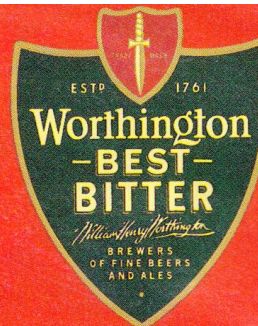




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Welcome  
to  
Kingsholm



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# GLOUCESTER

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

v

# BLACKHEATH

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 1993

KICK OFF 3.00 p.m.



Official Programme  
£1.00

Peter Arnold

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

I can't recall a close season when the doings of Gloucester RFC have been such a constant topic of interest. Indeed, we hardly seem to have been away at all. The arrival of Barrie Corless as Director of Coaching has sparked most conversation, of course, but Paul Beech's adventures on the Australian Tour, the proposal for a new Patrons set-up, Roger Eggleton's Chairmanship of the AGM have all attracted comment. As for the usual rumours about which players were going, which staying and which moving to Kingsholm from elsewhere — well! If I believed all I have been told as irrefutable fact, then I'd be expecting a First XV which would make Bath look like Nigel Green's immortal 'Old Nottinghamian's Extra B'.

But if the rumour factory has been working double shifts this Summer, then the facts are hardly less intriguing. Gloucester's thunderous finish last April left everyone on a 'high'. Various players who missed all, or a large part of last season through injury would seem to be fighting fit this time round. Whereas we started last year's campaign without a recognised scrum half, this time we have no fewer than five all vying for First Team places. The advent of the home-and-away League system means that the fixture list will never be the same again. If no new 'big name' has drifted Gloucester's way, there is a galaxy of would-be rising stars on the Kingsholm stage this season.

### PIPING TIMES, MY MASTERS!

But this is where the nattering and the speculation has to stop. Today, someone's going to have to out there and do the business. And we could hardly have more respected Opposition against whom to do it. While Blackheath can't really describe themselves as among the top two or three clubs playingwise, they are certainly

there in terms of prestige and of lively appreciation of how the game should be played.

With almost two dozen of our players disporting themselves on the Mediterranean (all right for some!), it's up to the younger element to flourish the cherry-and-white banner today. And perhaps that's no bad way to start the season. The vast majority of today's Gloucester side will be hell-bent on proving that they're good enough to demand a regular First XV place, and there's no substitute for a little fire in the belly.

It is to be hoped that our very welcome visitors don't think that today's Gloucester team implies any sort of disrespect to either the Club or its abilities. I'm afraid that the new League structure is likely to throw up this sort of anomaly from time to time, regrettable though that may be. Anyway, we regard Blackheath too highly to take their abilities lightly.

Conversely, they shouldn't think that the lack of a few familiar names implies that they're here for an early-season run out. They could well find that they have an elver by the tail, to coin a phrase.

But whatever happens, Blackheath are as welcome as always, and we all hope they find that a trip to Kingsholm is a fine way to start their season — for which we all wish them the very best of luck.

As always, you'll see changes to the Programme this season. This year we have 32 pages but you're still only asked to pay £1.00 for it, which is about on a par with the price you'll pay at other clubs. (All right — I know that some programmes have more pages for the same price, but close inspection will show you that, usually, the amount of editorial which changes each week is significantly less than we provide.)

The change in the League structure means that more space will have to be allotted to



THE  
SOCIETY  
THAT  
TRIES  
HARDER



WISHES GLOUCESTER R.F.C ALL THE  
BEST FOR THE 1992/1993 SEASON  
AND WELCOMES ITS GUESTS  
TO KINGSHOLM

statistics — you'll certainly be wanting to know where we stand, and how we're getting on. We've managed this by extending the 'results' section, traditionally at the back of the publication, to two pages, and my good friend Ed. Martin will be handling that operation week by week. Nevertheless, we haven't cut down the space he has for his fascinating historical — almost archaeological — researches which have interested so many people over the past couple of years.

The number of advertisements is the same as last season, but some old faces have disappeared, and have been replaced by new ones. Obviously, we're very grateful to everyone who supports us in this way, and to single one out for mention is a little invidious. However, I would draw your attention to the ad. on page 9, inserted by the Gloucester Small Business Club.

