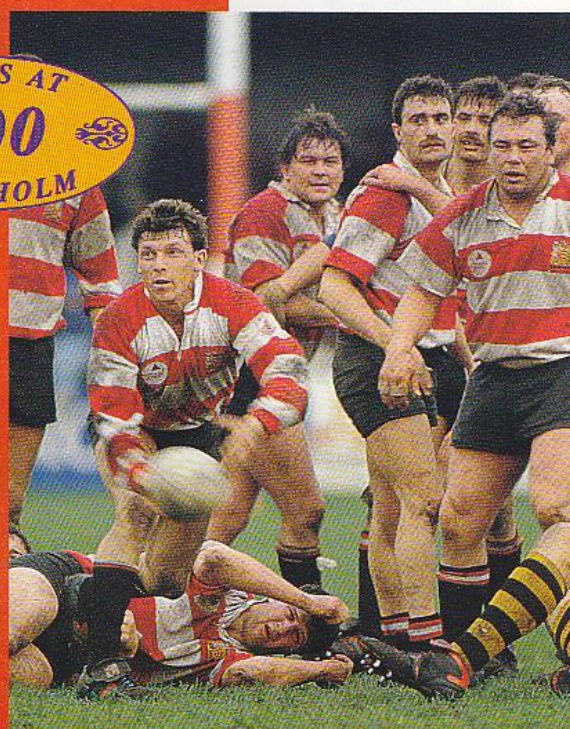
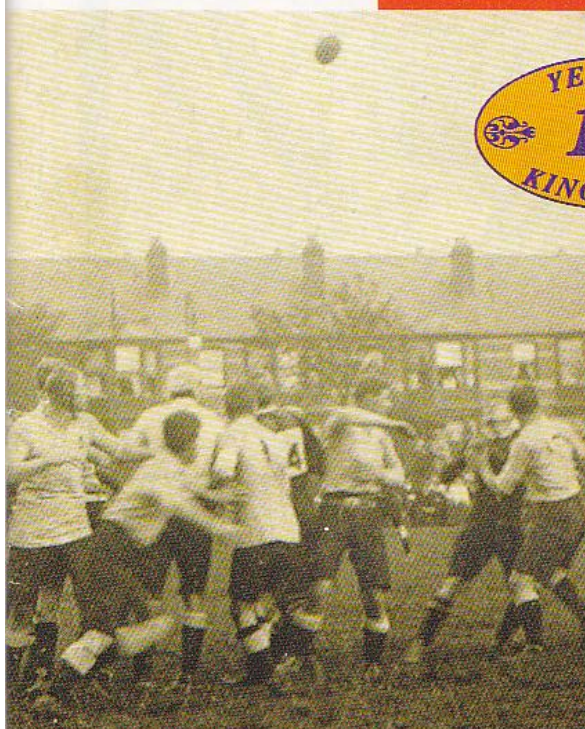


THE
GLOUCESTER
RUGBY FOOTBALL
CLUB

V
LYDNEY

YEARS AT
100
KINGSHOLM



80p.

Official Programme



FOUNDED 1873

President:
Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

Thursday, December 26th 1991

Kick-Off 3.00pm

MATCH KINDLY SPONSORED BY

GLOUCESTERSHIRE NEWSPAPERS LTD.

The Citizen

OFFICIAL SPONSORS



Welcome to the Club, Mr. Carter. I gather that Membership details have been sent to you. As I once wrote on another occasion about another Kent man 'Discovering Gloucester after a lifetime of supporting London Rugby must be like a shandy drinker discovering real ale'.

TOUCH LINES

by
Peter Arnold

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR . . .

And when it does, it brings Lydney. Which is right and proper, and the way things should be. After all, this is the time of year when you meet old friends, and the neighbours drop in for a drink or two.

You can't count Bristol, which is in Avon, for the moment anyway, so our friends from down the South Wales road are the only Gloucestershire club, apart from ourselves, who are playing in the upper echelons of the Courage Clubs Championship. They're finding it hard going at the moment, but no one knows the toughness and resilience of the boys from Regentholm better than we do, and you shouldn't write them off yet. Not with Gordon Sargent and Dave Spencer in charge, you shouldn't.

