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FACT FILE

Kingsholm was sixty-two years old when the first team from Ireland paid a visit to take on the Gloucester club. It was in the 1955-6 season that The Wanderers Club sent a team to take on the Cherry and Whites.

Was the luck of the Irish with them on that occasion? No. The Cherry and Whites emerged 12-3 winners against the club that provides a very decent pint for rugby fans in their clubhouse which is alongside the old West Stand at the Lansdowne Road end of the world's oldest international rugby ground.

Then came the first of three visits by the Wolfhounds, which is a sort of Irish Barbarians, and the first of only two Irish wins to be posted at Kingsholm. It was in 1965-6 season that the Cherry and Whites were beaten 18-14. Gloucester getting revenge with a 36-8 win the following season and edging ahead in the three games series with a 6-3 win in 1973-4.

Bective Rangers, another Dublin club, join the Wanderers as the only other Irish club team to have played at Kingsholm — they lost on all three visits. It was 20-3 in 1966-9, 13-3 in 1969-70, and 20-12 in 1979-1.

The only other side from Ireland to take on Gloucester at Kingsholm is the divisional Munster who turned up on Monday September 22, 1986, with several Irish internationals and duly recorded a 28-16 win.

Several Gloucester players in today's game also appeared in the Munster match. For the record, the Cherry and White's team was: Nick Marritt (full back), Jim Breeze, Ruan MacDonald, Paul Taylor and Richard Mogg (three quarters), Mike Hamlin (fly half), Richard Williams (scrum half), Kevin Dunn (hooker), Malcolm Proudfoot and Richard Presley (props), Nigel Scrivens and John Ethridge (locks), Bobby Fowke and Andrew Stanley, Mike Tongue (number eight).

That gives the Cherry and Whites six wins from their eight meetings at Kingsholm with teams from Ireland. Gloucester have scored 117 points in those eight meetings and have given up 81 points.

But all those previous meetings have been against club or divisional sides from across the Irish Sea. Today it is different — the Irish President's XV, which, if you translate from officialese into the vernacular as understood down Kingsholm Road, means Ireland.

Finally, there can be few rugby clubs that have taken on two international teams in successive games, as Gloucester can now boast. If someone, somewhere, can come up with a club to equal the Cherry and Whites now proud record of September 1991, then Gloucester will be able to say: 'Well, I bet when those two national sides came on the field, they weren't led out by a native of your town on both occasions!'.

Captain Will Carling sportingly let Mike Tongue (born in Gloucester) lead England out last week, and Phil Matthews (born in Hucclecote) will be the first in a green jersey out on the turf this afternoon not through the fortunes of birthplace, but as the Captain of Ireland.

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CEAD MILE FAILTÉ!

...which means, so I'm told by Mike O'Connell, raconteur, erstwhile prop forward and purveyor of Irish ale in this our fair City, "One hundred thousand welcomes!" and I can't think of a more appropriate way to greet this afternoon's highly distinguished visitors. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, himself an Irishman, to welcome one international side is fortunate; to welcome two, and that on successive Saturdays, is little short of miraculous.

More on both occasions the visiting side has a native-born Gloucester lad to lead it out. Last week, Mike Teague was, very pleasantly, granted that signal honour, while the Irish President's XV is slippereed by Phil Matthews, originally from Hucclecote. It isn't any surprise, knowing their Gloucester backgrounds, that both of them are world-class back row forwards. How did we let Phil get away?

Ed Martin's Fact File provides chapter and verse, but perhaps we don't see as many sides from across the Irish Sea as we would like to. I can remember one or two mighty struggles against the Wolfsheads, some years ago, and Beehive Rangers paid some very pleasant visits. There was also the occasion when Munster arrived to play Gloucestershire, and what's more, beat the County convincingly.

London Irish have also been very welcome visitors, although quite often Cup commitments have disrupted our intentions. It's good to see that, having attained promotion to the Courage League Division One, the Exiles will now be regular opponents.

London Irish do have the distinction of having played at Kingsholm on a Sunday. Some years ago, Gloucester and the Irish were the only two first class sides to have got to about halfway through the season unbeaten, and although the John Player Cup intervened yet again, everyone was anxious for the game to be played, so we broke the Sabbath. The Exiles game second, a circumstance which they surveyed with great good humour, drank truly Hibernian amounts of beer with us, and then all departed to the Irish Club in Horton Road, where, for all I know, the celebrations are still going on.

Of course, various Irish stars have graced the Kingsholm firmament from time to time. The incomparable Willie John McBride skippered an International XV here to mark the County's Centenary, for example. Pat Quinn also played in that game, and Kevin O'Brien represented Broughton Park here on occasion. Indeed, he was to be seen in the bar when they visited us last Easter.

