

# Gloucester Rugby

Gloucester Rugby Official Matchday Magazine | 2005/06 Season | Issue 01 | Price £3.00



The Honour The History  
The Pride The Passion



**Trevor Woodman**  
Interview

**New Arrivals**  
Kingsholm signings

**Guinness Preview**  
Club by Club

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VS **Sale Sharks**

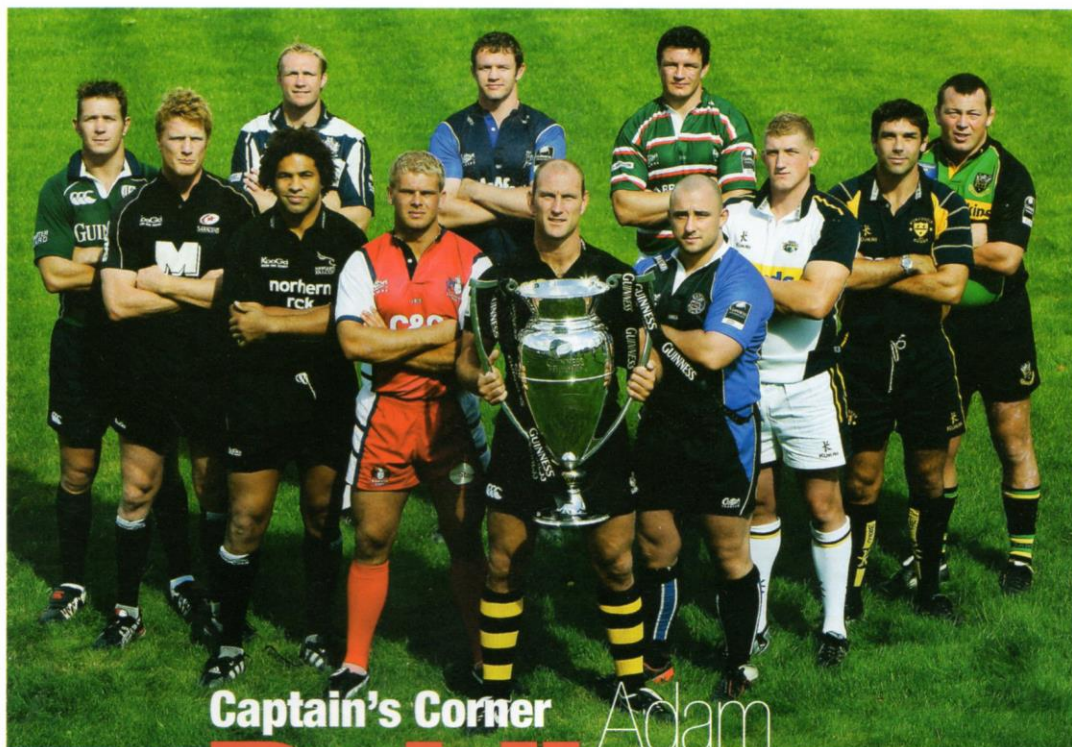
Saturday 10th September | Kick Off 15.00pm



THE TIMES



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## Captain's Corner Adam

In association with  
**dair\***

# Balding

I was hoping my first programme notes of the new season would be able to reflect on a victory over Worcester and anticipate what should be a thrilling start to the Guinness Premiership season at Kingsholm against Sale today.

I am sure the occasion this afternoon against one of the best teams in the country will be a cracker – I just wish I was leading the boys out onto the field.

On Wednesday I underwent surgery on the cheek bone I fractured against Worcester at the Gloucester Royal Hospital and I am three days into my rehabilitation.

The operation was a success and now I am looking forward to resuming running and weights in a fortnight. I remember virtually nothing of the sixth minute incident at Sixways. I can recall catching the kick-off, handing a player off, straightening up and then seeing something in my face. That's it.

Nothing prepares you for a collision of that intensity. We play a contact sport and injuries do occur but hopefully, touch wood, I will not suffer another serious one like that again.

In the dressing room I was assessed and taken to hospital for an X-ray so I missed the

rest of the 15-15 draw. The important thing was that we didn't lose on the opening weekend of the season like other teams but some of the boys were disappointed that we let two points slip away because we could have got four.

We have set ourselves very high standards this season and it was not one of our best performances but the character and determination shown by individuals still learning to adapt to our style of play was very encouraging for the future.

There was nothing to be negative about. We played with pride and passion and if

we can convert our chances against Sale, then we will find ourselves in a pretty healthy position in the league.

For the next eight weeks, I will be confined to a watching brief but I will remain closely involved with the squad. When I am not getting treatment, I will help the coaching staff with analysis, work on my skills and aim to come back fitter and stronger than before.

I would like to think any player in my situation would want to do the same and be involved with Gloucester at all times. I am not being negative. What has happened is in the past, I just want to give it my best in everything I do during these few weeks.

