

# Gloucester Rugby

The Official Matchday Programme of Gloucester Rugby

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Gloucester Rugby  
v Sale Sharks  
27.01.07 15.00

## Life after rugby

Meet Gloucester's plumbers and electricians

## Ryan's Review

The head coach looks back at a memorable night against Leinster

## Record holder

Alan Brinn joins the Hall of Fame

## Tom Walkinshaw talks

## Opposition spotlight

All you need to know about Sale Sharks

## ALSO INSIDE

Fans Zone, Peter Arnold, ticket and community news



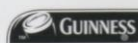
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# Captain's Corner

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"It was a performance of **pride and commitment** and I don't think anyone could deny we were the better team."

**F**RIDAY was fantastic. For me as captain it was a very special moment and showed we are capable of matching and then beating one of the best teams in the Heineken Cup.

It was a performance of pride and commitment and I don't think anyone could deny we were the better team. Europe has been a big experience for us, emotionally and physically, but to finish on a winning point shows a big element of progress and

something we must build on.

We are all disappointed to be leaving Europe because it is an environment where we have learnt a lot against some of the best players in the world. But we can use what we now know about ourselves in the Guinness Premiership for the remainder of the season.

There is now just one task ahead of us and that is in the domestic league. There are no distractions and we can concentrate fully on our

remaining games to try and gain a play-off place.

Today, we welcome Sale Sharks to Kingsholm - and they were the last team we played in the Premiership at the start of January and we obviously lost the game in Stockport.

But that day we played some excellent rugby and have done so since. Sale are a very physical team and their second half efforts that day were outstanding. They have some

excellent players and with the likes of Sebastien Chabal, Jason Robinson and Fernandez Lobbe in their squad.

Last Saturday they had a memorable game against the Ospreys so we know what we will be facing at Kingsholm this afternoon. This is a vital game for us and we are ready for it.

The support last Friday was very special and we need that same level today. Please get behind the team once again and cheer us to another victory.



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# Planning for a life after rugby

It is becoming increasingly important for rugby players to plan for the future and today the matchday programme talks to **Haydn Thomas**, **Luke Narryway** and **Jonathan Pendlebury** about life away from the pitch.

**I**N RUGBY'S amateur era, back in the days when Richard Mogg could be seen digging up Bristol Road on a Saturday morning and Mike Teague kept a Bath shirt (allegedly) in the back of his builders van to clean his boots, the top domestic players played the game following the 9 to five drudgery.

Times are now changing. The game is gathering speed as an elite, professional and evolving sport but many of today's players are heading back to the class room to gather skills and trades that will be vital to them when their careers finish.

The latest trio of Kingsholm players to head back to school are scrum-half Haydn Thomas, lock Jonathan Pendlebury and number eight Luke Narryway – who have followed the likes of Peter Buxton and Adam Eustace in gaining crucial skills.

They have just started a plumbing course at Gloscat – a two-year qualification that will provide and NVQ Level Two qualification. To complete the course the trio need to gain work experience and are on the look-out for potential opportunities with local companies in a bid to further their education.

"It is always important you look at the future, away from rugby," Thomas said.

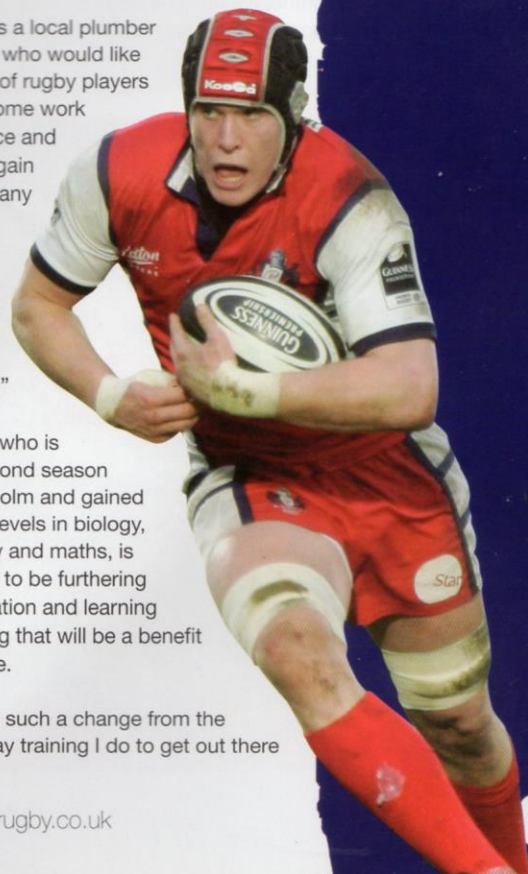
"This is something we are interesting in and learning a skill like this will be a huge benefit to us.

"We are looking for any support possible, whether work experience or sponsorship, to help us get up and running. This is something we want to get stuck into. Any support out there would be great.

"If there is a local plumber out there who would like a couple of rugby players to gain some work experience and perhaps gain his company some publicity, then we would love to hear from you."

Thomas, who is in his second season at Kingsholm and gained three A-Levels in biology, chemistry and maths, is delighted to be furthering his education and learning something that will be a benefit later in life.

"It makes such a change from the day-to-day training I do to get out there





and stretch my brain in something totally different. I think it is very important for players, no matter what their ages, to gain as much experience as possible – on and off the pitch – and this course has been thoroughly educational.”

Narraway (23), who has made 11 appearances this season, added: “There is always going to be life after playing rugby and I want to be prepared for that and give myself every opportunity in another sphere of life.

“This is a great opportunity for the three of us and adds another string to our bow away from rugby.”

Alongside Pendlebury, Thomas and Narraway the trio are joined twice-weekly by Peter Buxton and Adam Eustace, who are part of the electrical course at Gloscat.

Buxton left school with three A-Levels and his course will eventually lead to a full City and Guilds qualification which is very important to him.

His new hobby is now DIY which allows him to practise his developing skills at home, where safety is of utmost importance because he has a six-month-old son, Oliver.

He encouraged others to take up the opportunity to learn new skills at any point in their life.

“The other blokes in the class are all doing the course for different reasons too, so everyone’s different,” Buxton said. “It’s great.”

