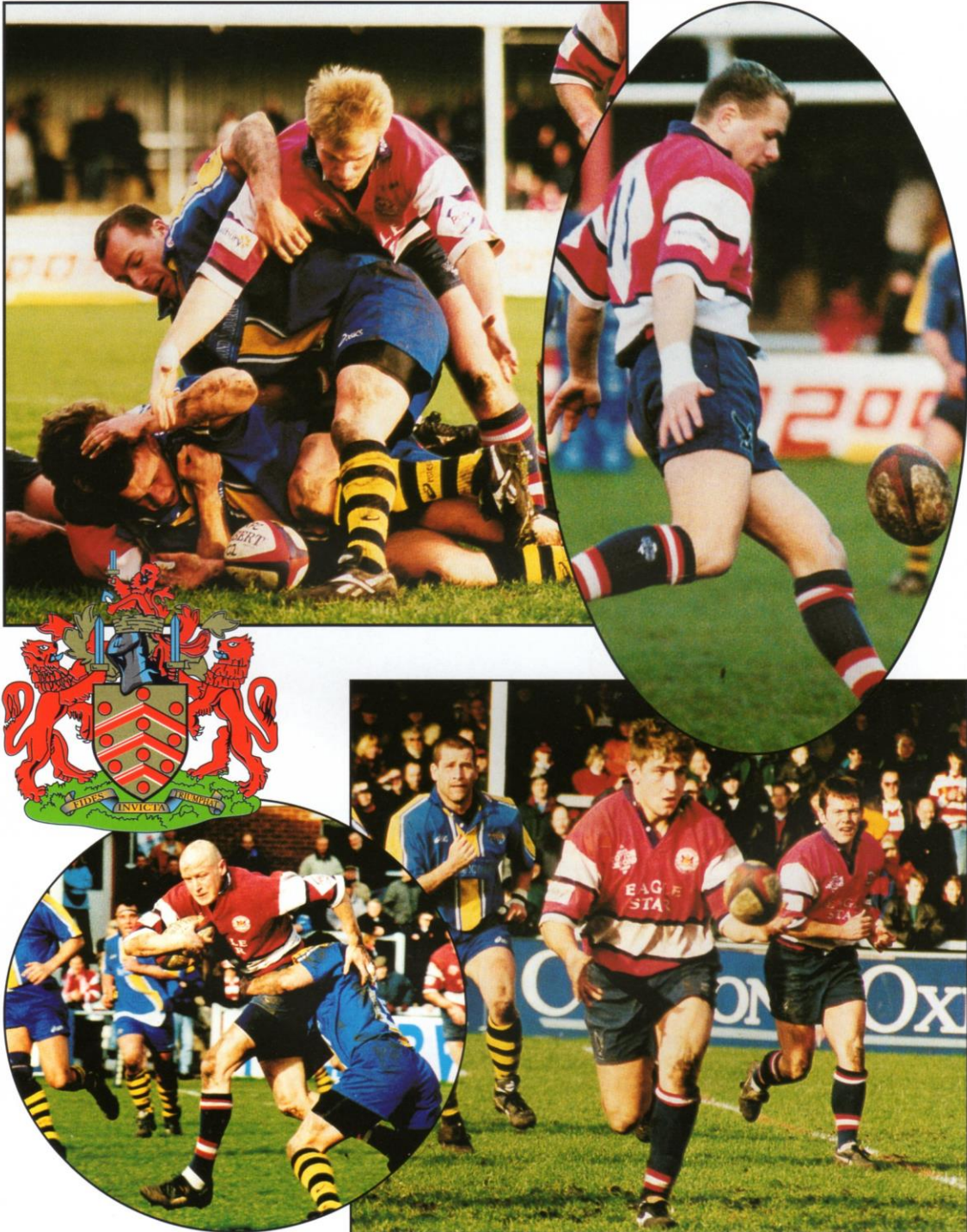
Very nice to hear, once again, from Robert Morgan. Leeds may deafen us with drummers, Saracens flaunt their Fez Boys, but we luxuriate to the sounds of the Lydbrook Band, of whom Robert is the lord High Panjandrum. Well, Secretary actually.