Enjoy the game today, get behind the boys and cheer Gloucester onto a victory.

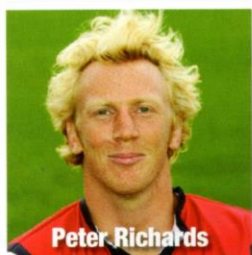
The **Passion**

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# Who's New at Kingsholm

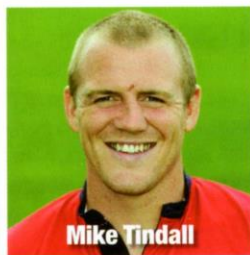


The matchday programme rounds up all the summer arrivals.



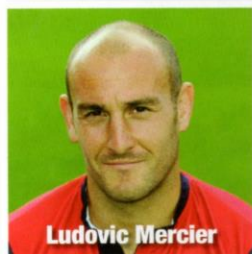
**Peter Richards**

**PETER RICHARDS:** The scrum-half played the majority of last season in the centre for his former club Wasps and joined Gloucester on a two-year contract. The 27 year-old was a member of England's Churchill Cup squad and replaces Andy Gomarsall. Richards has made 89 Zurich Premiership appearances and joined Wasps in the summer of 2003 after leaving relegated Bristol, and has represented England at various levels up to England 'A' and is a sevens specialist.



**Mike Tindall**

**MIKE TINDALL:** The World Cup winning centre joined from Bath and is now recovered from shoulder and foot injuries that kept him out since December last season. Tindall made 85 Zurich Premiership appearances for Bath, scoring 26 tries, and has 41 England caps to his name. He will be a key figure at Gloucester this season.



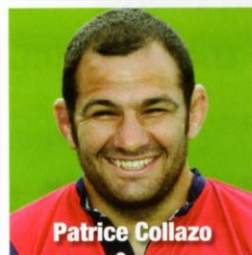
**Ludovic Mercier**

**LUDOVIC MERCIER:** The stand-off rejoined Gloucester from Pau. The 28 year-old, spent two seasons with Gloucester between 2001 and 2003. In the 2001/02 season Mercier became the only English-based player ever to score more than 500 points in competitive matches for his club in a season, finishing the Zurich Championship winning year with 508 points in all competitions. And he started the season with all 15 points against Worcester last Sunday.



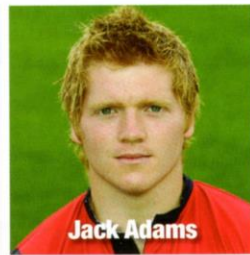
**Rob Thirlby**

**ROB THIRLBY:** Thirlby signed on a two-year contract from Penzance & Newlyn. The 26-year-old started his Premiership career at Saracens before joining Gloucester's West Country neighbours Bath Rugby. Thirlby has spent the last two seasons with Penzance and competing on the international sevens circuit for England.



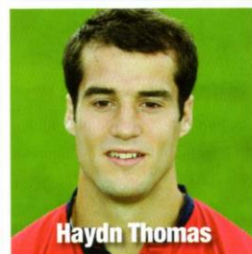
**Patrice Collazo**

**PATRICE COLLAZO:** The 30-year-old loose-head rejoined Gloucester from Toulouse after spending two years with the French club. The 6ft 2" prop joined Gloucester for his first spell in the summer of 2001, after five years with Begles Bordeaux, and spent just over a season with the Premiership side.



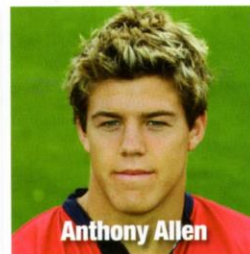
**Jack Adams**

**JACK ADAMS:** The powerfully constructed centre is a product of St Peter's School and scored in Gloucester's pre-season victory over Calvisano. Strong and direct, he is capable of running excellent attacking lines and already has England experience at Under-18 level.



**Haydn Thomas**

**HAYDN THOMAS:** Thomas signed a two-year deal from Exeter. The 22 year-old Thomas was a regular member of the promotion chasing Exeter Chiefs side last season, and has represented England students and England U18s.



**Anthony Allen**

**ANTHONY ALLEN:** Allen has already made a big impression since joining the professional ranks from Millfield School in the summer. He played a major role in Gloucester's victorious Middlesex Sevens triumph with a couple of crucial tries in the final v Wasps. He has exceptional feet and balance and is quick thinking. Was on the bench against Worcester last weekend.

gloucester rugby.co.uk





# Trevor Wood

**Trevor Woodman** had the rugby world at his feet. The World Cup winning prop was a key member of England's triumph in Australia less than two years ago. But today, as his former clubs Gloucester and Sale meet in the Guinness Premiership, he has been forced into retirement because of a back injury. The matchday programme pays its tribute.



