



TOUCH LINES by Peter Arnold



'FROM GHOULIES AND GHOSTIES ...

.... And long-leggedy beasties. Good Lord deliver us.'

So runs the old Scottish Hallowe'en prayer. Well — we're not too bothered about the ghoulies and ghosties, this evening, but we certainly don't want to be delivered from the fifteen long-leggedy beasties who are out there representing South Wales Police on this particular October 31st. I'm not aware that this evening's formidable opponents are especially spiritual, or even spirituous for that matter; indeed, they have proved in the past to be quite remarkably corporeal in their abilities to give very good Rugby teams more than a run for their money.

We can say that again. After two or three seasons when Gloucester made all the running in this annual Kingsholm occasion, almost exactly twelve months ago, the Police came here and arrested us somewhat, inflicting a hard-fought eight points to six defeat on us. To put that into perspective, only two other sides beat Gloucester at home last season — Pontypool early on, and Richmond right at the end.

Even more intriguing, only five weeks before that, British Police had gone down by 68 points to 15, which must have been a source of gentle amusement to the boys from South Wales.

If you look at your fixture list, you'll find that only nine sides visit Kingsholm every season, these days. for reasons which will be very apparent to you. It's nice that South Wales Police are among that number, including the local Derbies against Stroud, Lydney and Cheltenham, and unmissable opposition such as Bath and Bristol.

This is always a pleasant occasion, and it's good to welcome, what one ex-player termed 'the Taffy Coppers', here once again. We hope they have a highly enjoyable evening.

THANKS TO DAIRY CREST

You may not be aware of it, but if you live in Gloucester, the chances are that your morning pinta is supplied by Dairy Crest Dairies Ltd, from their depot just off Eastern Avenue. This evening, however, the company has emerged from behind the smiling face of your Friendly Neighbourhood Milkman to the extent of providing generous Sponsorship for the game.

The choice of the South Wales Police match is quite appropriate, actually. Dairy Crest's headquarters in this part of the world is based at Marshfield, just about mid-way between Cardiff Arms Park and Rodney Parade, Newport, so the South Walian connection is apropos. Apart from Gloucester, the company has depots at Stroud and Hereford.

Locally, Dairy Crest have only had one foray into Rugby sponsorship, supporting Stroud v. Paignton on one occasion. Nationally, of course, the company is very famous for its sponsorship, notably in athletics. You probably know that such support runs all the way from the grass roots right up to the Commonwealth Games.

Perhaps the most visible sign of athletic interest is that remarkable TV commercial which features Linford Christie, swigging a bottle of milk, and beating a speeding milk float. Bet my friend Brian Garfield wasn't driving it.

But we mustn't think of Dairy Crest as purely a milk-distributing organisation. In fact, you might well have some of their products in the fridge at home. Clover and Willow spreads spring to mind, as does Limeswold cheese.

It's always good to welcome a new Sponsor, and one which produces such healthy, bone and muscle building products as Dairy Crest seems particularly suitable for a Rugby match. Lewis Morgan has been organising things, and we hope that he, and his guests, find the whole thing a happy and worthwhile exercise.



ONE UP FOR KEITH

Congratulations to Keith Richardson on being called up to help coach the England 'B' side for the Namibia game. I hope he takes our good wishes to that excellent competitor and old Coventry opponent of ours. Peter Rossborough, who is sharing the job with him.

Gloucester, the Division and England 'B'. Quite a useful tripos to have on your CV. Who knows where he might go from here?

Quite sickening, actually. Demonstrably one of the most highly-regarded coaches in the country, entertaining writer for the 'Citizen', rapidly acquiring a following as a TV personality . . . Even Archie Hartshorne can't match that.

Good luck Keith. I hope that 'B' job leads to higher things.

BRISTOL ON SATURDAY

It's the old enemy on Saturday, Bristol are here, undoubtedly one of the two or three most popular games of the season. It isn't a League game, but I'm sure that won't deter you from coming along to one of the longest-established and epic series of matches in English Rugby Football. Might not be a bad idea to get along a little early.

Following that, we have two successive League Saturdays — away to the much-improved Rosslyn Park on the 10th, and home to Saracens — whose 21-21 draw, in the end, deprived us of the Championship last season, if you remember — on the 17th.

Also on the 10th. the United are at home to Leicester, in the Midlands Second Team League. With emphatic, even devasting, wins over Bath and Wasps. United will be looking to provide similar treatment to the second-string Tigers. And I'm not going to say they can't do it, either.

Mind you — Cinderford might just be different. And United have them to play here at Kingsholm, on the 21st.

Plenty of action to look forward to.

TWO LEGS OF A TRIPLE?

Talking of Bath, did you see that the Colts came back from nowhere to beat Bath Colts last week? Add that to the excellent win over the formidable Nuneaton side, and you can argue that the future of Gloucester RFC is in good hands.

Consider also the thrashing which United handed out to the Bath second string, and the First XV are going to have to look to their laurels. We'll find out about the third leg of the triple next February.

BIG DAVE KEEPS ON KEEPING ON

So many Gloucester types — including referees and coaches — have had something to be pleased about recently that I haven't had space to congratulate Dave Simms on gaining another England Under 21 place. An omission I hereby rectify.

Big Dave has become so much part of the Kingsholm scene, and has appeared in so many different representative shirts, that it does come as something of a surprise to realise that he still qualifies for the Under 21's. It seems that the proverbial sky may well be the limit for Young Mr. Simms.

It's all the more gratifying, when you compare Dave's progress with that of Sammy Southern of Orrell, a prop forward who has taken on the Gloucester front row with credit in several Cup and League encounters. England's youth policy has just awarded him his first England 'B' spot against Namibia. He'll be 38 next January.

TAILPIECE

In deference to our Welsh visitors this evening, I'll pass on a story which is purported to concern one of last weekend's Heineken League games.

It appears that one side was using a kicker who wasn't having a very good time of it, missing several penalties by fairly wide margins. Noticing one particular mannerism, the Captain went over to him as he was setting the ball up for yet another attempt and remarked on the fact that the kicker seemed to have developed a habit of glancing up into the stand just before starting his run up.

"The goal posts are over there, boyo!" he said, "You'd do better to keep your mind on them!"

"Sorry Skip," came the reply, "It's just that my mother-in-law is up in the stand today."

"Good God man!" barked the captain, "Give it up. You'll never hit her from here!"





TALKING RUGBY with **Mike Harris**



It was fitting that Nottingham should be the opponents when the Gloucester pack produced its most devastating display of the season at Kingsholm on Saturday.

On their previous meeting. Gloucester were well below their best in a bitterly disappointing defeat.

But the Gloucester forward machine was back at its very best on Saturday and a Nottingham pack which included two internationals was outplayed in the tight and the loose.

Mike Teague provided the best possible response to the England selectors who had dropped him five days earlier by producing a vintage performance which was at the heart of Gloucester's win.

And some fine midfield tackling snuffed out any Nottingham threat behind the scrum.

Bath, who retained their unbeaten league record with a win over local rivals Bristol remain favourites to lift the league title while Orrell produced the surprise of the weekend with a huge 60-0 win over Northampton.

Tonight's game is a rest from league action for both Gloucester and the South Wales Police.

The Welsh side, who enjoyed a 19-15 win

over Penarth on Saturday are currently lying third in Division One of the Welsh Heineken Leagues and look set to be among the contenders for promotion into the Premier Division come the Spring.

Neither club are likely to field their strongest sides tonight but with Gloucester's formidable reserve strength there is no reason why the game should not be as close and exciting as most recent meetings between the two teams.

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