After all, they gave Sale all they could handle in the Pilkington Cup. I wasn't there myself, and only know what I've gleaned from the radio commentary, the excellent 'Citizen' report, and what people have told me, but I gather that Lydney could well have won that one, and with respect to the Northern club, it's a great pity they didn't. That would have done Gloucestershire Rugby a power of good.

However, Boxing Day isn't a time for that sort of thinking. It's a day for celebration, relaxation and general good fellowship. We couldn't hope to find opponents more likely to fulfill those criteria better than Lydney.

So — very warm seasonal welcomes to Lydney, players, officials and supporters alike. Best wishes for the rest of the season, and thanks for sharing our holiday with us. Christmas wouldn't be the same without you.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Just about the first piece of information you'll want is that concerning the arrangements for tickets for the Pilkington Cup game against London Scottish here at Kingsholm on January 25th. Quite simple, really.

Stand tickets only. Experience has shown that it isn't worth printing Ground versions, at this stage of the Competition, anyway. The cost will be £6.00 per ticket.

They will go on sale on Monday, January 6th, as far as Members are concerned, and one week later will be available generally. Get yours at the Office outside the Clubhouse entrance, between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm

any weekday. Of course, you are welcome to order by post, but if you do, don't forget to enclose a SAE.

Not a bad draw, all things considered. We could certainly have more difficult ones, and most assuredly will if we get past the Exiles. However, the Scots can put out a formidable side, and have a habit of surprising everyone from time to time. Remember, they have beaten Gloucester three times in the Cup, including one occasion at Kingsholm. That was a game I remember vividly for its sheer disappointment: Gloucester could and should have won it, and somehow didn't. Let's see what happens this time round.

BOOKED YOUR HOLS YET?

If you haven't, you might like to consider this one. Gloucester will be visiting the USA in April next year, and MBM have arranged a package for supporters to travel with the team.

The whole thing starts with three nights in New York, where both First XV and United have fixtures against the Old Blues side. Then it's on to Boston where the boys are to take part in the highly prestigious Boston International Rugby Tournament. It's quite the most important event of its type in the States, and has a whole range of social events associated with it. While the First XV are doing that, United will have games against local sides.

Even before the Tournament starts, you'll have a memorable event to attend. It's the 'Kick-off Party', which takes the form of a three hour cruise around Boston Harbour, accompanied by around 1,000 like-minded souls. The Boston Tea Party was never like this.

If you survive that one, there's a Barbecue to attend, and as the Grand Finale, the Awards Banquet, which should be quite a thrash in its own right. In spite of all that, there will be plenty of time for independent sightseeing.

It's all a great temptation, isn't it? You could succumb and get full details by ringing Mike Burton on Gloucester 419666. He'll be delighted to arrange Advance Registration for you.

THANKS TO THE 'CITIZEN'

We're all so used to the 'Citizen' keeping us updated on the affairs of local Rugby that sometimes I think we

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MORE TOUCH LINES

don't realise how lucky we are. It may well be that our long-established newspaper is the only local daily in the country which treats Rugby as the premier sport, and features the game six days a week. Any time there's no news from Kingsholm, you can bet your season ticket that there are stories from the junior clubs.

Today, not for the first time, the 'Citizen' have been generous enough to act as Match Sponsors — and quite typically, they have their own ideas about how to do that. They're billing today as a 'Family Day', and you will have read, and probably seen by now, the various ways they're setting about it. It's a praiseworthy initiative, and simply adds to the debt which Gloucester RFC owes the paper.

Match after match, week after week, we get coverage which London clubs, for example, would give their athletic supporters for. What's more, over the years, the various reporters on the ground always seem to have watched the same match as me, which I can't always say about chaps from the National Press or TV.

And then there's the 'Pink 'Un'. It is, quite simply, the only football paper in Britain which leads on Rugby. There's no doubt that it's required reading for Gloucester supporter, but more — it's the bible for anyone who's first allegiance is to any other local club. If Matson, say, has a good Pilkington Cup run, or Old Richians do well in the Provincial or County Cups, you can read all about it in the 'Pink'.