# man



**P**UT YOURSELF, just for a minute, in the shoes of Trevor Woodman. Since the end of February, he has been unemployed after Sale terminated his contract and last month he announced his retirement from rugby union. He is 29-years-old.

Sale Sharks exercised a get-out clause in Woodman's contract earlier this year because of a serious back injury that has ultimately ended his career.

Woodman has a trapped sciatic nerve caused by a bulging disc in his lower back, which leaves him in considerable pain and without a certain amount of strength down his left-hand side. He has also shed a stone and a half in weight from his optimum playing condition.

He moved out of his rented house in Manchester and relocated to Aylesbury to be closer to physiotherapist Don Gatherer - the man who helped him overcome a serious neck injury and who he has worked with non-stop on his current condition. He is now living in

Cheltenham and considering a move back to his native Cornwall.

The daily rehabilitation sessions tried to build strength around the injury but leave him in serious pain and restrict his movement. "Since the end of February, I have been unemployed - that's hard to take. It has been incredibly stressful on a daily basis," he said.

"Deep down in my heart, I have known for a couple of months that it wasn't getting any better but the decision was still massively hard to take. All I have known for 10 years is life as a professional rugby player. That's gone now.

"The World Cup was great but I felt I had so much more to prove as a player for club and country.

"I thought I was coming into my prime as a front row forward. I have spent years trying to get into a position to be the best. I will miss the adrenalin rush and those challenges you faced as a forward and at the moment I am not sure how I will get that in my life."

Woodman had the rugby world at his feet a little under two years ago. A multi-faceted

**"Since the end of February, I have been unemployed - that's hard to take. It has been incredibly stressful on a daily basis."**

front row maestro, he was well capable of making the loosehead position on England's scrum his own until the next World Cup. He was surprisingly quick, had tremendous feet, was a damaging defender and could scrum with the best of them.

He was also a certainty for this summer's Lions tour to New Zealand after switching from Gloucester to Sale last summer. The injury happened during a weights session in the gym last September when he twisted awkwardly.

After then, he played only twice - the last occasion at the end of October. A lengthy lay-off did not improve the situation and Sale decided enough was enough and invoked the clause that stipulated that if Woodman was unavailable for selection for more than 24 weeks, as the doctors' reports suggested he would be, then he could be released.

"At the moment I am very limited in what I can do," he said. "I can manage a light jog and a cycle but I want to avoid having an operation. Some days it feels good but my job now is to get fit for life rather than professional sport.

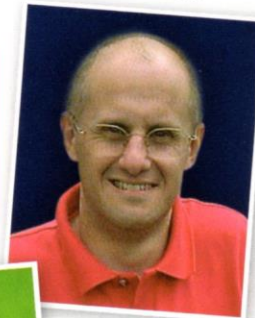
Woodman's problem is complicated because the disc is bulging inwards, not outwards. That makes surgery an even riskier option. If you imagine a pipe running down a wall with a leak at the back, then you get the idea how difficult and precarious surgery would be.

"All I can do is everything I can to help myself," he said. "It's been a pretty horrible time and now I just want to concentrate on getting better."

Woodman played his part in one of the most successful Gloucester and England teams of recent times and his contribution should not be forgotten.

# Q&A with Mark Cornwell

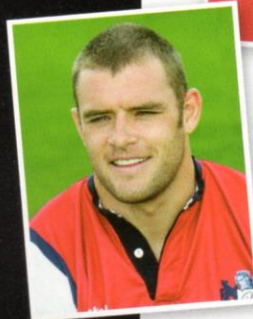
By Ian Randall



**Q** Who introduced you to your sport?

**A** Clive Stuart Smith Snr, the father of the former Gloucester scrum-half. He was my PE teacher, and although I was playing football, he asked me if

I fancied a game of rugby because I was so tall. It was as simple as that. The boys will laugh at this, but at school I used to play centre and take the goal kicks. I was a great kicker and scored lots of tries.



