



GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

FOUNDED 1873

PRESIDENT

CANON H. M. HUGHES, B.A.

GLOUCESTER v. BIRKENHEAD PARK

Monday, 23rd April, 1984

Kingsholm, Gloucester

Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

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*	13. P. Taylor
	12. C. Dyke
*	11. N. Price
	Half Backs
*	10. S. Parsloe
	9. R. Wilmott
	Forwards
	1. P. Jones
	2. K. White
*	3. R. Pascall
*	4. J. Orwin
§	5. J. Brain
*§	6. J. Gadd
	7. I. Smith
	8. D. Spencer
	REPLACEMENTS
	R. Pinnell
	I. Roberts

BIRKENHEAD PARK

	Full Back
15.	S. Howarth
	Three Quarters
14.	P. Kolokotroni
	13. N. Murray
	12. J. Reeves
	11. L. Jackson
	Half Backs
10.	M. Ferguson
9.	J. McHugh
	Forwards
1.	J. Cairns
2.	R. Tinsley
3.	R. Bold
4.	C. Plummer
5.	P. McCrave
6.	N. Powell
7.	S. Calam
8.	C. Wainwright
	REPLACEMENTS
	B. Elkerton
	K. Feddigan

Referee: D. HEAD (Cornwall Society)

† International

§ Under 23 International

* County



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The other side of the Pennines

Easter, this year, has had a distinctly Northern flavour this year. Following the very welcome visit of Headingley, last Saturday, we now have the pleasure of entertaining Birkenhead Park, from well over the other side of the Pennines.

Indeed, it might surprise you to know that we now play six Northern clubs on a regular basis, which equals the number we play from either London or the Midlands.

Bear in mind that our fixture list does not regularly include Gosforth or Waterloo, and you can see why Northern counties are consistently a significant force in the Thorn-EMI Championship, and how they can produce a Divisional side which beats the All Blacks.

So Birkenhead Park are in good company. They have been playing us for a goodly number of years now, and while they've never got into the habit of regularly beating Gloucester, (who has?), they always give us a good, committed and entertaining game.

There's always an 'end of term' feeling about this stage of the season, but spice has been added to today's match by the fact that Gloucester is suffering from the inclusion of five players in the South African tour party. Which is a problem which we wouldn't mind having regularly.

On paper, the two sides look fairly evenly balanced, which can't be bad from a spectator's point of view. Anyway, as I've said before, it's nice to have a straightforward game of Rugby Football, uncomplicated by Anglo-Welsh, Merit Table or Local Derby considerations, and where no International, County or Tour places are up for grabs.

To paraphrase Confucius: if Rugby's inevitable, lay back and enjoy it. And we hope that Birkenhead Park do just that, at least as much as we intend to.

Brought your sleeping bag?

This is the way the season ends — not with a whimper, but with a bang. You could stay here all week, if you like.

Tomorrow evening it could be well worth coming along to see the Under 17 Cup Final, which should be quite an event, bringing Longlevens and Lydney into contention.

On Wednesday, we have another intriguing event, when the United entertain — if that's the right word — their opposite numbers from Pontypool.

This is United's last home game of the season, and they have given us so much excellent entertainment, this year, that they surely deserve a rousing send-off.

I believe there is no truth in the rumour that John Fidler is turning out in Thursday's game, which is the North Gloucester Combination Under 16 Final, but nevertheless, it could be a good opportunity to see some other young hopefuls who we may all be cheering in a few years time.

After all that, you'll probably be suffering from 'Kingsholm Throat' — medically known as 'laryngitis slangrefitis' — so you'll need the appropriate medication. This can be obtained, regrettably, not on the National Health — at the last 300 Club Draw of the season, with its dramatically increased prizes. Friday night — might see you there.

Next Saturday, of course, rounds off the season with the visit of Exeter, who have, I would remind you, been known to beat Gloucester at this time of the year. Certainly, you wouldn't want to miss the last game; it's an awful long time until September.

So there you are. Plenty to savour, before we turn our minds to Cricket.

Congratulations 'Fid'

There were so many congratulations to give last Saturday, that I simply didn't have space to include a further one — that to John Fidler, who has crowned an absolutely fantastic season by being selected for the Babarians Easter Tour.

He has stated publicly that this has always been an ambition of his, and if ever a man deserved to call himself a 'Baa-Baa' it's Big John.

Exeter Sevens

If, after the end of the season, you still feel you'd like to wind down slowly, you could always con the wife into having a day in Exeter on Bank Holiday, May 7th. If, while savouring the beauties of the shoe shops, you happen to see an appropriate notice, you can always say, with an air of great surprise — "Oh look! It's the Exeter Sevens today, and Gloucester are playing."

I don't know whether you'll get away with it, but if so, make your move before 12.00, which is when the first game is to be played.

Fundamentally, the Tournament, which has increased in prestige, over the past few years, includes the South West Merit Table teams, plus one or two specially invited sides. They tell me that it's a thoroughly good day out, and there's an added attraction, this year, with the addition of a Colts tournament to the festivities.

Aiming at hire things

There's no good reason why our magnificent new complex should lie fallow, during the close season, so it will be available for hire to anyone who wants to run an event.

It would be perfect for retirement parties, wedding anniversaries and shindigs of that kind, so if you're down to organise such an occasion, why not consider the Complex, which will, at the moment, have novelty value for anyone who's not usually into the Kingsholm scene . . .

Terry Tandy will do the haggling, from the Club's point of view, so contact him for full details about such things as catering, use of bars, etcetera.

Harking back . . .

. . . to the South African Tour, I can't remember any occasion when Gloucester had as many as five representatives in such a party.

If I'm wrong, some of the older hands will no doubt enlighten me, but the most Elver Eaters I can ever remember on a major England tour was four on the tour of Australia, some years ago.

On that occasion we were represented by Phil Blakeway — whom no one had ever heard of, outside Gloucester, at the time — Peter Kingston, who had to wait years for a home England Cap, Mike Burton, who got sent off, unjustifiably, as everyone admits, these days, and Peter Butler, who deserved more Caps than he had.

That tour was something of a disaster all round, and I hope it's not a precedent for this year.

We did, as you'll remember, have three representatives on the last England Tour of South Africa, in 1972. That was the tour which 'discovered' John Watkins, who was accompanied by Mike Burton and Tom Palmer, who was playing for Cornwall, at the time.

In passing, it's amazing to note that our old Bristol friend, Alan Morely, was also on that tour, and that, in the absence of Underwood and Carleton, was even mentioned as a possibility this time round, twelve years later. Anyone who saw the County Final will agree that he wouldn't have let the side down, at that.

But Gloucester's touring connection with South Africa goes back a lot further than that. Tommy Voyce went there in his heyday, and gained a great reputation out there. The occasion started a lifelong friendship with Danie Craven, which persisted until the day Tom died.

There's nothing new under the sun!

Tailpiece

Hope you had a good Easter. I wonder why Easter eggs are always the same shape as rugby balls? Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that — like most people — wingers only get one once a year.

PETER ARNOLD.