



THE TALE OF THE TIGER

So many superlatives have been written about Leicester RFC, over the past decade or so, that it's difficult to know where to start. Their record over that period is so well known as not to need any elaboration from me, and so many of their players, certainly not excluding some of those present today, have been such credits to the game, that their names are almost certain to be mentioned wherever two or three are gathered together to discuss the Noble Art of the funny shaped ball.

Let's face it — Leicester have walloped just about everyone at some time or other, and I've no doubt that they will be out to do just that to Gloucester, but the 'Tigers' themselves would be the first side to admit that Gloucester's record against them stands comparison with anyone's. Furthermore, the games have been attractive, exciting, and even stylish at times. Remember Mike Hamlin's pulsating last kick a couple of seasons ago? In the snow after Lloyd Gardener had scored a couple of typical scrum-half tries?

Leicester are, of course, the current Courage Clubs Champions, and they beat us by 19 points to 12, at Leicester, along the way towards achieving that eminence. To be fair about it, we did redress the balance at Kingsholm, later, with a 30-16 scoreline, but that wasn't a League match. Today's little bunfight emphatically is, so there's a lot riding on it.

A good team doesn't necessarily mean a likeable one (mentioning no names), but I don't recall anyone having anything other than admiration for the current generation of Tigers. Leicester are a popular club as well as a very formidable one, and anyone who has visited their Welford Road ground will testify to the good humour and hospitality with which they are greeted.

At the time of writing, I haven't seen the Leicester side, but I'm sure we all hope that it features some of our more respected opponents — the recently-canonised Dusty Hare, Paul Dodge, Les Cusworth, Rory Underwood . . . they've all had their moments against Gloucester, and it will be good to see them again.

But then — it's always good to see any Leicester side, and we extend to them the heartiest welcome in the world. Have a great day chaps!

KEEP THE GANGWAYS CLEAR

It's that time again. One of those days where the congregation is likely to be large enough to tempt people to stand (or sit) in gangways or on steps.

That being so, I am asked to remind you that the Fire Officer (whom God preserve) takes a dim view of any such practice, and that you should resist the temptation.

Let's not be too flippant, however. A blocked gangway could cause nasty problems if there were any sort of accident.

W. H. HARE M.B.E.

I never did know why he's called 'Dusty'. Perhaps he, or someone in the know, would be kind

enough to enlighten me sometime.

Whatever the soubriquet, I'm sure that the news of Dusty Hare's inclusion in this year's New Year's Honours List will have been greeted with warm approval by sports people everywhere, and by Rugby people from a far wider sphere than just the Home Countries. Certainly, few players in any game have deserved the honour more.

As the club of Harold Boughton, Bill Hook and Peter Butler, we reckon to know a bit about kicking full-backs, and have always appreciated the skills in that position that Dusty has exhibited so conspicuously, ever since he first visited Kingsholm as a green newcomer playing in Nottingham colours.

The rest, as they say, is history. For a few seasons, England had an outstanding trio of kickers in Hare, Butler and the late Sam Doble of Moseley. Peter played for England in 1975 and 1976, Sam in 1972 and 1973. By contrast, Dusty Hare gained Caps over a solid decade, from 1974 to 1984. Even now, when he'd forgive me for remarking that he is no longer a fresh-faced innocent, no side in its right mind gives away gratuitous penalties, almost anywhere on the field, when W. H. Hare is among the opposition.

Furthermore, I don't think I have ever heard anyone say a derogatory word about Dusty Hare. While he may not run as fast as Serge Blanco, or tackle as hard as J. P. R. Williams, those are purely judgements

of playing ability. On the personal level he has universal popularity.

There are those who wouldn't give Honours to sportsmen. Personally, I don't agree. I think if you're the best in the world at anything, you have the right to have that fact recognised — and that includes darts players, incidentally.

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

Dusty Hare has certainly proved that, for a long period, he was the best in the world at kicking a Rugby football. His Honour is richly deserved, and all we 'Elver Eaters' congratulate him for it.

Now he has announced that he is hanging his boots up at the end of the season. That's as may be, but I remember a Pontypridd player, Pemberthy by name, who signified his retirement by throwing his boots over Niagara Falls, no less. But, the following season, when his club were short of lock forwards, there he was again, creating mayhem in the old familiar manner.

And he was much older than Dusty. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if he were back to torment us

season

But, if this is his Kingsholm swan song, then 'Hail and Farewell' Dusty. It's almost been a pleasure to have been beaten by you, once or twice.

INTERNATIONAL TICKETS

Anyone who has applied for tickets for the Home Internationals should have received their allocation by now. David Foyle isn't available, at the moment, so the distribution of the vital pieces of card has fallen on the broad shoulders of Terry Tandy.