**Q** What was the first car you owned?

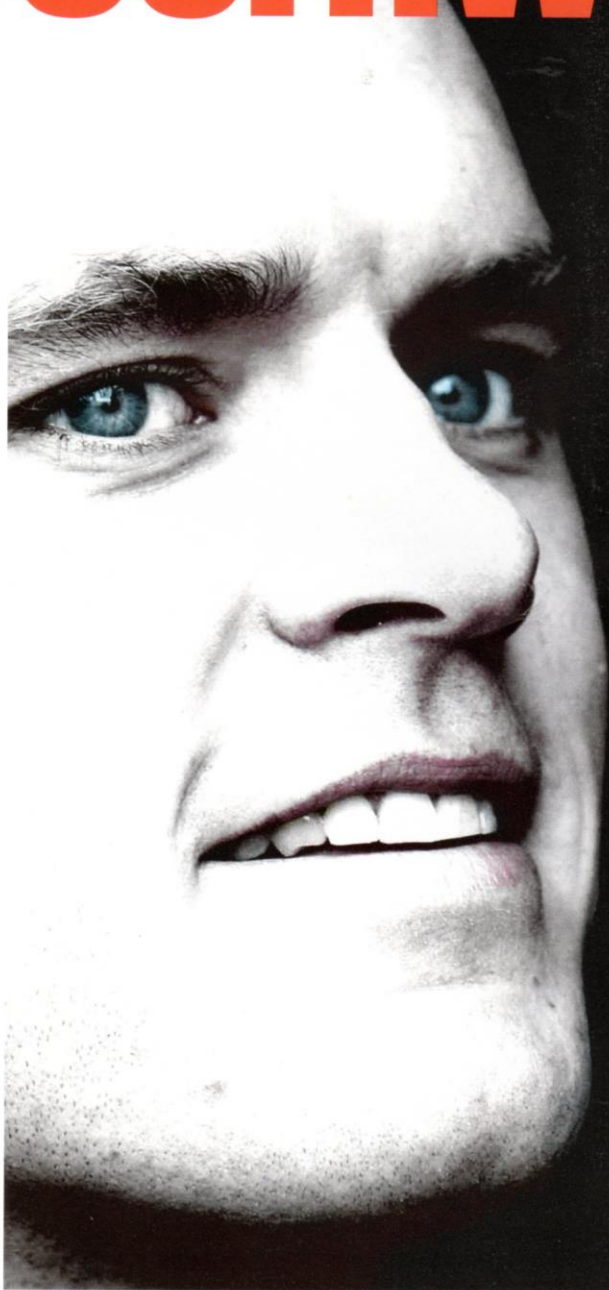
**A** A racing green Austin Princess. It had a leather strap on the steering wheel and sheepskin covers on the seats. I say it was because my Nan gave it to me as a present when I was 18! There was a patch on the roof lining too because I used to wear Brylcreem on my hair in those days and my head didn't clear it by much. You could nearly scrape it off and fry chips with it.



**Q** What was the worst album you ever bought?



**A** There have been a few. Remember Musical Youth, Rick Astley and Tiffany? I



## After a summer catching up on the decorating and gardening, regular Shed dweller **Bob Fenton** cannot wait for the new Guinness Premiership campaign to get underway.

# Fan Zone



Peter Richards

**W**ell hello again, and a happy new season to you all.

It seems to have been a longer summer than usual and ages since we had a meaningful game here at Castle Grim. Of course we have had the pre-season friendlies, but that's kind of like a phoney war – a lot of action but not the same intensity. But today's the real deal so lets get on with it. We've had a bit of an eventful summer though. It seems like a lifetime ago since Nigel Melville saddled up his horse and headed off into the sunset. It's never a pleasant thing when something like that happens, and I am sure I speak for most people when I wish Nigel the

best in whatever opportunity comes next for him.

Dean Ryan and Bryan Redpath seem to have welded the squad together and the stories coming out of the camp seem to be very positive. Certainly the players looked sharp enough during the pre-season fixtures and even looked like they have shed a few kilos.

It has been suggested that the new-look shirts have something to do with it as the design is slimming. If that's the case I will buy myself one immediately to see whether it can turn a hundred kilos of finely tuned beer gut into an apparent wall of muscle. Perhaps I'll get Westy to try one for me first, if it works for him it'll work for anyone!

As ever the open day was a success. I don't know how many other clubs do such things but I know that both Mike Tindall and Peter Richards said that it was a new experience for them. Long may it continue, though I think that some players see rather too much of supporters during the week.

The way Terry Fanolua greeted the boy Matthew with a guarded "Hullo mate" seemed to suggest that he recognised this particular stalker from too many encounters in the street or the local Tesco's. Sorry Tezza, but he knows where you live and since Toddy moved you have become his number one target...

Before leaving thoughts of

the summer we shouldn't forget that we were the first side this summer to scoop up some silverware as Simon Amor steered our sevens outfit home to pick up the Middlesex Sevens trophy last month.

Sad to say I missed the tournament being away on holiday. Even sadder to say I remembered it was on and kept up to date via the internet but worse still I had remembered to take a couple of items of the "lucky everything" kit with me. And they worked. Being in Spain in an average of 35 degrees of sunshine this did not extend to a rugby shirt, however one day a guy was sitting by the pool wearing not only a pair of jeans but also a Leicester Tigers long-sleeved shirt. Madness... There's something strange about those east midlanders...

It's good to see some old faces back on the pitch, Ludo is going to ensure that the traffic down Worcester Street will need to take evasive action on a regular basis as he boots kicks over the top of the Buildbase Stand. And the awesome figure of Patrice Collazo – together with Vickster looking as fit as the proverbial butcher's dog, and the human wrecking ball that is Olly Azam - will cause similar chaos in opposing front rows.

