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President: Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

v
LLANELLI

Saturday, March 17th 1990
Kick-Off 3.00pm

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TOUCH LINES

by

Peter Arnold

SCARLET INVASION

Llanelli is a rather special club. Always was. Still is. Unfortunately, games between today's two sides aren't a year-in, year-out occasion, and I suppose, such fixtures could be in jeopardy if the impending clashes between English and Welsh League dates aren't resolved.

Which would be a pity, from several points of view; it's always good to try conclusions with the best the Welsh game has to offer, and Llanelli can always be said to qualify for that particular description.

You might also agree with me when I say that I've always seen parallels between Wales' famous 'Scarlets' and England's Gloucester. Both have world-famous grounds, talked about wherever the oval ball is propelled around the field, both have extremely loyal and partisan crowds, both have, at times, wondered what their top players have to do to get National recognition.

And both are always there or thereabouts. The Neaths and Cardiffs, Baths and Leicesters, have their eras as top of the heap, but Llanelli and Gloucester are always in there, snapping at the heels of the current top dogs.

Finally, I've never been to Stradey without receiving an extremely warm welcome, and we like to think that Kingsholm hospitality has a similar reputation.

Again this season, Llanelli are running Neath close for the title of best side in Wales, and Gloucester, as you well know, are spectacularly performing the same service for Bath.

It's a shame that today's encounter has to clash with the most important International — from England's point of view — for a decade. Can't be helped, however, and I'm sure that those of the Faithful who prefer watching live Rugby to the TV variety, however distinguished, will have their fidelity amply rewarded today.

Visits from Llanelli haven't been as frequent as we would like, recently. Which just makes them all the more welcome today.

THANKS TO DOWTY ROTOL

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fact, the industrial scene around this area wouldn't be the same without the presence of the largest company within the Aerospace Division of the world-famous Dowty Group.

As you know, Dowty Rotol have a world-wide reputation for both products and technical expertise. In fact, last year the company won the coveted Queen's Award for Technological Achievement, and they don't hand those out in packets of cornflakes.

Last year's sales amounted to £138 million, harvested from such customers as Airbus Industrie — whose fantastically successful Airbus 320 programme prompted the construction of a huge new landing gear shop — Boeing, British Aerospace, Fokker, McDonnell, Panavia and Shorts. Recently, the Swedish company, Saab, chose Dowty Rotol to produce the propeller system for the new Saab 2000 fast regional jetprop.

At around the same time, the Company, with German, Italian and Spanish partners, won a multi-million pound development contract from Eurofighter, to supply main and nose landing gear for the EFA — European Fighter Aircraft to the uninitiated.

It seems entirely appropriate that such an internationally-involved organisation should have selected what is probably the most attractive 'international' Kingsholm game of the Season. We're very grateful to them for their continued support, and hope that everyone they bring along has a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

APART FROM THAT, MRS LINCOLN . . .

. . . how did you enjoy the show?

To hear people talk around Gloucester, at the moment, you'd think that the lads have only to turn up, for the next few weeks, to win the League and Cup Double. That, of course, is a consummation devoutly to be wished, but life ain't quite as simple as that. Our opponents might have a thought or two of their own, as Bath found out against Nottingham, last week.

To start with, next Saturday's Northampton game won't be a doddle. The 'Saints' are on a 'high', have ground advantage, and a very crafty guiding hand

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

in the shape of our old opponent, Barry Corless.

Orrell, conscious of their status as the only Northern Division club currently in the First Division of the Courage League, won't be doing us any favours. Happily, they visit Kingsholm for the game on the 31st of March, which is significantly preferable to playing on that two-way slope up there at Wigan.

The League season finishes with our trip to Nottingham. Of course, we've beaten them once, up there, but they must feel that if they can beat Bath, they can beat anyone — and their International trio won't be inhibited by the thoughts of impending Home Championship matches by then.

Then, having got past all that, there is the little matter of the Final at Twickenham on May 5th. There's no doubt that, on the record, Gloucester and Bath are the two best sides in England, at the moment. All things considered, they *ought* to be contesting the Final — and if things did turn out that way, especially if Gloucester had won the League by then, I'd have a few quid on Gloucester.

And, you know, Bath mustn't take their game at Moseley as a holiday canter — especially if it rains. The Reddings has been resembling a gluepot, recently, and their huge pack can rumble over anyone, given the right conditions.