To Terry Phillips, who used to cover Kingsholm games for years, and is now Sports Editor, to Mike Harris, who has to endure the alleged wit of the Kingsholm Mafia these days, our grateful thanks. Which go to everyone else concerned as well, for that matter.

We're not really experts at saying 'thanks' to people, by and large, but we would like everyone at St. John's Lane and at the Staverton printing operation, to know that we really do appreciate their efforts.

As we do today's exercise. We hope everyone involved has a super day, and wish them all the best for 1992.

CASH FOR CHRISTMAS

Mrs. V. F. Wilkes of Dean's Way, C. Midwinter of Churchdown, Mary Sibery of Longlevens, D. Fortlock of Hucclecote and D. J. Benzie of Brockworth all have £100 extra to spend this Christmas, because they're winners in our Gold Bond draw. The Agents who sold them their entries were: Smiles of Worcester Street, for whom it's getting to be a habit, Kiosks of Chosen Drive, Churchdown, The White Hart, opposite the Ground (best wishes, Roy!) and M. Benzie of Brockworth, who are also a little better off as a result.

In addition, G. D. White of Tuffley, K. B. Clark of Henry Road, P. Wales of Evenlode Road, Mike Rose of St. Mark's Street and J. Harris of Longlevens have won £5 consolation prizes.

Good luck to all of them. If you'd like to join their number, as Agent or participant, then you only have to ask. Do so by ringing Mike Burton or Dave Golder on 0452 419666.

SEASONAL CONGRATULATIONS

Good news for three Gloucester players this Yuletide. Dave Sims and Neil Matthews have been selected for the quaintly named England Development Squad. Obviously we send them both our good wishes, and there isn't a doubt that both of them will do well.

Following his form this season, notably in the presence of the England heirarchy, I had just a hope that Paul Ashmead might elbow his way in, too, but he hasn't quite made it. Of course, there's plenty of competition in the back row these days, and the likes of Messrs. Back and Rodber have been in the frame a little longer. Still — Paul has plenty of time, and I'm sure he'll get a crack of the whip one of these days.

The third Gloucester player to have won honours is Don Caskie, and no one ever deserved it more. He's been picked in a strong Scotland 'A' side who play Spain on Sunday next. Good on you Don!

I'm told that there's no truth in the rumour that his nickname is now to be changed from 'the Ferret' to 'the Spanish Fly'.

ONE FIRST CLASS TEAM SUPPORTING ANOTHER



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ED MARTIN'S FACT FILE

Things ain't what they used to be! Back in the Dark Ages of the 50s, my father used to take me out on Boxing Day. We would catch the bus into Kings Square and then mosey off down Worcester Street to Kingsholm and watch Gloucester beat the Old Merchant Taylors.

The only thing you can still do is to walk down Worcester Street to the ground! Gone is the Boxing Day bus and for OMT read Lydney.

OMT paid their first visit to Kingsholm over the second Christmas that the Cherry and Whites were at the ground. But their first visit to Gloucester was in 1890 when the fixture was played on the Spa. Gloucester won by a try and three minors to a minor. This very first meeting was the only fixture not to be played at Kingsholm.

All told, OMT played 62 Boxing Day matches against Gloucester before the fixture was terminated after the 1973 game which Gloucester won by a then Kingsholm record 82-12 margin.

There was to be one more visit. OMT celebrated their centenary in the 1982-3 season — and they asked Gloucester if they could come. That "special" match was the 63rd and final meeting, Gloucester winning 70-0.

Gloucester have won 66 of their 78 Boxing Day matches at Kingsholm. Eight have been lost and four drawn. This gives the Cherry and Whites an 87-18 win record for their holiday match. Their only opponents have been OMT and Lydney.

BOXING DAY AT KINGSHOLM

	P	W	L	D	PF	PA
OMT	62	51	7	4	1224	310
Lydney	16	15	1	0	404	116
Total	78	66	8	4	1628	426

A point to ponder between Christmas and Easter... Gloucester have never won a Courage League match that was originally postponed.