And some exciting new faces have appeared on the team picture this season. Tindall's arrival (and I think we have all had enough of the "By Royal Appointment" jokes by now) gives us some major muscle in midfield, and it will make a

change to see Peter Richards ripping up the Kingsholm turf wearing Gloucester's colours rather than the black of Wasps for a change.

Talking of Peter, am I the only one who thinks he bears an uncanny resemblance to Harpo Marx (not for younger readers – Harpo was one of the Marx Brothers and no relation to Karl). So therefore from this day forth he is to be known as Harpo.

Add to them a handful of exciting youngsters and some older, more experienced hands and we have a squad that has competition for places in most departments. This has to be good for the future, as very few players can now believe that they have an automatic first team spot and that will keep them on their toes.

So today then, to Sale. I wonder what went through Bryan Redpath's mind when he saw the fixtures and realised that his first home game on the coaching staff was going to be against his former employers. It's funny how sport has a habit of throwing things up like that – same as last week with Gommars and Foro's new club welcoming their previous outfit in their first outing.

I am sure Bryan will want to get a win over his old side almost as much as us supporters will want the victory to put the memories of last season firmly behind us. It won't be straightforward though, long gone are the days when Sale at home could have been regarded as a bit of a points banker.

The Saint will have a well drilled squad and has strengthened well. There are



## “Long gone are the days when Sale at home could have been regarded as a bit of a points banker.”

some familiar names on his roster of new players, not least Epi Taione. And a bunch of French guys who not many of us will have heard of. But don't take them lightly; we all know that Philippe has an excellent eye for talent.

He will also want to improve on last season when, despite finishing third in the championship, Sale lost more games than any other side in the top five. Our boys will need to be on their metal to make sure that they don't get off to a flyer against us today.

And finally as we're welcoming Sale today it's worth both sets of supporters reflecting on the misfortune that has led to Trevor Woodman being forced to retire from the game through injury. Dougie looked to have the world at his feet as one of the best young props in the

game, let alone in the country, before a training ground injury ruined his career.

It just goes to show how much these players risk every week. Supporters are often quick to criticise when things go badly on the pitch – perhaps we should remember just how much these guys are risking before we start complaining about what they have or haven't done. I'm sure everyone here today will join me in wishing Dougie well for whatever the future holds for him.

Anyway, it's great to be back at Kingsholm for a real game. Let's play our part and not have any of those long periods of quiet murmurings that we had last season and give our side the kind of vocal support that other clubs can only dream about.

The **History**



# Match Action



## Worcester Warriors 15 Gloucester Rugby 15

Sunday, September 4 SIXWAYS

Attendance: 9,726

Referee: A. Rowden.

Pictures by Bruce Seabrook – GPA Images info@gpaimages.com

**L**UDOVIC MERCIER marked his return to the Premiership with all the points as Gloucester began their Guinness Premiership campaign with a hard-earned draw at Worcester.

The Frenchman landed a drop-goal and four penalties to cancel out five penalties from James Brown in a ferocious confrontation at Sixways. Gloucester will be satisfied with the two points but not the performance after skipper Adam Balding suffered a fractured cheek bone in the sixth minute after a collision with Drew Hickey.

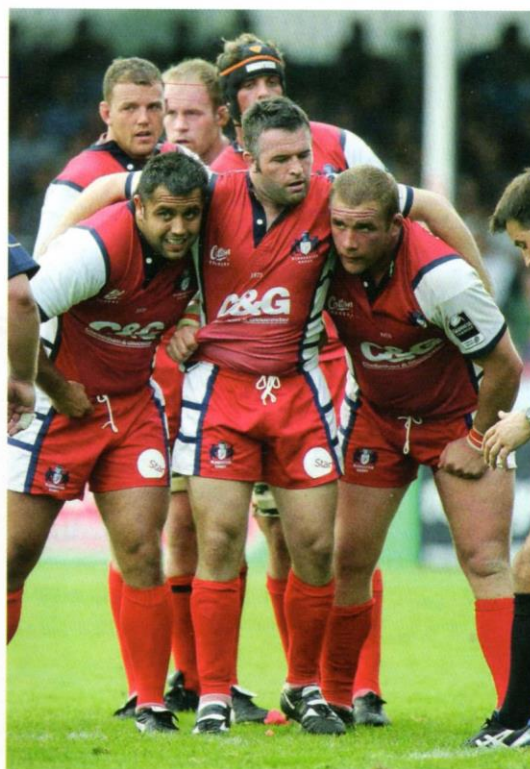
He will be out of action for eight weeks following surgery on Wednesday but on a tense afternoon, the teams were locked at 9-9 at the break. Mercier had booted Gloucester into a 6-0 lead with a penalty and drop-goal but Brown pegged Gloucester back as the match became bogged down

by a stream of penalties and a lack of continuity.