Pendlebury, who joined Gloucester from Rotherham last season and has just pledged his future to the club with a new contract, added: “I see this course as a good sideline from professional rugby and it is totally different challenge.

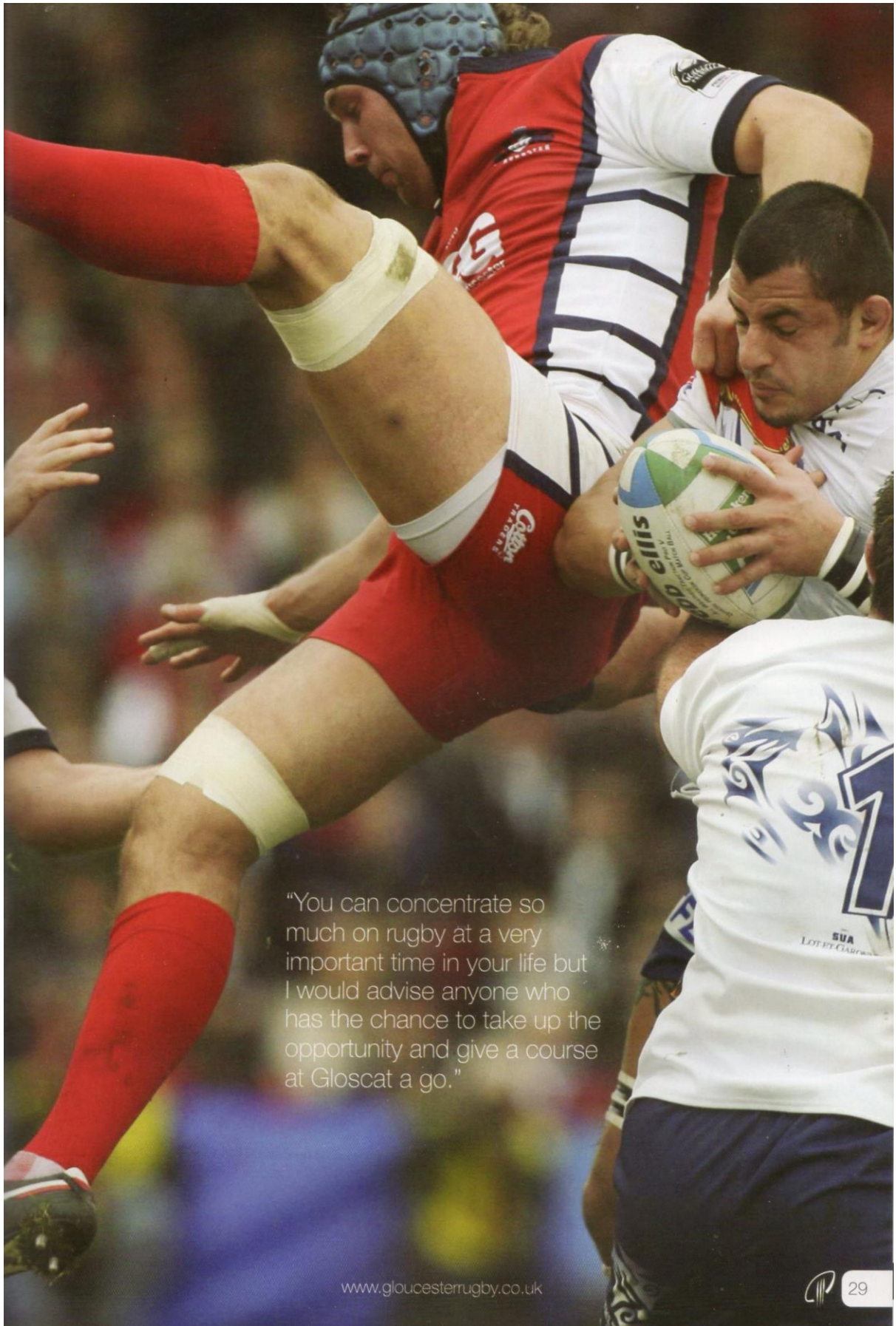
“You can concentrate so much on rugby at a very important time in your life but I would advise anyone who has the chance to take up the opportunity and give a course at Gloscat a go.

“It is not something I immediately thought about doing but now I am involved I am thoroughly enjoying every aspect of it because I can see it will be a huge benefit to me, not just now but in the future too.”

**Thomas, Pendlebury and Narraway are now looking for potential sponsors to help them on the next stage of their course. For more information, please contact Gloucester Rugby on 01452 872273.**







"You can concentrate so much on rugby at a very important time in your life but I would advise anyone who has the chance to take up the opportunity and give a course at Gloscat a go."



# Ryan's Review

**Gloucester** ended their **Heineken Cup** ambitions with a fantastic victory over **Leinster** last Friday and head coach **Dean Ryan** reflects on events with the matchday programme.



*It was a pretty special occasion last Friday Dean, you must have been thrilled?*

**DR:** All week, the majority of the build up had been centred on what a big game it was for Leinster as they aimed for a home quarter-final but it was also a massive game for us too and we wanted that to come out in our performance.



I said afterwards that Europe has been a bruising experience for us, emotionally and physically – sometimes that aspect gets lost in the ferocious turn-arounds we face on a weekly basis to get back up for these games so to finish on a high shows an element of progress we can be really pleased with.

It might sound a bit strange but we were desperate to gain some credibility – both internally and externally – we started the tournament unbeaten in the Guinness Premiership and that added an extra layer of pressure on us we could have done without.