Robert wants to thank everyone for the magnificent reception the band received for their efforts at the Tetley Cup Quarter Final against Harlequins. He also points out that the only game they have 'lost' for Gloucester was the one against Leicester, which was the only one where the band failed to play 'La Marseillaise'. That's a mistake they won't make again. He apologises that they're not available for the Semi Final against Wasps, because they will be away on their ambitious South African tour. "But don't worry", says Robert. "We'll be back for Twickenham!"

Our own brass band, marching round Headquarters? Now there's a thought!

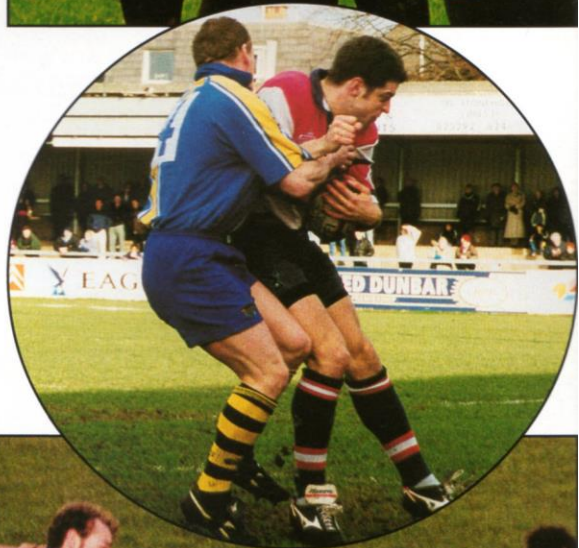
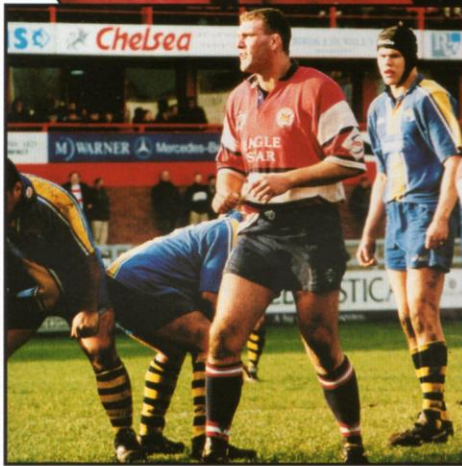
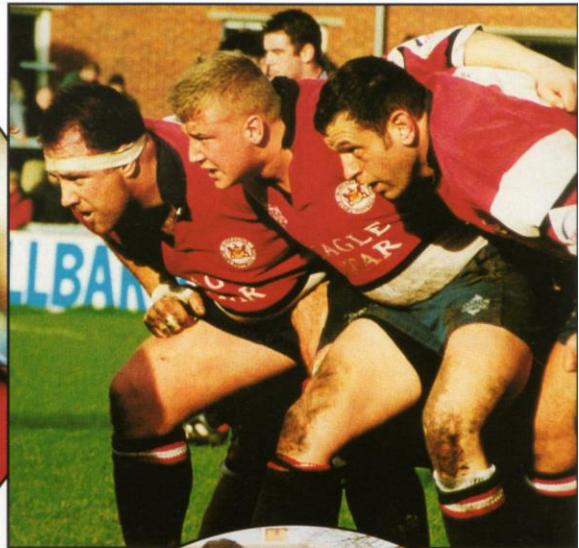


Action Special



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C&G Cup QF Glos v Leeds



Views from the Balcony

When entertaining our guests, especially those who travel from the smoke to watch Allied Dunbar Premiership games, their first comment is usually 'Is that The Shed?' and they seem to take great delight in actually viewing the thousands of supporters garlanded in Cherry and White venting their informed criticism of both the opposing players and the referee. They do however get a little upset when their team, prior to the game, runs past the Shed and is constantly booed for the full length of the pitch. They do not seem to understand the fanatical support and the passions which are aroused for eighty minutes on a Saturday afternoon. In fact it is beyond their comprehension that supporters should react so passionately to any incident which occurs and give vent to their feelings with such passion.

I do however feel that there should be a communication system between the Shed and the Boxes. One - we would be able to hear better some of the informed comments, which at the moment we can only guess at because of the roars of laughter, and secondly of course we could help The Shed appreciate the finer points which we view from our balcony.

Whilst I would agree with 90% of the comment I would strongly disagree with The Shed's questioning of the parenthood of Craig Quinell. I have met his father Derek on many occasions and can assure you that he is Craig's true father. I have not as yet met his mother.