Brown nudged the home side ahead again twice in the second half but Mercier's cool marksmanship ensured there would be no mishap on the opening weekend of hostilities.

Gloucester's head coach Dean Ryan said: "All things being considered, there were times when we were lucky to get out of that game with a draw but there were also times we looked like we could win it. "In the middle 20 minutes of the second half, we showed we could play some rugby but then again, I don't think there was a phase that went past two in the match, either due to intervention from the referee or mistakes.

"We allowed the game to become a bit of a scrap and that was always going to make it tough."





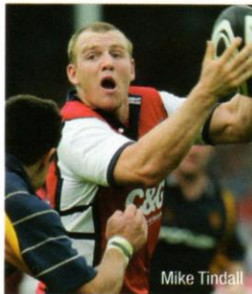
The History

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**Peter Arnold** is credited with writing some of the most entertaining programme notes in English rugby. But has the thought of an Ashes victory over Australia taken his eye off the oval ball?

# Peter Arnold



Mike Tindall

## BRAIN INTO GEAR

I must admit to having something of a problem at the moment. Usually, at this point, I'm positively salivating at the prospect of another Kingsholm season, revelling in the prospect of enjoying the triumphs and enduring the disasters the next eight or nine

**“enjoying the triumphs and enduring the disasters of the next eight or nine months.”**



Duncan McRae

months are sure to produce. This time round, however, I'm having trouble getting my brain into gear, because the Ashes saga has been so enthralling, and indeed is still going on.

So I'm torn between my allegiance to Gloucester and my lifelong love affair with the hard-ball game, and especially with the traditional battle with the Old Enemy in baggy green caps. However, in this place, and on this day, there is only one

question that matters: how are the Gloucester boys going to get on this season?

And that's my second problem. Normally, one has had a pretty fair idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the squad, and dare I say it, of the management team. Not so for the season 2005/6. All the new faces around, on and off the field, make this campaign a very difficult one to prognosticate.

For example, how are the returning 'old boys' going to get on? We're well aware of the formidable talents of Ludo Mercier, Ollie Azam and Patrice Collazo, but there's a lot of competition for their places this season, both from established players and emerging talent. Past glories are no guarantee of success in a game which changes and develops season by season.

Second, we mustn't forget the good and faithful servants such as Terry Fanolua and Duncan McRae. They're not going to go

quietly, that's for sure.

Then there are the high-profile signings. Messrs Mike Tindall, Peter Richards and Rob Thirlby all arrive with excellent pedigrees, but again, they don't have a God-given right to a place in the side.

Most exciting of all is the whole raft of young talent which is breathing down the collective necks of the established and arriving stars. Many of them, people like Ryan Lamb, Olly Morgan, James Merriman and Luke Narryway have impressed during the pre-season frolics, but are they yet ready for the whole new quantum leap which is the English Premiership? Injuries and loss of form will inevitably give some of them chances, but only time will tell if they're up to the job.

It's going to be a fascinating dilemma for the selectors, and should make for a highly charged and intriguing season.

Top up your glasses chaps. The arguments start now.

## SEE WHAT THE BOYS IN THE BACK ROOM WILL HAVE

There have certainly been big changes in the playing strength during the close season, and the same can be said about the back room team.

Phil Vickery once described Dean Ryan, in a TV feature, as being "the grumpiest man in English rugby." He's braver than I am. You could say that remark was a compliment, because I suspect that a touch

impressive pedigree, as Rugby Manager, should, I assume, lift some of that burden, and allow DR to do what he does best; scaring the living daylights out of opposing teams. And he'll do just that if he can instil into the playing squad the same uncompromising attitudes that he displayed himself during his playing days.

Of course, every iron fist needs a velvet glove, and that could well be provided by the very welcome arrival of Bryan Redpath on the Kingsholm

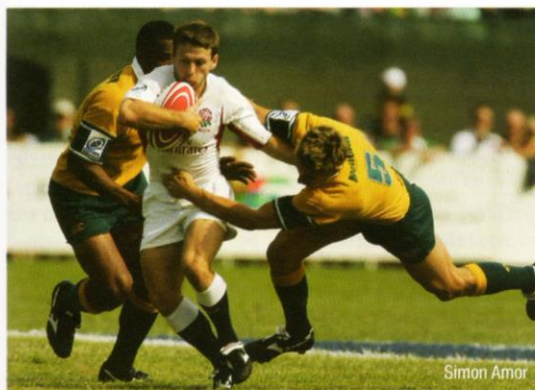
## "He was a player I always admired in his Scotland and Sale days."

of the cloven hoof is a distinct advantage when you're running a Gloucester rugby team. What Dean says goes, and that's the way things should be.