Sometimes it has been hard to convey just how difficult, how physical and how mentally shattering these games are and we knew that as a group we were unlikely to be able to go toe-to-

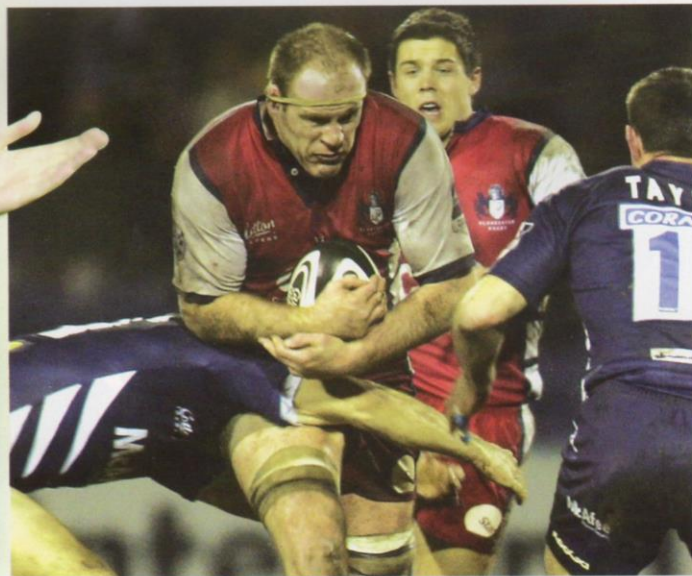
toe with some of the best players in Europe quite yet.

Friday was important because it was an emotionally charged performance and you only had to see in the faces of the guys just how much it meant to them and they must take a huge amount of credit for that.

I am positive we can get to that level on a consistent basis and on Friday we showed signs of that. We are learning to combine that smartness with a game that is based on movement and that is what is pleasing. I was thrilled for everyone associated with that performance.



*Despite that, you must be disappointed to be leaving the competition?*





"You only had to see in the faces of the guys just **how much it meant to them** and they must take a huge amount of **credit** for that."

**DR:** Of course we are. We have to pack this experience away in the background of our development for another 12 months now and that hurts because we all want to be involved in the best club competition in the world.

But at the same time we can use that as a motivational factor and call on the experiences domestically to get back again and test ourselves next season, a year further on for these players, some of whom have not been exposed to this level of competition before.



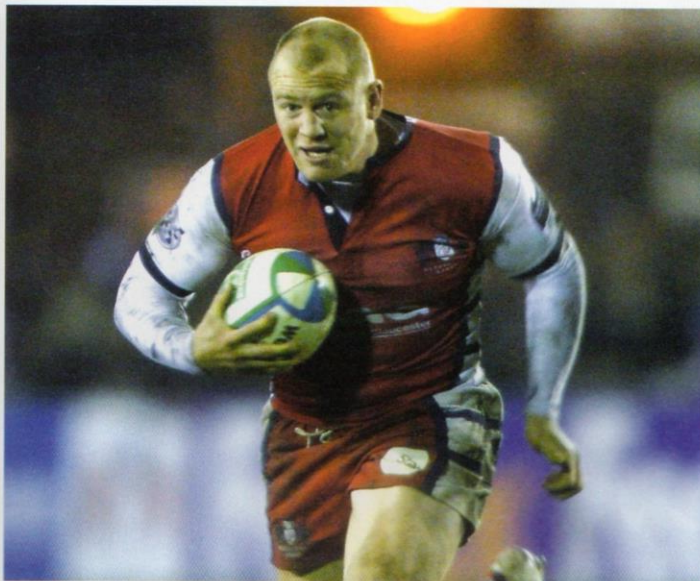
**You said afterwards that some of the lessons you have learnt only apply to the Heineken Cup, what does that mean?**

**DR:** I AM not here to be critical but some of the fundamental aspects of

the game in Europe are interpreted vastly differently from the Guinness Premiership and in those phases it has been difficult for us to come up to speed and I am certain that is through no fault of the players themselves.

Certain parts of the game we want to play don't apply in Europe and I think the competition as a whole needs to look at that for its credibility. I would just like to know if, how and whom officials are accountable.

There have been times during the pool stages when I felt we have been let down in certain areas of the contest and that must change. They could have become issues before Friday's game but as a club we kept our council because it just looks like whingeing but I felt something was said on Friday and



I hope it is taken on board.



**It's back to the Premiership today. Sale have had their problems but beat us at the start of the season, what do you expect today?**

**DR:** THEY have been hit hard by injuries but if my memory serves me right, their forward pack at Edgeley Park a couple of weeks ago was packed full of quality like Lobbe, Chabal, Jones, Lund, Schofield and they still had Bruno on the bench.

What pleased me that day from our point of view was that we looked like we wanted to play an exciting and attacking brand of rugby and we must carry that forward this afternoon.

Sale's physicality was outstanding in the second half and they must take great credit for that. Their game against the Osprey's last week verged on the remarkable such was the ferocity of the contact situation and I am pretty sure they will come out firing today.

They are the champions of England and will not want to give that away with a fight, so I am pretty sure it will be full-on.

All I am concerned with though, is our game. If we can get the level of performance right, use last Friday as a springboard, then we will stand a good chance.

We only have the Premiership to concentrate on now, so every game until the end of the season is massive for us.