The Brunsdon Group

The box gives the Warner Group the opportunity to entertain loyal customers, to show appreciation for past business and help build a relationship for the future. Staff meeting customers away from business premises is a totally different experience for staff and customers.

Premiership rugby becomes a seven day talking point in the city; if you are interested in rugby you have a point of view. Any sport at the top level is what people who follow or play sport aspire to. It can become a goal for local talent.

Warners

Having grown up on a diet of Stuttgart FC, Real Madrid and lately FC Tenerife, my German colleagues were somewhat sceptical about joining me in Box 12 for their first live viewing of the very English game of Rugby. I didn't bother to explain the differences between League and Union: there is only so much you can do to educate the Europeans; after all, the Euro takeover bid did not need to include GRFC and The Shed. Converted I said and converted they were. Whilst fluent English answered the questions, "Glawster! Glawster!" needs no translation. "What an amazing game" and "I can't believe how fast it is" seemed the only answer from my male guests, whilst a rough translation of "look at the legs on that" came from the girls. Needless to say these people are all now Gloucester RFC converts, and woolly hats, fleeces and polo shirts now decorate torsos and heads in such far away places as Dusseldorf, Paris, Austria and the Canary Islands. They can't wait to come back and savour the unique and very special atmosphere of Kingsholm. Long may it remain.

Richard - Box 12



Tom Beim Interview

Tom Beim is laid back. I mean, he's laid back in the sense that he doesn't seem phased by much and exudes a calm, confident demeanour, but he's also literally laid back on the physio's couch when I meet him. A few minutes later, he ambles back into the players' bar. That looked very painful...

"No, I was just having a rub. I'm not injured, I was just a little stiff

after yesterday [against West Hartlepool]. We played some nice rugby and scored five tries to two, but we made too many mistakes and gave away too many penalties to be able to win the match. It's

