

INTO 1988

It's a month to the day since the last time we produced a programme. I don't remember such a long gap before, and it's good to be back. Hope you had a good Christmas, saw the New Year in appropriately, and have enough stamina to be able to enjoy today's game without using matchsticks to prop your eyes open.

It would be a pity if you haven't. The Gloucester/Moseley matches are always worth pulling yourself away from the telly for, and the biennial New Year visit to Kingsholm has become a valuable tradition. Remember the time when Moseley masqueraded as North Midlands for the County Final, stuffed Gloucestershire at The Reddings, came here under their true colours three days later, and got well-and-truly beaten in their turn?

Generally speaking, over the years, the games seem to have gone more or less with home advantage — and the only time we played on neutral territory ('Twickers', no less), the match was tied after extra time.

Having said that, Moseley deservedly beat us twice last season, and the lads won't want that to happen again. This year, of course, there is the added stimulus of the Clubs Championship, and both sides could do with the points. The pundits now seem to be taking it for granted that Leicester are going to walk away with it, but there's a long way to go yet, and there will be thirty blokes on the field today who will be doing their damndest to see that it ain't no easy ride.

But, quite apart from the game and its implications, I can't think of any side I'd rather see along to help us launch 1988. They're not all tall and dark, they're not strangers, and I think the ref might have something to say it they ran on the field carrying lumps of coal, but very acceptable 'first footers' none the

less

Nice to see you Moseley. Hope you start the New Year pleasantly at Kingsholm.

JOHN PLAYER SPECIAL CUP

Yes — we're nearly at that time of the year again. And, in the ways that such things happen, the draw, as you know, has thrown us into the pot against Orrell, who sqeaked past us on a disputed try, up there, in last season's Quarter Final.

You'll also remember that we squared accounts, a week or two later, right here at Kingsholm. But, one way and another, the prospects meeting them again in the Cup, but this time on our own patch, is one to make the taste buds tingle.

The date is three weeks tomorrow — January 23rd. Stand tickets at £3.00 (reserved), and £2.20 (unreserved) will be available after next week's Leicester match. Terry Tandy asks me to add that, if any

Patron prefers, they can reserve a ticket by dropping him a line before that.

Should be quite an occasion. Unfortunately, it's one that everyone has to pay for, so don't blame the club when you find that your season ticket doesn't work on that day. Like anyone else, we have to obey the rules of the Competition, and they state that proceeds of all matches are split between the clubs involved, and that we have to charge accordingly.

And that includes the car park, so your windscreen sticker won't help either. Pity, but we don't make

the rules.

HARD POUNDING, GENTLEMEN!

That's what the Duke of Wellington is purported to have remarked to his fellow selectors during the Battle of Waterloo — and that seems to be one of the few sides of real quality who don't feature in our January fixture list. So the pounding is undoubtedly going to be hard.

We start tomorrow, of course, with our usual circa-Hogmanay game against London Scottish. Not

We start tomorrow, of course, with our usual circa-Hogmanay game against London Scottish. Not having a particularly good season, but I assume that the proximity of today's game, plus the prior engagement of Kevin Dunn and Richard Pascal, will mean that we have a fairly unrecognisable side out.

Next Saturday things really hot up with the visit of Leicester, and you'll recall that the de-meriting exercise imposed by the accursed Divisional Championship means that we really do have to win that one. Didn't I read that there's an England training weekend on around then? That will make things interesting.

On the 16th we have yet another Courage Match, when Wasps are the visitors. That's International day, of course, and again, the Paris outing may well make a difference to the London side, if the Trial teams are anything to go by. Nevertheless, you can't take Wasps lightly.

are anything to go by. Nevertheless, you can't take Wasps lightly.

Orrell arrive in the aforementioned John Player game on the 23rd, and we finish the month with a trip to Bridgend.

No rest for the wicked, they say, and that apparently includes Gloucester Rugby players. It's going to be a hard month on our vocal chords, too.

It's also probably true that there are going to be good crowds for all these games, and that John Beaman will have to enforce the "no Social Club Card, no admission to the Clubhouse' rule at various times along the way, so perhaps you'd better make sure you have yours about your person at all times.

NICKEDI

I'm told that, despite friendly warnings in these pages and elsewhere, one or two of our supporters received tickets and fines for parking irresponsibly on the occasion of the Bath game, a month ago. The drivers involved have my sympathy, but there have been rumblings that this might happen all season.

I've no reason to think that the Law is going to be any more lenient this month than they were then — and after all, they were very patient and understanding about cars parked in the streets around the ground for a long period, before they took action.

I don't want to preach at anyone, but a word to the wise might save a few quid. It might be easier to

come by bus.

THANKS TO HARTLAND MOTORS

It would be particularly unfortunate to be nicked for parking today if you happen to be a Renault driver. Hartland Motors, our distinguished local dealership, can handle most things, but fixing a ticket acquired at a rugby match is beyond even their capabilities.

And they're the last people who would want to see a valued customer deprived of hard-earned akkers on the day when they so generously sponsor the Kingsholm game. They've had a spectacularly successful year, and would like that to rub off on their friends.

In fact, 1987 saw record sales for Hartland Motors, in both Renault cars and commercial vehicles. We don't know whether last year's sponsorship had any influence on that, but we'd like to think we helped.

Perhaps we did, but the fact that the Renault range is the youngest currently available, and that it has been updated still further, with an eye to reliability, comfort and economy must have been a very potent

factor in the company's deserved success.