# Gloucester RUGBY



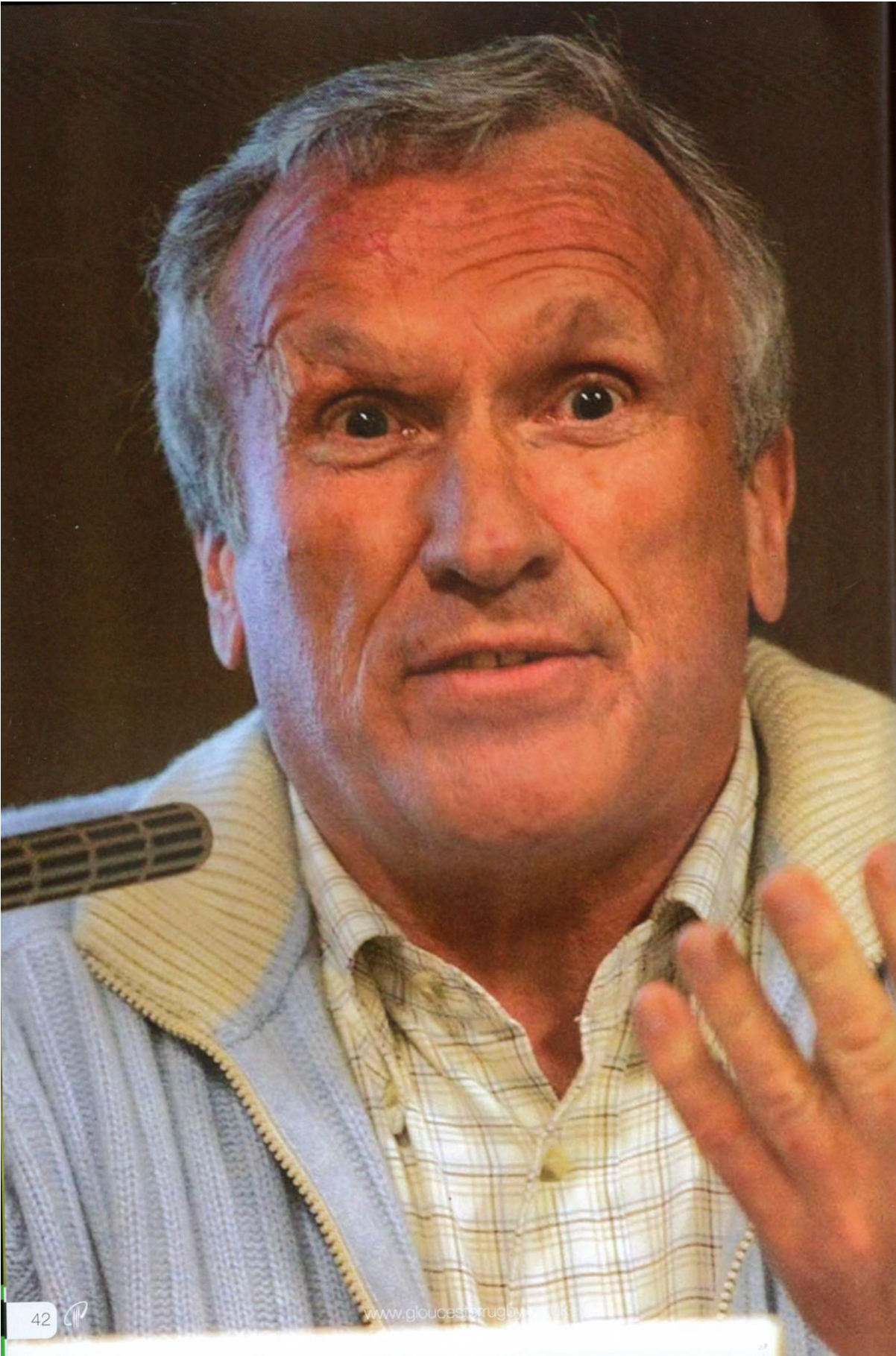
# Sale SHARKS

	Iain BALSCHAW	15	Full Back	15	Iee THOMAS	
	James BAILEY	14	Right Wing	14	Steve HANLEY	
	Jack ADAMS	13	Centre	13	Chris MAYOR	
	Mike TINDALL	12	Centre	12	Mark TAYLOR	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	11	Left Wing	11	Oriol RIPOL	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Richard WIGGLESWORTH	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Ben FODEN	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Eifion ROBERTS	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	Sebastien BRUNO	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Stuart TURNER	
	© Marco BORTOLAMI	4	Lock	4	Chris JONES	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Dean SCHOFIELD	
	Peter BUXTON	6	Flanker	6	Ignacio Fernandez LOBBE	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Magnus LUND	
	Adam BALDING	8	No 8	8	Sebastien CHABAL ©	

## Replacements

	Mefin DAVIES	16	Substitute 1	16	Andy TITTERRELL	
	Christian CALIFANO	17	Substitute 2	17	Ben EVANS	
	Will JAMES	18	Substitute 3	18	Barry STEWART	
	Jake BOER	19	Substitute 4	19	Chris DAY	
	Peter RICHARDS	20	Substitute 5	20	Mike HILLS	
	Ludovic MERCIER	21	Substitute 6	21	Jason ROBINSON	
	Olly MORGAN	22	Substitute 7	22	Chris BELL	









# Tom speaks out

On Wednesday, Gloucester chairman **Tom Walkinshaw** and head coach **Dean Ryan** spoke at an open fans' forum at King's School on a variety of subjects – including the Shed, Grandstand development and playing matters as the matchday programme rounds-up.

**GLOUCESTER'S** chairman Tom Walkinshaw has confirmed a long term plan to re-develop Kingsholm and confirmed the Shed will be replaced with a grandstand sometime in the future.

Although Walkinshaw expects it to be several years before the terracing will be replaced, he has made it patently clear that the Shed, in its current guise, will be replaced by a more modern structure in line with the demands of the professional game.

"We want a great ground up to modern standards and conditions that must comply to the league," Walkinshaw said.

"We will develop in stages to increase the capacity but we want to keep the atmosphere in place but make it a better environment to watch rugby."

The stadium development dominated the first fans' forum for six years, which was held at The King's School but less than half the venue capacity of 300 season ticket holders attended.

Walkinshaw referred to a recent survey of Guinness Premiership supporters, in which Gloucester came out 11th of the 12 clubs for its provision of seating

and covered areas before managing director Ken Nottage displayed the first plans for the new Grandstand that will begin in March.

Walkinshaw added: "The whole ground has to be redeveloped. The Main Grandstand is just the first step.

"The aim is to get the capacity to 20-25,000 over the next three to five years, so the Shed will be redeveloped in the course of that time but we will do it in stages.

"We're still running the numbers and we will be putting the first attempt at planning in the next two months. It could take years before something happens.

"But the Shed will be coming down. It is nothing special as a structure and we will put something there that will be better - and it can be called the Shed if people want it to be.

"The experience should be better in terms of seeing the game and comfort, the fans make the Shed not the structure.

"Ultimately we will have a grandstand on that side of the ground to get the capacity for us to compete with the other top teams. People who watch rugby from the Shed are very fond of



"Building work is due to get under way on March 26, following the rearranged Guinness Premiership game against Newcastle."

it and we can understand that but we have to follow the likes of Leicester and develop and move forward.

"Eventually, we all have to move forward and the Grandstand is the first step on that but the whole thing is a progression."

Walkinshaw confirmed that work on the redevelopment of the main Grandstand is underway with planners and designers. Building work is due to get under way on March 26, following the rearranged Guinness Premiership game against Newcastle, to increase Kingsholm's capacity to around 16,500.