So the Irish aren't entirely unknown to us, and we welcome today's distinguished contingent quite unreservedly. I hope they can give us their informed opinion about the quality of the Club's Guinness, after the game, and our very best wishes for the World Cup go with them. We shall certainly be shouting for them considerably louder than we might otherwise have done.

*He's also a notorious practical joker, so if I've been conned into saying something rude about the Irish, they'll know where to send the boys round.

THANKS TO HAZLEWOODS

If anyone mentions firms of accountants in this area, the chances are that just about the first name you'll think of will be Hazlewoods, who are today's generous Sponsors. It's always nice to be dealing with one of the leaders in the field, and in Rugby terms, Hazlewoods are certainly up there towards the top of Division One. They have five offices in Gloucestershire — in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Tewkesbury and Staverton — and as a leading member of a substantial international group of independent accounting firms, can provide representation and information to clients from over 700 offices throughout the world.

Yet they still manage to retain a personal, individual approach. As Managing Partner Don Cottermole puts it "We have spread our wings substantially since the 1920's, but the family atmosphere and personal and friendly client contact remain, along with the highest standards of professionalism."

The eighteen partners in the practice are determined to hold on to those qualities, although they don't rule out the possibility of opening more offices as the situation demands. As their literature proclaims "Each client's success is our success." As you would expect, Hazlewoods offer every accountancy service you have ever thought of — plus a few you probably haven't. Accounting and audit, tax, trusts and estates, corporate finance, financial
investigation for anyone thinking of purchasing a
company, even Company Secretarial services to
maintain statutory books and records.
That’s a very quick summary of a whole galaxy of
Hazelwood expertise and experience. I’m sure they’d
be glad to elaborate further if you get in touch.
Don Cattermole concludes, “I welcome the chance
for the firm to sponsor this prestigious match between
the Irish President’s XV and the ‘cherry-and-whites’,
and wish both teams well in the coming season.”
Thanks for that, Mr. Cattermole, and for your
generous support. You’re pretty prestigious
yourself.

OLIVER’S ON THE BALL
Hazelwoods have also supplied today’s Mascot.
He’s Oliver Webber, son of one of the firm’s partners,
Norman Webber. Oliver is 10 years old, and has
already turned out on the wing for Painswick Under
13s.
His newly acquired cherry-and-white strip could
well come in handy. If my memory isn’t at fault — and
I’m sure it isn’t — Painswick play in those colours too.
Indeed, they have worn them for longer than we have,
having been founded in 1872.
None of which need stop the speedy Oliver Webber
trying out his legs at Kingsholm, one of these days.

LAST WEEK
You wouldn’t want me to let the opportunity pass
without commending about the performance of the
Gloucester side last Saturday. The points difference
was appropriately wide at the end, but for over an hour
the lads gave England all they could handle, and on not
a few occasions, rather more than that. We really could
have expected no more from them than they gave us.
In fact, they did us proud. In retrospect, it was
inevitable that they would lose in the last quarter.
I’m not going to mention any names, because
everyone played his heart out, but a few players must
have enhanced their own international prospects no
end: a Scottish Selector or two would have profited by
attending.
I’ve seldom been more proud of a Gloucester side

than I was a week ago today, and the occasion will
be fondly remembered by all of us privileged to be
present.
Undoubtedly, the remark of the day came from The
Shed when the England pack had just been pushed
backwards for yards.
A good West Country voice proclaimed “Go easy on
em, Glor!”

THANKS
On the same subject, Terry Tandy asks me to thank
everyone for the good-humoured way the supporters
conducted themselves last Saturday. In spite of
various restrictions on where one could stand or sit,
there wasn’t a single untoward incident all day. The
whole exercise was an object lesson on how crowds
should behave, and usually do at Kingsholm.
I never saw one policeman all day — apart from the
ones out on the field — and that’s more could have
been achieved at various other sporting occasions of
the same magnitude. Gloucestershire Constabulary
will, I’m sure, have taken note of the fact.

WORLD CUP
Indeed, these two games provide very useful
dummy runs for the New Zealand v. USA game on
October 9th. I’m asked to warn you that you won’t be
able to wander just anywhere on that day, and there
will be barriers to make sure you don’t. I’m afraid that
the many people who like to stroll gently round during
the game will be grounded that day.
I’m also told that the entire Complex will be taken
over by the World Cup organisation, and that the usual
happy going of after-match drinkers will be relegated to
the Clubhouse on that occasion. Nothing we can do
about it. We are, in effect, simply setting the ground to
the organisers. Furthermore, you will need a ticket to
gain entry to the Clubhouse at all, and those will be issued
shortly, so you have been warned.
On a brighter note, it appears that the collapse of
Keith Prowse may make more World Cup tickets
available to Gloucester supporters. Watch the Press,
the Programme, and listen to the loudspeakers.
We've reported last week's inside back and front covers today. If you didn't get a Programme last week, they are the front and reverse of one of the earliest Gloucester programmes still in existence, a Comic Football Match dated circa 1900.