If comments attributed to him after his departure from Bristol are true, then he's perfectly happy to work his unmentionables off on the rugby front, but is less than enamoured with the administration chores that come with the job of Director of Rugby. The arrival of Rob Burgess, who has an

scene. He was a player I always admired in his Scotland and Sale days, and I can't think of a better guy to bring on the trio of young scrum halves which we shall be calling upon this season.

For example, Simon Amor is arguably the finest Sevens player that England has ever produced, but has sometimes seemed to have difficulty translating his undoubted skills into the fifteen-man arena. If Bryan can assist that transition, then Gloucester, and perhaps



even England, will have cause to be grateful to him.

The playback I get from Sale is that Mr Redpath's inspirational skills had a great deal to do with the development of players like Mark Cueto. I've no reason to doubt it, and it bodes well for Gloucester.

As we know only too well, things won't go right on the pitch if off-the-field matters are less than satisfactory. The vibes I have been receiving thus far seem to indicate that a totally new atmosphere is now pervading Kingsholm. That's music to the ears, and has to be welcomed.

We shall just have to wait and see what the boys in the back room have in store for us.

### BEST OF LUCK TO DOUGIE

Although it wasn't entirely unexpected, we were all very sorry to hear that Trevor Woodman has had to yield to the inevitable and announce his retirement from rugby. In the end the back injury he sustained in training, ironically enough with Sale, proved intractable, and just too serious to allow him to continue.

The sad thing is that 'Dougie' was at the height of his powers and had a great deal more to offer. In an all too short career, he had caused serious mayhem to opposing props of the highest quality, as he demonstrated during the epic World Cup Final. No one has yet been able to explain to me just why he was penalised right at the end of that game while England were ahead. My own theory is that he was dominating proceedings so completely at that point that the ref thought he must be doing something illegal, so pinged him just on principle.

It's also sad that we shall not be seeing his bulky frame, moving at a rate of knots, ball in hand, simply destroying everything in sight on the way to the line. It was certainly one of the finest sights at Kingsholm for a few seasons.

We all send our best wishes to him, and hope he does well at whatever he does from here on in.

I see he hopes to remain in rugby in some capacity. It would be nice if a niche could be found for him here at Castle Grim.

The History

# Fortress Kingsholm

At the start of the season, one of Gloucester's aims will be to remain unbeaten at 'Fortress Kingsholm'. But as regular programme contributor **Dave King** investigates, only four previous skippers have managed the illustrious feat.



Mike Nicholls



Steve Mills

**W**e all like to think of Kingsholm as our very own 'Fortress' and it was only three seasons ago that Stuart Barnes and Dewi Morris on Sky TV used the phrase to describe our home.

Despite the difficulty for visiting teams to win at Kingsholm it has been almost impossible for Gloucester teams down the years to remain totally undefeated during the course of a season.

Only four captains have led their team to this achievement during Gloucester's history. The first was **Fred Webb** in the 1920-21 season, when the club were undefeated in 21 matches at Kingsholm.

They won 19 of those matches and drew the other two. For the record the sequence went as follows: Lydney 17-0, Bath 9-6, Northampton 14-8, Cinderford 5-0, Bristol 6-3, Guy's Hospital 6-3, Moseley 29-0, Swansea 10-0, Stroud 24-0, Old Merchant Taylors 16-3, Bridgewater 18-8, then came the first of those two drawn matches. United

Services 5-5, Leicester 12-3, United Services 16-3, Newport 12-9, Cheltenham 18-9, Cardiff 16-11, then the second of those tied matches, Pontypool, ironically another 5-5 draw. Victories then resumed Coventry 26-5, Llanelli 11-8 and Manchester 20-3. A total of 295 points were scored and 92 conceded here at Kingsholm.

**The squad of players Webb captained included:** Arthur Hudson, W.D. Fox, Tom Millington, George Holford, Syd Smart, A. Hall, W.F. Warde, F.W. Ayliffe, Tom Voyce, J. Harris, Stanley Cook, J.F. S. Langston, P. Gabb, D. Flynn, G. Smith, G. Welshman, S.A. Brown, F. Ashmead, J. Phelps, D.J. Brown, N. Daniell, H.J. Webb, C. Cooke, T. Burns, A. Robbins, A. Hall, W. Collins, G. Thomas, F. Manswell, C. Mumford, F. Curtis, W. Dix, Lieut G.C. Bloxam, W. Washbourn, E. Richardson, A. Wright, E. Curtis, S. Bayliss, T. Bridges.

It should be noted that **Fred Ayliffe** captained the team for half of that season due to a long term injury sustained by Fred Webb.

Amazingly, a total of 51 years elapsed before the feat was equalled or should we say surpassed by 22 wins and one draw in the 1971-1972 season under the captaincy of **Mike Nicholls**.