Walkinshaw revealed the likely venue for Gloucester's remaining home game against Bristol on April 28 will be Ashton Gate, with plans in place for any potential play-off fixtures – and confirmed that season ticket holders will be informed as soon as a decision is made.

"There will be a lot of support activity to ensure our fans get there and outnumber anybody else," he said.

"It was between Bristol and Oxford and we decided on Bristol to make it easier for everyone to get to.

"Other games will be played at Kingsholm and we are looking at how to handle the seating for the people who sit in the Grandstand."

The chairman also stated that the club have taken consideration of the supporters who currently stand in front of the Grandstand.

"We are not going to jump someone from terrace pricing to the top Grandstand price - we want to keep fans, not drive them away," Walkinshaw added.

On the topic of the dispute between the Rugby Football Union and the clubs, Walkinshaw said in his role as chairman of Premier Rugby - the body looks after the clubs - that he expected a compromise deal to be reached shortly.

"There was a time when I thought the RFU were not ready to negotiate but we hope to have a compromise deal in place soon that will suit both sides. There has to be a bit of give from both parties but it needs to be more than just a sticking plaster to take the thing forward.

"We have been here for the thick end of 10 or 12 years but we want to be dynamic, move forward and keep the clubs solvent."

Head coach Dean Ryan and his assistant Bryan Redpath also fielded questions on the ground redevelopment as well as playing matters.

Ryan said: "I'm in the market place for players and I need to be able to show them good facilities, but I need to know they are coming to Gloucester for the rugby. I may speak to someone who has been at Toulouse one-day and Leicester the next and we need to be able to compete.

"Having a great stadium and a great team do not go hand-in-hand. We have the starting point with a very good team, we need the facilities to match.

"We want Gloucester to be at the forefront of European rugby – on and off the field – to achieve that regularly we need to be in the shake up in the Guinness Premiership regularly and we want to be in the play-offs regularly.

"As a side we are capable of some very good performances and the exposure to the Heineken Cup gives us a better chance of that. We have started to put together a great team and we want to develop that."





"Having a great stadium and a great team do not go hand-in-hand. We have the starting point with a very good team, we need the facilities to match."



# Match Action

## Time line

 19 mins	
Penalty TRY, Walker CON	7-0
 33 mins	
O'Driscoll TRY, Contepomi CON	7-7
 57 mins	
Contepomi PEN	7-10
 65 mins	
Califano TRY	12-10
 74 mins	
Foster TRY, Lamb CON	19-10
 89 mins	
Contepomi PEN	19-13

## Gloucester Line-up

15	Iain Balshaw	
14	James Bailey	
13	Jack Adams	
12	Mike Tindall	
11	Mark Foster	(1t)
10	Willie Walker	(1c)
9	Peter Richards	(yellow card)
1	Nick Wood	
2	Mefin Davies	
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Marco Bortolami	(capt)
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	
7	Andy Hazell	
8	Adam Balding	
REPS		
16	Olivier Azam	(Davies)
17	Christian Califano (1t)	(Wood)
18	Will James	(Brown)
19	Jake Boer	(Hazell)
20	Rory Lawson	(Richards)
21	Ryan Lamb (1c)	(Walker)
22	Rudi Keil	(Tindall)

**Gloucester Rugby**  
**Leinster Rugby**

**19**  
**13**



## Heineken Cup, round six

Friday, January 19

Referee: Nigel Owens (WRU), Attendance: 12,500

**G**LOUCESTER ended their Heineken Cup campaign with a wonderfully determined victory over quarter-finalists Leinster at Kingsholm.

Three tries – from Christian Califano, Mark Foster and a penalty try – eased Gloucester to a thoroughly deserved victory that was more conclusive than the scoreline suggests.

Leinster were lynched in the front five, dominated in the scrums and taken to task in the line-out and with the back row also getting through a tremendous amount of work, Gloucester dominated the forward

exchanges virtually throughout.

Gloucester took the lead after 19 minutes when Keith Gleeson pulled down a – powerful driving maul – one of a series of close-range attacks the home side mounted in the opening quarter.

Although both teams lost a player to the sinbin – Gloucester's Peter Richards joining Brian O'Driscoll – it was the visitors who struck next when the British Lions skipper followed up to score after excellent breaks from Stephen Keogh and Jamie Heaslip to tie the scores at 7-7.







## Man of the Match...

### Peter Buxton



It is almost impossible to split the Gloucester eight in terms of effort and attitude but Buxton's outstanding form continued.

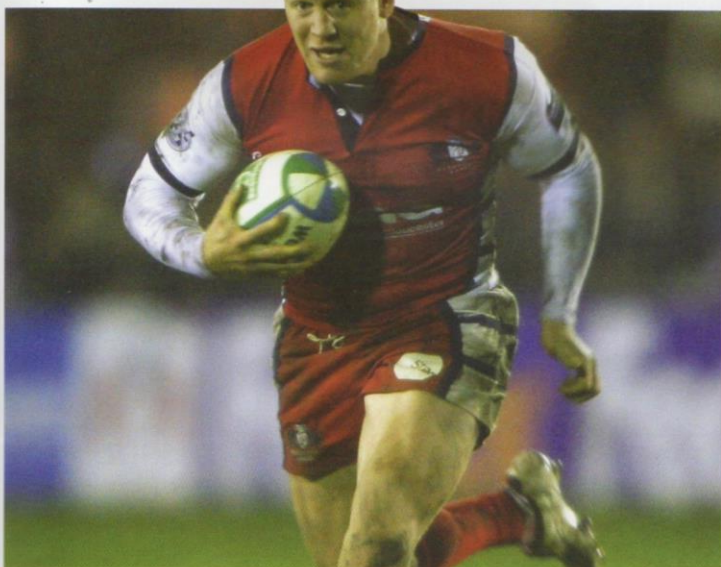
There were no more points until the 57 minute when Felipe Contepomi landed a penalty but the visitors could not capitalise. With the likes of Marco Bortolami, Carlos Nieto, Peter Buxton and Adam Balding getting through a mountain of work, Gloucester clawed their way back.