Close inspection is very revealing. To start with, the prices are nostalgic; the programme itself costing one penny, which I calculate means that today's effort constitutes a 24,000% rate of inflation since then! Similarly, you could get a pound of tea — described as a 'real eye opener' for 1/3, which is 7½p in today's funny-money. Furthermore, you could have a sample quarter-pound for free!

Notice, too, the address of The Orient post card shop. It's simply described as Corner Shop St. Aldate St. Is it the same corner which now houses Hudson's sports shop? I wonder if Gordon, our respected past Chairman knows.

Again, my thanks to Norman Patridge and Gloucester Old Boys RFC for the loan of this lovely old piece of memorabilia.

**QUIZ TIME**

Just for fun. Answers on Teasip page, although you could cheat by buying a copy of our KINGSHOLM — THE FIRST 100 YEARS' brochure, because all the answers are in there. A snip at £1.50. This week, it's all about Gloucester's International players.

1. Who was the first Gloucester player to win an International Cap?
2. Who was the last Gloucester player to Captain England at Lansdowne Road, Dublin?
3. Who scored two tries in a match for England and never got a Cap?
4. Peter Butler won his second Cap against France in 1976. Against whom did he win his first?
5. Alphabetically, who is Gloucester's first International?
6. Finally, which Gloucester player came within 15 minutes of winning a Cap and never did so?

If you found those easy, why not try setting a quiz yourself? Send your efforts to Peter Arnold care of Gloucester RFC.

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QUIZ ANSWERS (see 'BACK THEN' page)
(1) Walter Jackson (1894) (2) John Owen (but only for half the match) (3) John Good (against Fiji, 1982)
(4) Australia (1975) (5) Arnold Alocoe (1906) (6) Father Dix

CENTENARY BROCHURE
As I said earlier, you could find the answers to all those questions in our Centenary Brochure, 'KINGSHOLM, THE FIRST 100 YEARS'. And a whole lot more too. In fact, I'll venture to suggest that even the most knowledgeable Gloucester aficionado will learn a few things by investing a modest £1.50 in a copy.
There are some superb action pictures, some historic documents, and a whole raft of words, not dissimilar in style to the ones you're reading now.
There are people selling them around the ground today, and a supply in the Club Shop. Judging by the clamour I received on the subject after last Saturday's game, after the sellers had departed, a lot of you would like a copy; so I'm trying to get them to stay on later this week.
I promise you, you'll enjoy your copy.

WORDS OF WISDOM
The arrival of the Irish reminds me of the memorable speech the great Willie John McBride made when he captained the International XV which lost to Gloucestershire during the County's Centenary Season. This was before the Complex was built, and the oration was made from a bar stool over in the old quarters where the gym is now. Willie John elevated by a bar stool is an impressive enough sight, even when not accompanied by his undoubtedly gift of Celtic oratory.
"I've always wanted to play at Kingholm," he said.
"And it's good to be here at last. Before I came I'd heard a lot about your ground. I'd heard a lot about your Rugby, and I'd heard a lot about your crowd."
"As soon as I arrived, this afternoon, I knew everything they said about your ground was true." (applause)
"Ten minutes into the game, I knew everything they said about your Rugby was true" (renewed applause)
"But as soon as I ran out on the field I knew that everything they said about your crowd was true!" (prolonged laughter)

WELCOME HOME
I liked Mike Teague's comment made to Graham Day of BBC Radio Gloucestershire after last Saturday's game. Graham asked him how he felt about being honoured by leading the England team out.
Mike remarked that it was obviously a very emotional moment for him. And then continued.
"Then, two minutes into the game, I got a smack in the mouth, and thought: 'Oh yes! A typical Gloucester Welcome!'"
Accidents will happen, Mike.

'BURTO' ON RADIO FIVE
It's nice to see that Mike Burton is to share commentary duties with Bill McLaren on BBC Radio Five's coverage of the World Cup. The combination is obviously one to be conjured with. The fact was announced during Rugby special last week, and during the conversation, Bill McLaren speculated on a Scotland-Ireland Final.
Of course, he could be biased.

WRONG AGAIN, NIGEL
It's nice to note that Nigel Stammer Smith (Old Boy of Barnwood Church of England School) reads his programme when he comes to Kingholm. Unfortunately, he appears to have been rather hurried about it, this time round.
During his commentary, which I thought was very fair, he commented that the England game was only the second time that a full international side had played at Kingholm. He'd obviously picked up the snippet from Ed Martin's 'Fact File' notes, but in the general fixture, had misread it. What Ed had actually written was that this was only the second time that a full international side had played against Gloucester, which, of course, is a very different thing.
In my own memory, which goes back a mere half-century, and not counting these two matches, I can recall full sides at Kingholm from England (twice), Wales (twice), New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, USA, Japan, Romania... and I've probably missed a couple at that.
See you next week for Neath.