Even Terry isn't quite perfect, and it's possible that some error has occurred somewhere along the

line, so if you haven't received your tickets yet, please see him as soon as you can.

While we're on the subject, all International seats have been allocated, but there is still a limited number of Ground and Enclosure tickets available for the Twickenham matches. Terry will be selling them at the Caravan, (not the Office, please note) immediately after today's game. Not before, not during, but after the game. If you fancy a couple, better get along there.

BLEACKHEATH NEXT WEEK

Talking about 'not quite perfect' Terries, I think our old friend Terry Phillips from the 'Citizen' must have still been suffering from Hogmanay Hangover when he wrote his notes for the London Scottish programme, last week. Our guests next Saturday are Blackheath, and not Wasps as he commented. Easy sort of mistake to make - only a week or two ago, I referred to Mr. Olver as a Wasp instead of a

Before that, however, we have a trip to Pontypool, next Wednesday, so it's going to be an interesting

few days.

CUP MATCH

The following Saturday is, of course, Cup Day, and involves a visit to Brixham. Trevor Pritchard is organising coaches, and will be glad to give you full details in the Clubhouse. The cost will be £5.00, and the intention is to leave for home soon after the game.

As far as tickets are concerned — there aren't any. Brixham have made the decision to charge a straight £2.00 at the gate, whoever you are, and wherever you come from, so you'll have to attend to that detail when you get there.

Brixham's stand only holds 180 people, so our ticket allocation for stand seats is, for all practical distribution purposes, zilch. They have investigated temporary provision, but found the cost prohibitive, so have abandoned the idea. Sorry about that, but it should be a pleasant trip, anyway.

By all accounts, Ruari MacLean distinguished himself at last week's Scottish Trial, and must have come within a whisker of getting himself a spot on the reserve benches. The season is not over, yet, however, and he must still be in with a good chance.

Hard luck Ruari! Keep trying mate!

My little piece about King Edward II trying to ban the game seems to have interested people. Here's another curiosity.

According to a local paper, in 1887 a match took place in Sedgefield, Co. Durham. The game took the form of a 'scrimmage of 400 people', and was won for the Tradesmen by a certain 'J.B.' who dropped the ball into a stream, dived in for it, swam along and scored the vital goal.

Not even Gloucester Old Boys have used their stream that way.

PETER ARNOLD



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Gloucester are still chasing runners-up spot in the Courage Clubs Championship National Division One and today's match against Leicester is vital to their

For the two clubs are level on points after seven matches and the team victorious today will have a big advantage in the bid to finish second behind Bath, who have surely done enough to win the title.

Gloucester have four matches left in the League against Leicester today, Harlequins in March, Orrell away in April and Nottingham at home in April. All are tough matches and as the table stands now

Gloucester still have to play three of the top five clubs

— Leicester, Orrell and Nottingham.

Earlier this season Gloucester went down 19-13 at Leicester, but that day both sides were affected by divisional calls and today's encounter holds far more significance.

The kicking of full-back Dusty Hare is a major threat to Gloucester hopes. He has said he will retire at the end of this season, this is possibly his last visit to

end of this season, this is possibly his last visit to Kingsholm.

Hare, Leicester's record breaking points scorer needs ten points to top 300 for the season.

Today's National Division One matches: Bristol v Waterloo, Liverpool v Bath, Nottingham v Moseley, Orrell v Wasps, Rosslyn Park v Harlequins.

Following today's clash with Leicester, Gloucester travel into Wales next midweek for the annual clash with Pontypool

with Pontypool.

And next Saturday Blackheath are the visitors at Kingsholm.

COURAGE CHAMPIONSHIP **National Division One**

		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Bath	7	7	0	0	170	51	14
2	Orrell	7	5	0	2	108	103	10
3	Gloucester	7	4	1	2	147	74	9
4	Leicester	7	4	1	2	148	125	9
5	Nottingham	7	4	1	2	95	78	9
6	Wasps	7	4	0	3	131	100	8
7	Bristol	7	4	0	3	93	66	8
8	Harlequins	7	2	0	5	114	134	4
9	Rosslyn Park	7	2	0	5	85	153	4
10	Moseley	7	2	0	5	57	166	4
11	Waterloo	7	1	1	5	94	130	3
12	Liverpool	7	1	0	6	73	135	2



On the run! Number eight Barry Clark bursts away from a scrum during Gloucester's victory against London Scottish last Saturday.



Moving in! Gloucester Rugby Club prop Richard Pascall threatens as London Scottish try to launch an attack at Kingsholm last Saturday.

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