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THE  
**GLOUCESTER  
RUGBY FOOTBALL  
CLUB**

President: Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

v  
**ORRELL**

**Saturday, March 31st 1990**

**Kick-Off 3.00pm**



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# TOUCH LINES

by  
Peter Arnold

## WHO WOULD TRUE VALIUM SEE?

It really is a bit hard on the nerves, these days. No sooner do we weather one 'crunch' game, than the next one looms on the horizon.

The Pilkington Cup Semi-Final having been safely negotiated, at Northampton, last Saturday, we now find ourselves nail-biting our way through the penultimate Courage Clubs Championship game of the season. Valium sales must be on the increase in Gloucester.

The thought that Orrell, very welcome though they are, provide today's Opposition, doesn't exactly exercise a calming influence, either. Although we beat them, reasonably, at a similar stage, last season, most games between our two sides have been fairly tight in recent seasons. And you'll remember the Wigan lads pipping us in the Cup not all that long ago.

It wouldn't be wise to forget, either, that Orrell are conscious of their status as the only side from the North currently in the First Division. They will therefore want to be very sure that they stay among the upper echelons, if only for reasons of regional pride.

Like many Northern sides, today's visitors have suffered from defections to the 13-man game, but that doesn't mean that they can't field a more-than-useful side. We know all about their pack, and Simon Langford is a force to be reckoned with. So are Messrs Ainscough, in his first League game since returning from injury, and Heslop, who scored 20 tries last season.

So the situation is that Orrell badly want to win for the reasons stated, while Gloucester need to if they are to have any realistic chance of winning the First Division Title. We certainly can't depend on Bath slipping up again.

One way and another, we should be in for an enthralling afternoon. I'll just reiterate our sincere welcome to our respected Opponents, and win or lose, hope they enjoy their visit.

## TICKETS FOR TWICKERS

Welcome to the Visitors is obviously the first priority, but after that, you'll want to know about tickets for the Cup Final at Twickenham on May 5th.

Everyone today, should be handed an Application Form. If you're reading this in the Social Club before the game, make sure you don't miss out.

The form has full details of prices, etc. — there are four to choose from. The idea is for you to apply to Terry Tandy by post, at the address on the form. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope, not because the Club is penny-pinching about such matters, but because the idea of poor old Terry having to write a huge number out fills him with understandable alarm, and in any case, would be prohibitively time consuming.

None of the applications will be scrutinised until April 7th — one week from today (and, incidentally, that includes all applications received already). At that point, Members will get preference in their choice of tickets. But that's the last preference they will get; Members' applications received after that date will be treated just like any others. So, if you're a member, quote your Membership card number, and apply early.

Of course, we all know that many coach parties have already been arranged. Organisers of such parties are asked to make their block applications on the aforementioned form — makes things easy for all concerned.

After that postal exercise, which we hope will distribute the bulk of the tickets, we'll see how things go. If there are any left when the postal applications are dealt with, then the likelihood is that we'll mount one of those Sunday morning operations which have proved so successful this season. It's most unlikely that tickets will be sold at any of our home matches.

As a matter of fact, we have been allocated 15,000 tickets rather than the 17,000 which we originally expected. Ask the Twickenham authorities why that should be, nobody hereabouts knows. Nevertheless, I'd be surprised if we can't accommodate everyone, although first choice of where you want to stand or sit might not be available if you leave things too late. Of course, I could be wrong . . .

Finally, there are no tickets available from Twickenham itself, so there's no point in applying direct to HQ. Your only source of supply is through the Club — unless you want to brave the wilds of

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Bath, of course.

So that's the plan. For now, make sure you get your form, and get your application — complete with SAE — in *early*.

#### THANKS TO COOPERS & LYBRAND DE LOITTE

The name may not be quite familiar, but you'll remember that Deloitte Haskins & Sells have generously sponsored games on past occasions. In fact, I'm jumping the gun slightly, because the leading firm of accountants and management consultants are to merge with Coopers & Lybrand on April 29th, and will use the above company name in the UK from then on. This will make them the largest firm of their type in Britain.

You could say it's a busy time for them; which makes us all the more grateful for their continuing support.

