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GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

30_p
**OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME**

GLOUCESTER v LIVERPOOL ST. HELENS

**Saturday
27th February, 1988**

Kick off 3 p.m.



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WELCOME BACK — OR IS IT JUST WELCOME?

We have, of course, been able to welcome Liverpool to Kingsholm before. This is the first time, however, that Liverpool-St. Helens has paid us the honour of dropping in for a little social intercourse (if you'll pardon the expression).

In fact, I don't think we've seen today's visitors at Kingsholm since 1984. The good blown by the ill wind of the defeat by Wasps, a couple of weeks ago, is that the fixture is not interfered with by the needs of the John Player, and we can get down to business today, unhindered by the pressure of either Cup or League rugby. Which is, in my view, by no means a bad thing.

On that subject, perhaps we'll look back in the summer and remark 'this is where the season really starts'. The absence of such worries certainly seemed to inspire the lads at Bath last week, and perhaps they will now feel free to play the way they'd like to, rather than the way circumstances dictate. If so, then everyone's in for an excellent couple of months.

The last time Liverpool were here they came second by 20 points to 4. However, if you've been keeping an eye on the results, you'll have noted that the new organisation is by no means having a bad season. At the moment, they're running second to Rosslyn Park in Division Two of the Courage Clubs Championship, with a game in hand over them. I suppose that that could well mean that their name will be appearing in our fixture lists with an asterisk against it, in future seasons — a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Just one more point. The last time Liverpool paid us a visit, the great Mike Slemen was playing, as I recall, at full back. He won't be playing today, and we shall miss him.

But then — we always did.

Have a great time chaps — perhaps we shan't have to wait so long before seeing you again.

SPONSORS DAY

The uncertainty about the Opposition today, caused by the John Player, means that we don't have a match sponsor. This gives me the chance to tell all our generous sponsors and advertisers that there is a slight change to our arrangements for the traditional 'Sponsors Day' this year.

Normally, that very pleasant event is held on the day of the last home fixture of the season. This year we're inviting everyone along on Easter Monday, April 4th, when we shall be joined by Birkenhead Park.

So, if you are one of the splendid band of benefactors who qualify to attend, then make a note in your diary now, and avoid turning up at the Sale match by mistake.

After all you've done for us, we'd hate you to miss out.

STUDENTS GAME

As heretofore mentioned, we have a highly attractive fixture on March 15th — a Tuesday — when English Students are playing French Students. Spice is added to the occasion by the fact that the 'Oxbridge' players qualify for inclusion in the side, rather than just the UAU teams.

This is quite an important occasion, as is proved by the very high level of interest we're receiving from points far and wide — not least from the cloistered halls of the Rugby Football Union itself. This has meant that tickets will be available, from the usual sources, for the Stand. £3.00 Centre (Reserved) and £2.00 Wings (Unreserved). Pay at the turnstiles if you want to stand up.

Terry Tandy tells me that there is already a large demand for tickets, so if you fancy coming along, it might not be a bad idea to get yours as soon as you can.

French rugby is something of an enigma, at the moment. They were lucky to beat England, got hammered by Scotland, and ran the Irish ragged. At 'B' level, England fairly took them apart.

This game could be a good pointer to the future strength of the French national team, and there will be a fair few promising home players on view too. Should be an event well worth patronising.

PATRONS NIGHT

About this time last year, I rang a friend of mine to ask him if he was attending Patrons' Night. He wasn't at home, and I left a message with his small daughter.

That was fine, until I met his wife in town, some little while later "Hey Peter!" she said "What's all this about a 'Patron's Nightie?'" It appears that the Junior Miss had misheard me, with questioning results from her Mum.

All is well now, however, and I have pleasure in reporting a conversation with Andy Mitchell, who rang to tell me that this year's bacchanalian farrago will be held on Wednesday, March 23rd, at 7.30 for 8.00. Tickets, as usual, are free, and will be available from Andy Mitchell and David Foyle. Just when they will be available is not quite certain at the time of writing, but Andy hopes to be able to make an announcement over the loudspeaker system this afternoon.

It should be a specially memorable occasion this year, because it is the intention to make some modest presentations to last season's United side to commemorate their unique unbeaten record. That's worth coming along to in its own right. See you there.

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DAVID I. ROBINS M.Inst.T.T.

AND TALKING ABOUT THE UNITED . . .

. . . they have no less than four home games coming along in March. They're on splendid form at the moment, as last Friday's Moseley result shows. If you want to support them — and why not? — you can come along to watch them take on Cheltenham next Tuesday, Northampton next Saturday, and Glamorgan Wanderers on Wednesday, March 9th. They then come back home on Saturday, March 19th to play Orrell(!)