It was the season when the club won the RFU National Club Competition by defeating Moseley 17-6 at Twickenham. The sequence of results went as follows: - Clifton 26-11, Coventry 16-15, then came that one drawn match versus Bristol 12-12. Victories then followed against Ebbw Vale 16-12, Harlequins 12-4, Newport 18-0, Oxford University 16-6, Moseley 23-10, Lydney 14-3, Bath 24-16, Old Merchant Taylors 67-3, Wasps 28-3, Newbridge 16-6, St Lukes College 23-14, Swansea 16-10, Aberavon 12-9, Richmond 17-0, Cheltenham 21-3, Guys Hospital 33-13, Headingley 18-6, Birkenhead Park 29-4, Stroud 16-6 and Pontypool 16-4.

A total of 489 points were scored and only 170 conceded. It should be noted that the previous season of 1970-71 under the captaincy of Nicholls only one match was lost from the 30 played at Kingsholm and that was to Bedford who won by 21-11.

In Nicholls' other season as captain of this club only three matches were lost at



Kingsholm out of 29 played. This was an outstanding feat. During the three seasons when 82 matches were played here with Nicholls at the helm only four matches were lost!

**Included in the squad were:**

Eric Stephens, Bob Clewes, John Bayliss, Roy Morris, John Dix, Tom Palmer, Mickey Booth, Robin Cowling, Mike Burton, Jim Jarrett, Alan Brinn, John Watkins, Mike Potter, Dick Smith, Jerry Herniman, John Haines, Nigel Jackson, Dave Owen, Richard Jardine, Ron Etheridge and Roy White.

**Steve Mills** was the third Gloucester captain to attain the feat by leading the club to an unbeaten record at Kingsholm in the season of 1981-1982. Ironically, once again in an undefeated season the club triumphed in the RFU National Club's Knockout Competition.

It was a season where the club won all 28 matches played at Kingsholm. The results sequence was: Stroud 22-3, Coventry 21-15, Rosslyn Park 25-0, Pontypridd 16-12,

Newbridge 6-0, Cheltenham 19-3, Pontypool 14-3, Ebbw Vale 23-0, Newport 19-0, Nottingham 20-7, Loughborough College 34-0, Oxford University 46-6, South Wales Police 24-4, Plymouth Albion 58-0, London Irish 19-6, Lydney 27-7, Moseley 27-21, High Wycombe 40-6, Bristol 10-3, Exeter 34-3, Sale 13-6, Saracens 3-12, Abertillery 21-7, Headingley 34-4, Birkenhead Park 24-12, Sale 40-0, Bath 33-15 and Exeter 21-7.

At the seasons conclusion a 12-12 draw with Moseley at Twickenham in the National Cup crowned an unforgettable campaign. It was a season when 720 points were scored and 162 conceded on the hollowed Kingsholm turf with seven teams failing to register a single point!

**The Gloucester squad that Mills**

**captained was:** Paul Ford, Phil Pritchard, Paul Taylor, Steve Parsloe, Richard Mogg, Les Jones, Steve Baker, Malcolm Preedy, Phil Blakeway, Steve Boyle, John Orwin,

John Gadd, Mike Teague, Mike Longstaff, Nick Price, Paul Wood, John Fidler, Gordon Sargent, Kevin White and Graham Thomas.

The only other Gloucester captain to hold par with Webb, Nicholls and Mills is one from the professional era – **Jake Boer**.

In the 2002-03 season the club remained unbeaten in the 16 matches played at Kingsholm. A sequence of results that went as follows:- Sale 44-8, Bristol 45-18, Saracens 44-14,

points were scored and 233 conceded.

**The squad of players Jake Boer led are still fresh in the memory for many, including:**

Thinus Delpont, Henry Paul, Chris Catling, Marcel Garvey, Tom Beim, Terry Fanolua, Robert Todd, James Simpson-Daniel, Ludovic Mercier, Simon Amor, Andy Gomersall, Clive Stuart-Smith, Rodrigo Roncero, Olivier Azam, Chris Collins, Phil Vickery, Andy Deacon, Trevor Woodman, Ed Pearce, Rob Fidler, Adam Eustace, Mark Cornwell, Andy Hazell, James Forrester, Luke Narroway, Junior Paramore, Chris Forley, Adam Caves, Darren Molloy, Peter Buxton, Darren O'Leary and Mark Irish.

**“The only other Gloucester captain to hold par with Webb, Nicholls and Mills is one from the professional era – Jake Boer.”**

Munster 35-16, Northampton 18-9, Leeds 28-10, London Irish 25-20, Perpignan 33-16, Exeter 35-6, Wasps 24-17, Viadana 64-16, Saracens 51-20, Bath 29-16, Newcastle 25-23, Harlequins 29-11 and Leicester 31-13. A total of 560

Three of these captains were forwards, two being hookers – Mike Nicholls and Steve Mills with Jake Boer a back row forward. Fred Webb was a three quarter, so the odds favour the forwards at Kingsholm. What else would we expect?