Not that we're alone in that. They also sponsor both the Gloucester and Cheltenham Cricket Festivals, and have run their own Golf Day at Monmouth. More — the change of name has rendered quite a lot of items obsolete, so they auctioned off a whole load of everything from promotional pens, through golf umbrellas to car park signs to loyal staff — there are 130 of them in Gloucester — and gave the proceeds to the Royal Hospital's Scooby-Doo Baby Unit Appeal.

As if they're not working hard enough at the moment, they also worked through the night after John Major's first Budget, putting together a theatre-style analysis of the effects to over 100 Clients at 8.00 o'clock the following morning.

So we're even more grateful for the fact that they could fit us in, right now.

Of course, that's not the only reason we have to be appreciative: the firm has a long association with Gloucester RFC in their capacity as the Club's Auditors, so it's very nice to see them here from several points of view.

I'm sure they're in need of a little relaxation, just at the moment. Today's exercise will, we hope, give them and their welcome guests, just that.

#### EXTRA GAME

Just to remind you, next Saturday, April 7th, we have an added attraction, not shown in your fixture

list. Neath, being involved with the Welsh Cup, have called off their game with Gloucester at The Gnoll, and Richmond have agreed to step in and play at Kingsholm: just a little consolation for our perennial trips away in the Cup.

On Thursday, April 12th we visit Lydney, and are then into the Easter games, with Headingly arriving on the Saturday, and Birkenhead Park on Easter Monday. Our First XV home season then ends on Saturday April 21st, with a visit from Sale.

After that, it's all up for grabs, with Nottingham and Bath following in quick succession — and I don't have to spell either of those games out for you, do I!

#### WELL DONE! NOW DO IT AGAIN

Our once-in-a-lifetime collection for the Cathedral's 900 Year Appeal raised the highly creditable sum of £1,156.63, which should buy a hassock or two, and thanks are due to everyone who contributed.

That was very much a 'one-off' effort, of course, but today we have our regular annual collection for St. John's Ambulance. No need to tell you about the sterling services they provide for us all season, and have done for as long as I can remember, anyway. They deserve a good collection from us, and I'm sure you'll provide it.

You'll be aware that the St. John's own ambulance is always stationed at the ground on match days, just in case. That's fine as far as we're concerned, of course, but it does mean that while it's here, it can't be anywhere else. I'm told that the Brigade are making great efforts to buy a second one, and that your generosity today will contribute to that worthy aim.

So do dig deep in true Kingsholm fashion. I can't think of a better cause.

#### TAILPIECE

My brother was sitting in licenced premises (naturally), last Sunday lunchtime, just outside Cardiff, and was chatting to a couple of blokes who had been to Dublin the previous day. "It was terrible, boy," remarked one of them, "We left halfway through the second half!"

"Never mind", said my brother, "The team left two minutes after you!"



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## TALKING RUGBY with Steve Fraser



Orrell are the first of three obstacles blocking the path to Gloucester's most successful season ever.

Given that they have never won at Kingsholm, it would be easy to write off this afternoon's visitors as the least of the hurdles between Gloucester and a league and cup double.

But it's been a good month for the underdog and the Cherry and Whites do not want to join a list which features red-hot favourites like Desert Orchid and the England rugby team.

Despite their modest league position, no team — including Bath and Wasps — has managed to beat the Lancashire side by more than six points in the league this season.

Their record reads played nine, won four, lost five, but the bare statistics mask a series of very close results. Any one of those matches could have swung their way had they been able to convert some of their kicking opportunities.

Club spokesman Fred Holcroft said: "We've been creating the opportunities but we haven't been taking them."

The return of inspirational Lancashire fly half Gerry Ainscough for his first league match of the season may resolve their problems, should he be given the opportunity to kick. But the team may keep faith with Martin Strett who has run up a solid 205 points this season.

Both sides are close to full strength, although

Orrell may miss number eight Charles Cusani more than Gloucester miss centre Don Caskie.

Cusani, who misses today's game because of work commitments, is one of the key players in a huge Orrell pack.

Caskie, who joined Gloucester from London Scottish at the start of the season, misses the match with a ham-string problem but there is adequate cover in the experienced shape of last season's first team regular Damian Cummins.

The Saintbridge school teacher has been shut out of the first XV this season but is no stranger to the big occasion — and they don't come much bigger than a match which could bring your team within two points of the league title.



*Pack leader Malcolm Preedy on the charge in last weekend's Pilkington Cup win at Northampton*



*England's Mike Teague drives for glory and a place in the final*

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