— Plenty of good rugby there.

RICHMOND NEXT

The next home First XV match is in two weeks time when the Opposition will be Richmond, who always provide some entertainment. We're then away to Cheltenham and Orrell, and return home at the end of the month for Saracens and Lydney.

So there's plenty to look forward to.

AND THE REST

To complete the picture, our sparkling Colts side takes on Nuneaton, at home, next Wednesday, which is far better than staying home and watching the telly. They then visit Bath on the following Wednesday, but you could come along to see them try conclusions with Moseley on the 23rd.

Part of the idea of a Colts XV is to get the youngsters used to playing under first-class conditions — and that includes a sizeable crowd. You're be doing everyone a favour, therefore if you came along and shouted. And I can positively guarantee you'll enjoy the rugby.

Finally, on March 29th one of the most eagerly-anticipated of the annual events takes place. It's the night of the County Cup Final, this season between Lydney and Berry Hill, fresh from their remarkable John Player run. Both sides, of course, qualify for next year's Cup, and who's to say that either of them can't do even better than Berry Hill and Lydney did this year?

CLANGER

I must have been struck suddenly drunk, when writing the notes for the Wasps game. At one point, I referred to England outside half Rob Andrew as 'Keith', for which I apologise.

Keith Andrew was, of course, the Northamptonshire wicket keeper who kept to Frank Tyson, and went to Australia on that famous tour.

Excellent keeper he was too — but as things turned out, perhaps it would have been better for Gloucester if I'd been right!

BEST OF LUCK PAUL!

We've become fairly used to players going to Storud — but Mozambique? Isn't it rather a long way to commute on training nights?

In all seriousness, though, we wish Paul Taylor, bedevilled by injury this season, all the very best in his move to that troubled part of Africa. It may come as a surprise to some people, but there is more to life than rugby, and Paul has his career and family to think of.

If he shows the same dedication and flair in his new life as he always has with Gloucester Rugby Football Club, then he'll do very well. And deserves to.

Bon Voyage old mate. Come back and see us regularly.

TAILPIECE

You'll have seen all the press publicity about Chris Oti's selection for England, and the contention that he will be the first black English international since 'Darkie' Stevens, of Plymouth and Bristol, back in around 1908.

I take issue with that, even though I suppose the Wartime Internationals don't count, in some people's eyes.

Old Kingsholm hands will remember the occasions when England played Wales, right here, on two or three occasions during the war. They will also remember an extremely elegant centre — occasionally winger — called Francis, who was a regular member of the England side. He wasn't exactly 'as the Ace of Spades' but was black nevertheless, and a great favourite with the crowd.

I believe he was a League player, who was in the Forces, and got in through the dispensation at the time. In fact, he never played on a winning England side, so I hope it's not an omen for young Mister Oti.

PETER ARNOLD



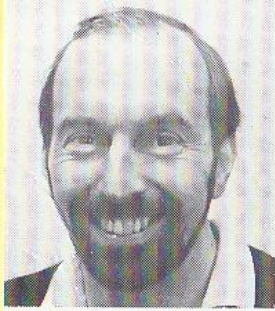
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TALKING RUGBY with Terry Phillips

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



Gloucester have been unable to support County rugby this season because of their commitment to the Divisional Championship, but that decision has served to underline the strength in depth around this area.

While the senior Gloucestershire team have advanced to the semi-finals of the County Championship and now play Lancashire away, the under 21's appear to be in with an excellent chance of qualifying for the semi-finals of their competition.

Gloucestershire continued their preparations for the senior semi-final against Lancashire away next

month with a 19-9 midweek win against a Forest of Dean XV. Mike Teague, who started his season with Gloucestershire before returning to Kingsholm, and winger Chris Howard scored tries with Howard adding one conversion and three penalties.

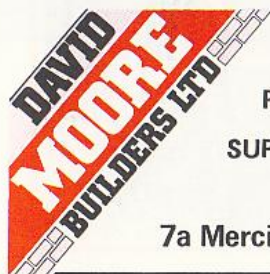
At under 21 level Gloucestershire won 31-6 against Somerset in Cheltenham following up their draw against Cornwall. They now have matches to come against Royal Navy and Devon with victory in both needed to ensure a place in the semi-finals of the first under 21 County Championship.



Matson Lock Phil Wallace jumps successfully at the front of the line for Gloucestershire against the Forest of Dean XV. Also pictured are Roger Pickett (Berry Hill), John Etheridge (Gloucester) and Mike Teague (Gloucester).



Under 21 action from the Gloucestershire v Somerset match in Cheltenham. Scrum-half Julian Davies (Lydney) sets another attack rolling with Roy Yates (Coney Hill) the forward just climbing to his feet.



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