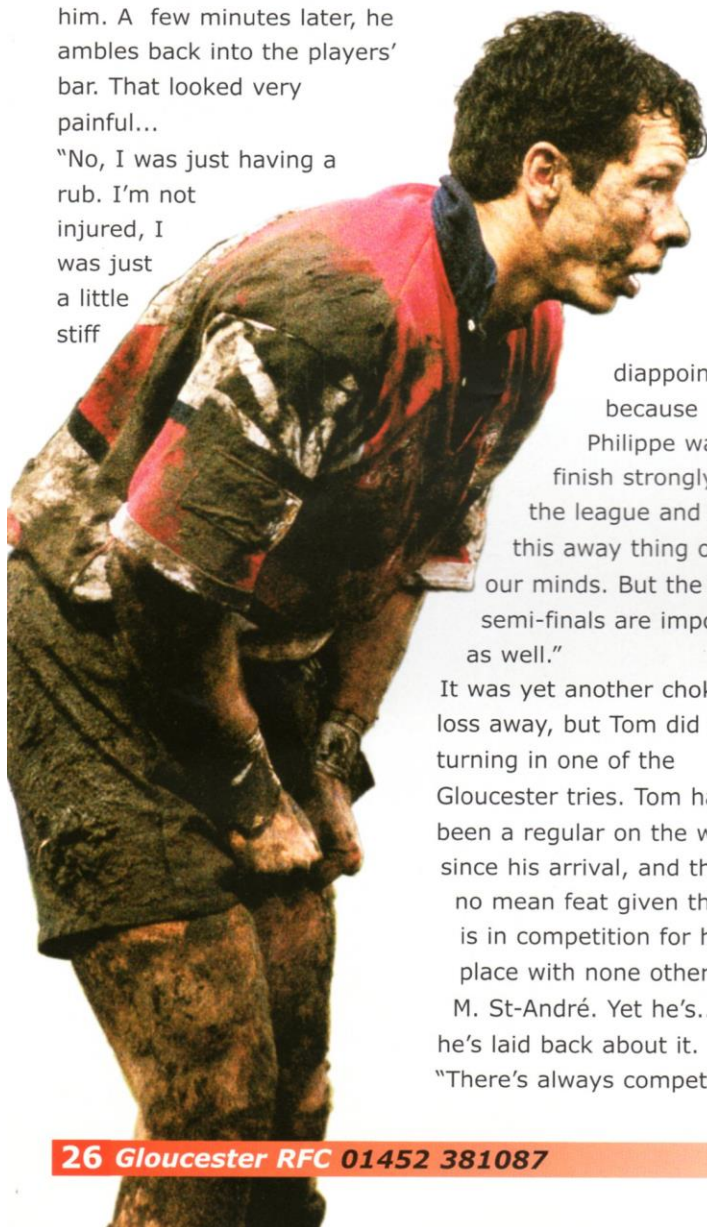
disappointing because

Philippe wants to finish strongly in the league and to get this away thing out of our minds. But the cup semi-finals are important as well."

It was yet another choking loss away, but Tom did his bit turning in one of the Gloucester tries. Tom has been a regular on the wing since his arrival, and that's no mean feat given that he is in competition for his place with none other than M. St-André. Yet he's... well, he's laid back about it.

"There's always competition

for places," he says, and adds, "Philippe's helped me a lot. He even started helping me before I came to Gloucester." As you know, Tom joined Gloucester at Christmas. Or, I should say rejoined, as he began his top flight career at Kingsholm. "I felt I was in a bit of a rut here after I left school," he states, frankly. "I wasn't really going anywhere, in part because I had a few injuries. But then I went on the England tour of South Africa, where I won my first caps and thought that the time was right to make the move. I wanted to get away and improve my rugby somewhere else. I think it worked very well up at Sale but the time was right to come back at Christmas. I had wanted to come back at the end of the season but December was the right time. I can't really say I was unhappy at Sale but I wasn't settled and I knew it wasn't the place I wanted to play the rest of my rugby career." In what ways weren't you settled? "Well... maybe settled isn't the right word, but... in your mind you know where you want to play and you want to



Tom Beim Interview

be with certain people - your friends. Also, I didn't do myself justice the first time I was here. I mean, you always know where you want to play. I'm from Cheltenham and my Dad used to bring me down to watch all the games when I was

younger. I was at school with Rob Fidler and played a lot of rugby with him. I always wanted to play for Gloucester and in the back of my mind when I was at Sale I always knew that I wanted to come back."

Tom came back from Sale at - coincidentally - more or less the same time that Phil Greening left for the Manchester club. Did you discuss things much with him?

"Well, we played a couple of games

together. At that time, Phil had just arrived and I was on the transfer list so it was only a couple of games. I played three games with him at most. He's another good friend of mine. He did give me a bit of abuse about coming back down to Gloucester - but that's only to be expected!"

Is he bitter about the situation at all?

"No, he's not bitter. If it doesn't work out at one club, you have to move on to another. He's playing regular first team rugby up there now, so it's worked out for him. I would have thought he'll be involved on England duty, so maybe he won't play today. I won't be playing because I'm cup-tied - I played in the first round for Sale. I still speak to quite a few of the players so it would be good to see them."

Martin Jones





GLOUCESTER



SALE



15 Audley Lumsden
14 R. Greenslade-Jones
13 Terry Fanolua
12 Mike Davis
11 Rob Jewell

10 Martyn Kimber
9 Ian Sanders

1 Tony Windo (c)
2 Chris Fortey
3 Andy Deacon
4 Adam Harris
5 Richard Ward
6 Richard Stott
7 Nathan Carter
8 Ed Pearce

16 Trevor Woodman
17 Chris Collins
18 Rob Fidler
19 Adam Eustace
20 Laurie Beck
21 Simon Mannix
22 Stephen Ward

Full Back
Right Wing
Centre
Centre
Left Wing

Outside Half
Scrum Half

Prop
Hooker
Prop
Lock
Lock
Flanker
Flanker
No. 8

Replacements

Jim Mallinder (c) 15
Matt Moore 14
Chris Yates 13
Barrie-John Mather 12
Joe Shaw 11

Jos Baxendall 10
Kevin Ellis 9

Duncan Bell 1
Phil Greening 2
Dawie Theron 3
Dave Baldwin 4
Chris Murphy 5
Pat Sanderson 6
Alex Sanderson 7
Andy Morris 8

Richard Smith 16
Tom Barlow 17
Paul Knight 18
Simon Mills 19
Simon Raiwalui 20
Phil Winstanley 21
Steve Diamond 22