



## GLOUCESTER RFC 125TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

round this time 125 years ago...
... young men with sporting interests were invited to the Spread Eagle Hotel in Market Parade, Gloucester, on September 15 1873. A young solicitor's clerk had just arrived in the city from London and he was wanting to start a football club.

There was a good turn-out and, according to the Gloucester Journal, "about forty-five gentlemen" were enrolled in the new club, which was to become the Gloucester Rugby Football Club.

The legal clerk was Frank Hartley, and not surprisingly he was elected captain, a position he was to hold for three seasons. Hartley had been the captain of the Flamingoes club in London

The first season saw just three matches played - the first against the boys of College School, Gloucester. Despite only having ten players available, Gloucester defeated the schoolboys 1 and 6 to 0 and 0.

The results of the other two matches are a matter of considerable guesswork as the contemporary newspaper accounts do differ! The club's "home" in the early days was on The Spa, also home of the Gloucester City Cricket Club. There was a turbulent relationship between the two clubs that culminated in the rugby club being given notice to quit at the end of the 1890-91 season. The reason? The Rugby Club, in an effort to beat a severe frost and get a match played, sprinkled considerable amount of salt on the playing surface. This, of course, eventually killed the grass, which left the cricketers fuming!

So a plot of land was found at Castle Grim, the site of the old racecourse. And in the autumn of 1891, the club moved to its own ground - Kingsholm. Ironically, the records show that Gloucester's very first game in 1873 was played on Castle Grimm

From a statistical point of view, the move to Kingsholm came at exactly the right time. It was in the autumn of 1891 that the rugby authorities decreed there to be "points" for the various scores, rather than the "majors" and minors".

Gloucester won the first game played at
Kingsholm, beating
Burton-on-Trent 18-0.
By the end of that inaugural season at
Kingsholm, the Cherry and Whites had won
18 of the 22 games played on the new
ground (two were drawn and two were lost). That set the standard for
Gloucester's phenomenal home

record - going into last weekend's clash against Newcastle, Gloucester has an overall 77.36 per cent winning record at Kingsholm, one of the best

home records in a team sport in the world. No wonder the ground is sometimes referred to as "fortress Kingsholm"!



GLOUCESTER
RUGBY FOOTBALL
CLUB