Happy New Year!

TAILPIECE

by
Peter Arnold

SYMPATHIES TO NIGEL

We've all had our fun at the expense of Nigel Starmer Smith, over the years, and none more often than I. In fact, we have considerable, if slightly wry, affection for him, and news of a family tragedy will strike a chord with all of us.

Apparently, 'Starmer' lost his daughter to a rare blood disorder, right in the middle of his heavy commitments to Radio 5 during the World Cup. This might be expected to prostrate any man, but Nigel soldiered on, flying back to Paris for the Quarter Final. I listened to that broadcast, and wouldn't have suspected that there was anything wrong.

Our sincere sympathies go to Nigel and his family, and we hope his devotion to Rugby will do just a little to take his mind off things. If anyone from the BBC is covering today's game, I hope they'll send a copy of the programme to him. Just so he knows we're thinking of him.

SHOUTING THE ODDS

More information from my bookmaking correspondent, Mike Heasman. Apparently, you can get 7 to 1 on Gloucester winning the League, and 5 to 1 on winning the Cup. The favourites in both competitions are obviously Bath at 11/4 in both cases. Wasps are rated at 4 to 1 for the League and also 5 to 1 for the Cup.

Apparently, one Cheltenham punter got on early, and stands to win £2,000 if Gloucester wins either League or Cup, and over £10,000 if they do the double, and we wouldn't begrudge him a penny of it.

At the time of writing, you could get 33/1 on Gloucester for the double, but the aforementioned hopeful got 194/1, in London, before the League season kicked off. Apparently, you can usually obtain better prices in London; the bookies don't seem to see much further than Wasps and Harlequins.

But if you really want a flutter, try Thurrock for the Cup at 1500/1!

FEELING OLD

Not wishing to boast, I became a Grandfather for the first time, a couple of weeks ago. An old drinking mate of mine commented, "In most well regulated families, the lad gets his name put down for Eton at birth. I suppose, in your case, it's Gloucester Rugby Football Club!"

He's not wrong, you know.

WELL DONE JONATHAN

Jonathan Newton of Churchdown is today's mascot. As you'll have read, his name came out of Terry Phillips' battered bowler in a draw run by the 'Citizen', today's Sponsors. Waiting until his back was turned, I spoke to his Mum about him. "He's sport mad!" she told me. "Plays football, but likes Rugby best." Which shows a remarkable grasp of the fitness of things for a nine year-old.

Young Mister Newton goes to Churchdown Village Junior School, and plays his mini-Rugby for Chosen Hill. "They've been going for about a year now, and have really got it together." Mrs Newton told me. Which is good news for all of us.

COLTS

I'm grateful to Reg Collins for updating me on the Colts record. They've now finished the first half of their season, resuming in February. Here's the score: Played 10, Won 9, Lost 1, Drawn 0. Points For, 294, Against, 56.

Results since we last reported, in the Leicester programme, were: Forest of Dean (H) Won 35-7; Lydney (A) Won 32-0

Leading points scorers: Goran Antonijevic, 2 tries, 15 conversions, 10 penalties — 68 points. Chris Theyer, 12 tries — 48 points. Bruce Harris, 11 tries — 44 points. Daffyd Farr, 6 tries — 24 points.

One of the highlights of the Colts Season so far came when no less than four players — all from Old Richians, incidentally — were invited to attend the South West Colts Coaching Week-end at RAF Locking. They were: lock Mark Cornwall, prop Andrew Screen, and flankers Rob James and Dan Darby. Well done, lads!

SEASON'S GREETINGS

What with one thing and another, notably the weather, I haven't had a chance to wish you all the appropriate Season's Greetings. 'Better late than never', like the man said, so I do so now, quite unreservedly. I hope you are having a quite spectacularly good Christmas, and that 1992 will be amazingly prosperous and pleasant.

Of course, there's still New Year's Eve. No doubt you'll see the year in appropriately, and you won't be drinking and driving, will you? It's dangerous, illegal and downright stupid, and you might spill the stuff.