First, the hugely impressive Mike Tindall combined with Iain Balshaw and James Bailey to get Gloucester deep inside Leinster's 22 and when they won a line-out, they set in motion a powerful drive and Christian Califano was at the bottom of the ruck to score.

And with six minutes remaining Gloucester scored the try that won the match. Replacement Rory Lawson combined with Tindall on the charge and then Ryan Lamb changed the angle of attack alongside Balshaw.

The full-back cut left and found Mark Foster, who chipped ahead and won the race to gather the ball and score.

Although Contepomi kicked an 89th minute penalty to salvage a bonus point for Leinster, Gloucester were thoroughly worthy winners.



## Coaches Comment...

### Dean Ryan



"It has been a bruising experience for us, emotionally and physically and to finish on a high point is what I am after,"





# Hall of Fame with Dave King



## Alan Brinn

**Alan Brinn** made 572 first team appearances as a lock forward in a record that is likely never to be broken. Today, he joins **Dave King's** Hall of Fame.

**A**LAN BRINN holds a Gloucester Rugby record that is unlikely to be beaten - he played 572 first team matches - a remarkable record for the club which simply could not be matched today.

Alan played in an age much different to the frenetic modern game and he served this club as a player, official and supporter spanning no fewer than six decades.

To play so many games for one club, as

Brinn did so magnificently, meant he had to be outstanding in all aspects. Any man who achieves this record has to display a huge amount of loyalty, commitment, skill and conscientiousness.

The former Gloucester lock played his rugby in the amateur era and it was his ambition to become a veterinary surgeon but he eventually went into banking before going into partnership with former Gloucester centre Ron Pitt in a sports outfitting business.

Although Alan was capped three times by England he was actually born on 21st July 1942 in Ystrad, Rhondda in Wales. His birthplace was in Wales was because Alan's father served in the Royal Air Force. In the early days of his life Alan was constantly on the move to wherever his father's service postings took the family.

It was this constant movement that accounted for Alan's education at various schools throughout the United Kingdom.

He attended Annandale Grammar School in Belfast, Aylesbury Grammar School and the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe. Part of Alan's early life was also spent in the Isle of Man and Yorkshire.

Southern Rhodesia was another of the more exotic destinations for the Brinn family but while he was there Brinn was more concerned with playing soccer than the game of rugby. His considerable talent led to him being asked to captain his school team.

It was not until the family returned to Great Britain that he first played rugby at Annandale Grammar School in Northern Ireland. No doubt he was encouraged by the fact that Robin Thompson, the Irish international, who had captained the 1955 British Lions team was at the school in a coaching capacity. Also, the fact that the British Lion's captain was a lock forward probably made an impression on the youthful Alan Brinn.







“**Burton** appeared in all three of **Brinn’s** international appearances but it was not a successful Five Nations Championship for England.”

The Brinn family eventually moved to Hereford and this move enticed Alan to join his local club. That became a stepping stone to him joining Gloucester in 1962.

He soon became a prominent member of the ‘Cherry & Whites’ and the consistent form he showed attracted the attention of the national selectors and he was selected to make his England debut on the 15th January 1972 versus Wales at Twickenham.

**The England XV on Alan’s debut was: -**

R. Hillier (Harlequins, Captain); J.P.A.G. Janion (Bedford), M.C. Beese (Liverpool), D.J. Duckham (Coventry), K.J. Fielding (Moseley); A.G.B. Old (Middlesbrough), J.G. Webster (Moseley); C.B. Stevens (Harlequins), J.V. Pullin (Bristol), M.A.

Burton (Gloucester), A. Brinn (Gloucester), C.W. Ralston (Richmond), P.J. Dixon (Harlequins), A.G. Ripley (Rosslyn Park), N. Neary (Broughton Park). The referee was Mr J. Young (Scotland).

It was a day where both Brinn and his Gloucester colleague Mike Burton were making their international debuts.

Burton appeared in all three of Brinn’s international appearances but it was not a successful Five Nations Championship for England. However, it was a Championship that was unresolved as Ireland did not meet Wales or Scotland due to the political unrest in Northern Ireland. Brinn’s England debut saw the Red Rose country face a Welsh team fielding 10 of the successful 1971 British Lions touring party. The then household names of J.P.R.

Williams, Barry John and Gareth Edwards spring to mind easy in one of the greatest teams of all-time. Such was the wealth of talent available to the Welsh selectors at that time that it came as no surprise that Wales won by 12-3.

However, despite difficulties on the international front for England, Brinn will always have cause to remember the year of 1972 with a great deal of satisfaction. He not only made his international debut but also helped Gloucestershire to their 12th championship title. **The Gloucestershire team that defeated Eastern Counties in the final at Kingsholm by 13-9 was: -**

P. Butler (Gloucester); A.J. Morley (Bristol), J. Bayliss (Gloucester, Captain), R. Jardine (Gloucester), S. Dix (Gloucester); D. Pointon (St Paul’s College, Cheltenham),



# Hall of Fame...

P. Kingston (Gloucester); M.A. Burton (Gloucester), D. Protherough (Moseley), B.G. Nelmes (Bristol & Cardiff), J.H. Fidler (Gloucester), A. Brinn (Gloucester), J. Haines (Gloucester), D.M. Rollitt (Bristol), J. Watkins (Gloucester).

Alan had the satisfaction of scoring a try after Eastern Counties had taken an early lead.

That season of 1971-1972 ended in fine style for the lock forward for he was a member of the Gloucester XV that won the inaugural Rugby Football Union Knockout Cup competition when they defeated Moseley 17-6. **The Gloucester team on that memorable occasion was: -**

E.J. Stephens; R.J. Clewes, J.A. Bayliss, R. Morris, J. Dix; T. Palmer, M.H. Booth; R.J. Cowling, M.J. Nicholls (Captain), M.A. Burton, J.S. Jarrett, A. Brinn, J.A. Watkins, M.J. Potter, R. Smith.