The other major development for Hartland, during 1987, was the formation of BetterFit in June.

This new satellite venture has, to quote Sylvia Spring, "taken Gloucester by storm," and is acquiring an enormous reputation for their highly-competitive pricing in matters pertaining to tyres, exhausts and similar motoring necessities.

Similar motoring necessities.

Sylvia pulled my leg about that, chiding me gently for missing their grand opening, performed by our local 'Page 3' celebrity. Pity: I do like to keep abreast of events.

I'm told that Hartland have about 60 guests and colleagues here today, including some senior representation from Renault in Swindon. While thanking them again for their invaluable support, we sincerely hope that they have a thoroughly enjoyable time today.

And that they've all parked tidily.

DIVISIONAL REFUND

It's nice to be able to inform anyone who bought tickets for the frosted-off Divisional Championship match at Kingsholm, and couldn't get down to Torquay, that you're going to get your money back. If you'd like to see Terry Tandy in his office, IMMEDIATELY after the match, he'll be glad to provide a refund. If you haven't got your ticket with you, don't worry. He'll be going through the same exercise next week.

AND ALL THE BEST FROM EVERYONE, TO EVERYONE

Terry also asks me to wish everybody the happiest, most prosperous, and generally all-round best New Year to everyone from the Committee and everyone else involved, including Marcus Hannaford and the players. To which, I'd like to add my own good wishes.

And I'm sure you'd like to add 'all the best' for 1988 to Richard Pascal and Kevin Dunn, in the hope

that they can just take that deserved last step into the ranks of Gloucester Internationals.

TAILPIECE

Heard a seasonal story you might like.

Apparently, over the Christmas period, one of our local refs. found himself officiating in a game between his old club and their deadly rivist. Unfortunately, with the scores level, and not much time to go, between his old club and their deadly rivist. Support the posts which was duly slotted. he had the sad duty of awarding a penalty in favour of his old club, in front of the posts, which was duly slotted.

Just after that (surprise, surprise) he got involved in the scrum, and found himself flat on his back,

with an aggrieved lock forward hanging on to each leg.
One of the said locks then looked up, and with an evil grin, quoth:

"All right, you bastard. Make a wish!" Makes your eyes water, don't it? All the best again.

PETER ARNOLD



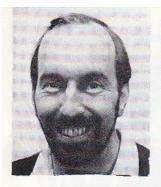
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TALKING RUGBY with Terry Phillips

The Citizen rugby writer Terry Phillips on the news from Kingsholm - in every Gloucester RFC programme.

Hooker Kevin Dunn has caught the eye of England selectors only 15 months after making his first XV debut for Gloucester Rugby Club.

Dunn's speed and aggression in the loose makes him stand out above many other hookers and his progress with the Cherry and Whites has been remarkable.

Only a few weeks ago South West selectors delayed naming their side for the Divisional Championships because of a doubt over one place — hooker. They waited until after the Gloucester v Bath match at Kingsholm to decide and Bath's Graham Dawe, backed by a dominant pack, edged the vote.

But it was desperately close and Dunn should draw great encouragement from the fact that Dawe is now rated England's number one hooker for the trial match at Twickenham.

Dunn and prop Richard Pascall are both on the replacements bench for the England trial and have an excellent chance of selection for the England B match against France B in Paris on Saturday January 16 — a few hours before the main Five Nations Championship match at the Parc de Princes.

Former Lydney and Spartans hooker Dunn joined Gloucester last season and made his debut in the 34-13 victory against Glamorgan Wanderers at Kingsholm during September last year.

He made 32 first XV appearances last season after securing his place as Gloucester's first choice hooker above Kevin White and Glyn Mann. This season he has played 14 times and looks set for a long and glowing future at the top level.

But while Dunn and Pascall celebrate their inclusion among the 47 players involved in the England trial, Gloucester skipper Marcus Hannaford must be bitterly disappointed.

Neither he nor Bath's Richard Hill are among the four scrum-halves named for the trial.

Courage Clubs C	ham	pion	ships	s:			
National Division One	P	W	D	L	F	Α	Pts
Leicester	7	7	0	0	138	73	28
Nottingham	10	4	1	5	138	136	23
Bristol	8	4	1	3	146	92	21
Bath	8	3	1	4	107	112	18
Gloucester	6	3	1	2	101	69	16
Moseley	7	3	0	4	98	105	16
Waterloo	3	3	0	0	43	25	12
Wasps	4	2	1	1	57	48	11
Coventry	6	1	1	4	70	145	10
Orrell	4	1	1	2	54	65	8
Sale	5	0	0	5	37	116	5
Harlequins	2	0	1	1	18	21	3
National Division Two	Р	W	D	L	F	А	Pts
Rosslyn Pk	7	6	1	0	110	54	26
Richmond	7	4	0	3	80	79	19
St Helens	5	4	0	1	58	36	17
Headingley	5	3	1	1	84	46	15
L Scottish	6	3	0	3	92	61	15
Bedford	5	2	2	1	57	59	13
Gosforth	6	2 2 2	1	3	64	88	13
Saracens	5	2	1	2	63	55	12
L Irish	7	1	1	2 5	53	100	11
L Welsh	5	1	1	3	72	68	9
Northampton	4	1	.0	3	37	96	7
Blackheath	4	0	0	4	21	49	4



(Kevin Dunn . . . a young hooker with a promising future).

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