All in all, we have the most enthralling climax to a Season for many years. Gloucester can certainly do it, given a fair crack of the whip, and freedom from injuries. You won't want to miss a minute of it. And neither will I.

EXTRA ATTRACTION

As you'll see from the Fixture List, we're down to visit Neath on April 7th. Not any more, we ain't. It's Welsh Cup Semi Final Day, and the boys from the Gnoll are otherwise engaged.

All of which has turned out to be good news for those of us starved of home games due to the unkind Cup draws. Richmond will be playing at Kingsholm on that day. So there's an extra entry for your engagement book, and very welcome too.

There's also a change in the United calendar. The players have decided that they want to see the Gloucester-Northampton Semi Final, so their Pontypool fixture has been brought forward to the Friday evening, that is, March 23rd. The Pontypool

lads were quite happy about that, because they wanted to see Wales play Ireland.

Don't forget, either, that on Tuesday next, the Colts entertain Nuneaton, who are always very stern opposition. And, on the following Tuesday, they have a home game against Hereford.

Plenty to look forward to.

COACHING PROBLEM

A friend of mine, on Monday last, attempted to make a provisional booking for a coach to go to Twickenham on May 5th. In the event, he found himself talking to coach operators miles away before he could find one who had a vehicle available. Apparently, they'd all been provisionally booked by other enthusiasts with similar ideas. And, of course, it's Bank Holiday weekend when demand is always heavy, anyway.

So, of you have ideas yourself, in that direction, it could be as well to get your skates on.

... BUT NO PROBLEM FOR THE CUP

There isn't any problem, however, about coach seats for Northampton on March 24th, next Saturday, as ever was. If you decide to go up that way, see Trevor Pritchard in the Social Club, hand him £5, and he'll be glad to welcome you aboard. **RING 0898 122 971**

With so much happening, things are likely to change from day to day. Happily, the above number will bring you all the latest information just as soon as it's available. Keep the calls coming.

TAILPIECE

Apparently, the first news of Bath's defeat last Saturday, arrived at Kingsholm via a pair of headphones, clamped to the august cranium of none other than our old friend Nigel Starmer Smith, Old Boy of Barnwood C. of E. School.

Apparently he couldn't believe his ears, and asked for confirmation before he passed on the glad tidings.

He then told the news to Archie Hartshorne, who had just finished his stint for Severn Sound, who, obviously in the search for complimentary beer, went round telling everyone.

The trouble was, that no one would believe him either.

So, what else is new?



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TALKING RUGBY with Steve Fraser



Tomorrow afternoon Gloucestershire aim for their second trip to Twickenham in three seasons when they face Eastern Counties in a County Under 21 Championship match at Lydney's Regentsholme stadium (3 pm).

Two years ago Gloucestershire reached the final before losing to Yorkshire at Twickenham and a repeat trip looks probable for a team who have scored 155 points and conceded only 32 in five under 21 victories.

The talent within the team is undeniable — players like lock Dave Sims, fly-half Neil Matthews, back-row player Greg Keyse and prop Tony Windo from Gloucester, scrum-half Julian Davis and flanker Julian Horrobin from Bristol all surely have a big future in the game.

But Godfrey Cullimore, the chairman of selectors for the County senior team, says: "I watched the 41-10 win against Berkshire and it is certainly an outstanding under 21 team, but how many of these lads will be available for the senior County Championship games?"

It is a good question and it seems likely that none of them will go on to play for Gloucestershire at senior level.

For currently Gloucester and Bristol prefer their players to opt out of County rugby and go for Divisional selection with the South West team.

You can see why the clubs take that stance for if they support both Divisional and County teams their leading players will be

missing for weeks on end and with the current pressures of big games that would be unacceptable.

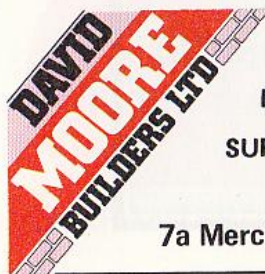
But for County selectors it is a major problem.

They see talented young players coming through the system, players capable of leading Gloucestershire to great success, knowing they will not be able to use them.

It is frustrating for Cullimore and his fellow selectors as they try to piece together a County side without any Gloucester or Bristol players — and so far, while the County have not achieved the success of previous years, they have done pretty well.



Lloyd Gardiner in action for Gloucester during the 29-9 midweek win against Cheltenham at the Prince of Wales Stadium.



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