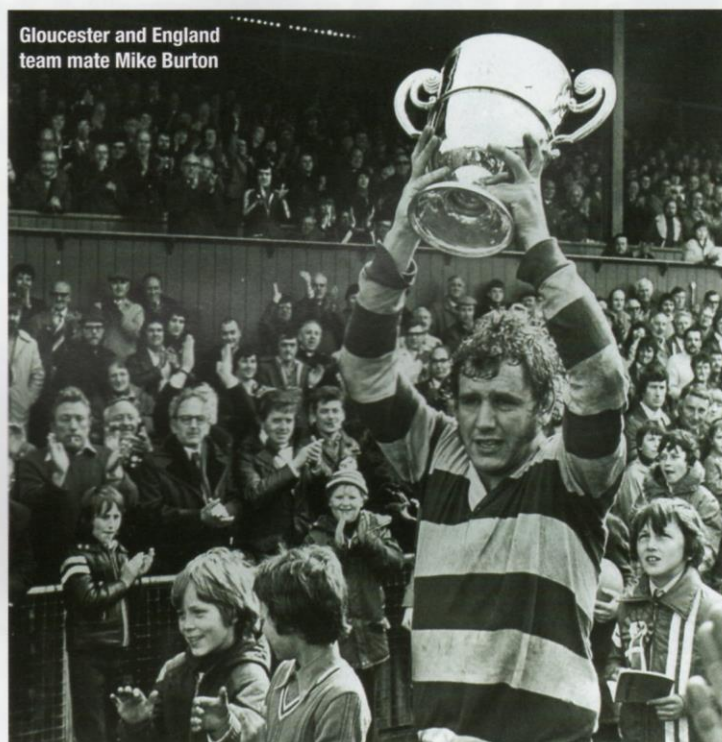
Alan is one of only five players that have made over 500 appearances for Gloucester – a record that is likely never to be broken. He made his 500th appearance against Abertillery in a 28-3 victory on Wednesday 18th September 1974.

On this momentous occasion he was presented with a suitably inscribed tankard by his team mate Mike Burton, on behalf of his Gloucester team-mates. His record is unlikely to be surpassed as

**“Alan is one of only five players that have made over 500 appearances for Gloucester – a record that is likely never to be broken.”**

the clubs fixture list is not so extensive in the professional era. After his retirement from playing Brinn became an England Rugby Union Associate National Selector. He also served Gloucester in the official

capacity as chairman. Alan still retains an avid interest in club affairs. He certainly set a remarkable record by any stretch of the imagination and he has been a wonderful servant to this club.



Gloucester and England team mate Mike Burton

## CAPS

YEAR	VERSUS	DATE	VENUE	RESULT
1972	Wales	15th January	Twickenham	Lost 3-12
	Ireland	12th February	Twickenham	Lost 12-16
	Scotland	18th March	Murrayfield	Lost 9-23





# Fan Zone with Bob Fenton

It was some night last Friday for Shedhead **Bob Fenton** who cannot wait for Gloucester to get back into action against Sale Sharks this afternoon.

**S**O THAT'S that then... The Heineken Cup dream is over for another season for us, and with no Anglo-Welsh Cup thingy to think about, and apart from a few minor distractions of the Six Nations over the coming months, it is heads down and let's go for one of the top four spots in the Premiership.

Those of us who were lucky enough to be here last week saw a performance that showed just what a side we have here at the moment. It's easy to get a bit despondent after a couple of defeats – and I admit to saying before the game that I thought we had only a very slim chance of success – but Friday night showed that this Gloucester side is class. I'll go as far as to say that I thought it was the best performance that I have

seen by this current crop of players.

If we can carry the determination and effort that was shown across the squad last Friday in the demolition of Leinster – and make no mistake that was a demolition of a side widely tipped to go all the way in the Heineken Cup competition – we should be nailed on for a play-off place.

However, let's not start counting chickens yet, there is the small matter of Sale Sharks to be taken care of today.

Sometimes the fixture scheduling in the Guinness Premiership leaves you scratching your head in amazement. Sort of like wondering why we are now seemingly destined to play Wasps away on every Boxing Day, and how some

fixtures appear back to back.

A bit like this one, in fact. Our last Premiership outing was an away trip to Sale where we manfully managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Credit to Sale for the way they fought back from seemingly hopeless position to take the points, but courtesy of the fixture scheduler's aberrations, we have a chance for immediate payback.

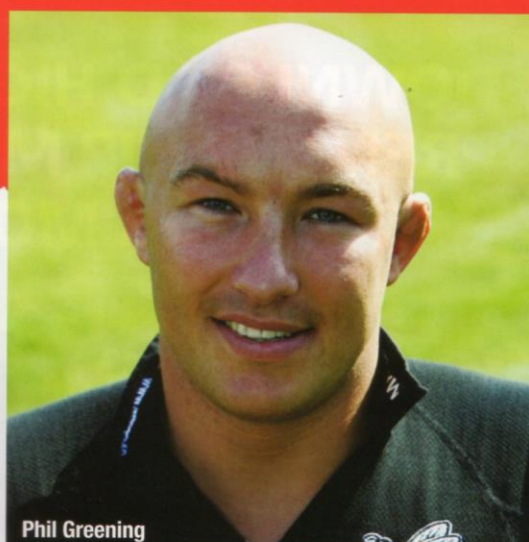
I think it's fair to say that Sale have a few problems at the moment, apparently their treatment room now resembles something like the field hospitals you saw in M\*A\*S\*H (note for younger readers: this was a cult TV programme from a few years back about err... field hospitals, actually). In fact rumours were flying around that Sale would not be arriving on a team bus like normal,

“Or maybe it's just the fact that every time we roll up there the **Wasps** players ratchet up the intensity notch by a few hundred twists and take us apart.”





Kingsley Jones



Phil Greening

“I pointed out to **Kingsley** that, according to press reports of the time, Natalie had been seen playing tonsil tennis in a London nightclub with one **Phil Greening**”.

instead they would be arriving in a fleet of ambulances.

You have to feel some sympathy for them though. Coming so hard on the heels of such a successful season last year to have any hope of building on that ripped apart by a succession of long-term injuries to key players must be devastating. And it's credit to them that they haven't just buckled and gone under, they are still in their fighting.

Some of that attitude must come from the coaches, we know all about the Saint's attitude, but I reckon that this fighting spirit comes from another Gloucester old boy – a certain Kingsley Jones.

What a great player he was, often overlooked when people look back on the list of great back row forwards who have graced the Kingsholm turf. But Kingsley deserves to be up there with them, a born leader who inspired his troops from the front.

He once told me that he had been captain of every side he had played in, from school kids through to Gloucester and Wales. It was easy to see why as well.

Another thing he told me once almost ended up in him crashing his car while

driving back from London.

I was conducting one of the legendary Shedhead interviews with him via his mobile, he was hands free coming back from some sort of Premiership launch meeting with a couple of the other boys in the car with him. We got through all the dull questions about rugby and stuff, so I hit him with the killer “Who is your all time object of lust?”

After a moments thought, he said, “That bird from Neighbours, who is now a singer... Natalie Imbruglia.” At this point, Richard Tombs, one of Kingsley's passengers, said that Natalie was a friend of his wife and she had been staying at his house recently. This caused much animated conversation in the car as Kingsley demanded to know why he hadn't been invited round to meet her. .

And when I pointed out to Kingsley that, according to press reports of the time, Natalie had been seen playing tonsil tennis in a London nightclub with one Phil Greening, there was even more shouting and bad language, with Kingsley unable to make up his mind if he was disgusted or elated because, to quote him, “...If she would snog that ugly (rude word deleted) I must be in with a real chance...!”

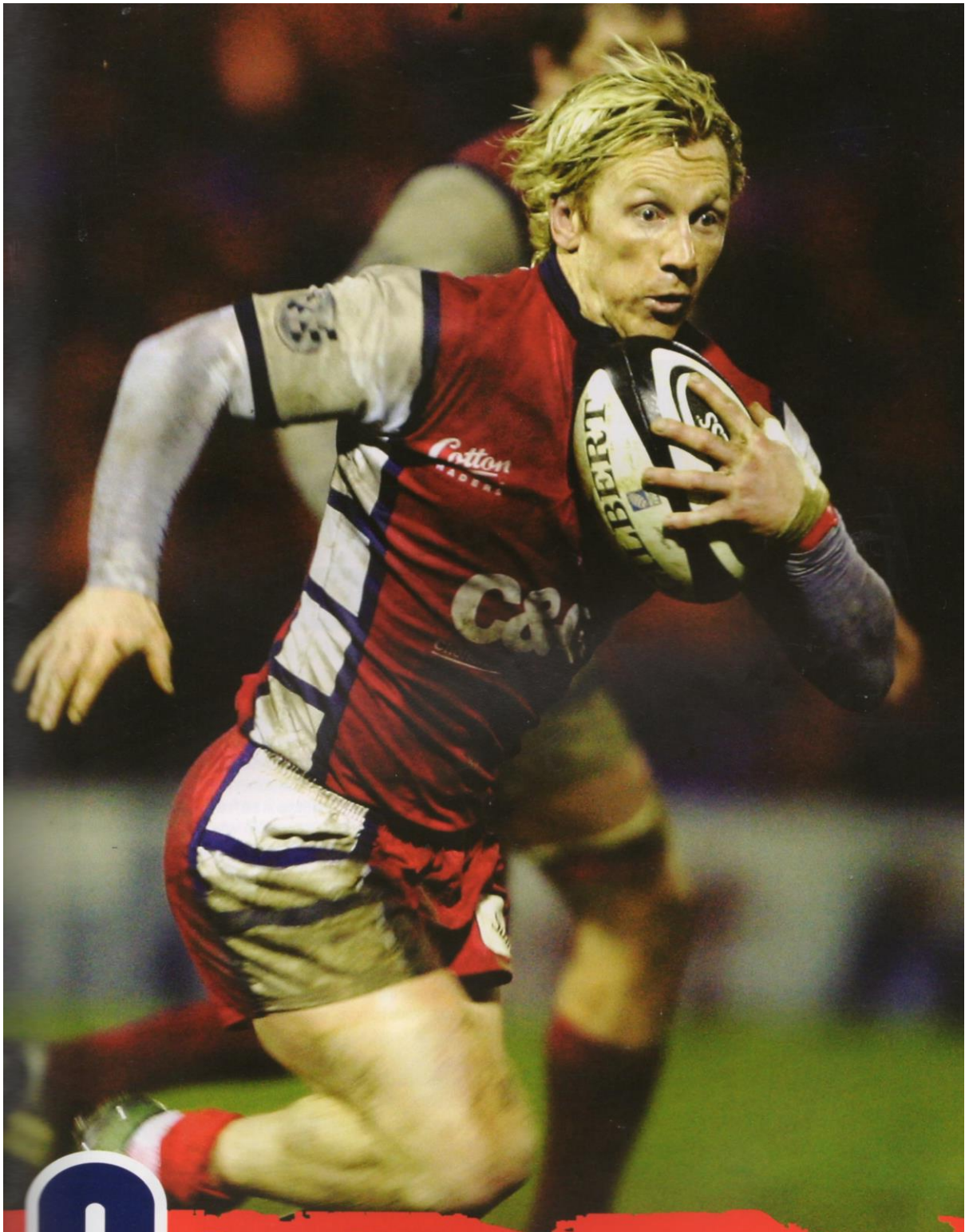
A couple of quick points to finish on... At the time of writing the news that Toulouse's Trevor Brennan faces all sorts of punishment after wading into the crowd and assaulting a spectator has just hit the press. God help us if that kind of immediate retribution catches on at Kingsholm, all the people I stand with will be beaten to a pulp in a second... Won't they, John... Not me though, because I am an angel.

And finally a word about an up-coming fixture on this very ground. On Thursday 1 February a match featuring teams from Cheltenham and Gloucester and Star will take place to raise money for the Pied Piper Appeal – for those unfamiliar with it, a local children's charity.

The game will also honour the memory of a young man who used to work for C&G – and who was a Kingsholm regular – who was killed in a traffic accident just before Christmas.

Doors open at 6:30 and the match kicks off at 7pm. Tickets cost just £3 and should be bought in advance, though a small number will be available on the night. Check local press and the fans' websites for details of how to get a ticket; try to come along to support this great local charity.





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## Peter Richards

### Stats

Position: Scrum Half • Height: 5'10"  
Weight: 13st 8lb • DOB: 10.03.78