You could say that this is our small contribution to economic recovery. We've been able to do a deal with Carol Bennett, who runs the club, so that small businesses can reap the benefit of exposure in one of the most widely read programmes in Rugby at a price they can afford. Nice that!

Incidentally, Carol is a fellow. He was christened that way because he had the good taste to arrive on Christmas Day, freeing his Dad to nip along to the Lydney game the day after. Or was it still Old Merchant Tailors then?

We've had a change in our management structure too. Nowadays, I have the official title 'Programme Editor', while Andrew Benzie, well known to all Gold Bond Agents, achieves the status of 'Programme Manager'. His job will be to make sure that you can get a programme where you want it, when you want it, and that we don't print too many or too few. He also takes over organising the programme sellers on match days, and I note that he could still find profitable employment for one or two more lads and lasses. Ring Andrew on 0452 419666.

So if you have any sort of query or comment concerning programme distribution or production, or if you want to lay your hands on any back numbers ( a lot of people collect them), then contact Andrew. If you have a story, anecdote, interesting trivia question, or anything you think might be worth printing, then, as always, drop me a line at the Club, or directly at 74, Victoria Street, Gloucester GL1 4EW, or ring me on 0452 380481.

#### KINGSHOLM UNDER SIEGE

If you were in the Club house last evening, or intend staying on late after the game, then you might see a few people in antique costume showing up and drinking our beer. Don't worry: it's not the Toby getting to you, nor is it our new away strip, it's a deputation from the English Civil War Society.

As you probably know, those noble people are Doing Their Thing at Llantony Priory this weekend, helping us celebrate the 350th Anniversary of the Siege of Gloucester. They are camping out on the King's School Paddock, and obviously need a watering hole while they're here. And where better than Kingsholm? In fact, on being approached, Mervyn Ellway bit our arm off: it's all good for bar takings after all.

I'm told that the ECWS numbers quite a few Rugby people among their membership, and are bringing people from all over the country, so it's nice to be able to offer them traditional Kingsholm hospitality. They ask me to thank everyone concerned for the opportunity to visit the sacred precincts, and extend a cordial invitation to visit their Civil War style camp at Llantony Priory tomorrow.

#### THAT FIRST FINE CORLESS RAPTURE

I can't remember anyone arriving at Kingsholm with so much goodwill going for him as Barrie Corless. Conversely, I can't recall a new boy of whom so much is expected. As that shrewd observer, Keith Richardson, has started in print, it's one thing to take an on-their-knees Northampton and bring it to the eminence it now deserves, but quite another to add an extra dimension to the achievements of a Gloucester club which, despite last season's alarms and excursions, still finished in the upper echelons of the League.

So what does Barrie, himself, think of it all? I asked him, and received the following piece for your delectation

*It is with some surprise, but nevertheless a great deal of pleasure that I find myself writing in the Gloucester programme. Events moved with surprising speed at the end of last season after Northampton and I were unable to agree on a renewal of my contract. I had already had a preliminary meeting to find out exactly what Gloucester were looking for, and the more thought I gave it, the more exciting the prospect became.*

*Well, here I am feeling more and more part of*

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the Gloucester Club as each day passes. I have been made to feel very welcome by everyone associated with the Rugby Club, which seems to include everyone in the area! The Players have shown tremendous enthusiasm during the pre-season training sessions, and I have been most impressed with their attitude.

The first team squad is much the same as last year with the return to fitness of John Hawker and Sam Masters — a real bonus. Several promising young players have joined the Club during the summer, and hopefully, some of them will be pushing for regular first XV place before the season is over; with the senior players in Italy one or two of these new faces get an early opportunity to impress.

What are my aims for the season? It is unrealistic to expect a side threatened with relegation for much of last season to be pushing for League honours. However we will be striving for much more consistency on the field, and to see the continued development of young players such as Paul Beech, Paul Holford, and Dave Kearsy.

It is not unrealistic to look for one place improvement in the league position from last season and to aim for a place in the last eight of the Pilkington Cup as reasonable progress. I would ask supporters to be patient in terms of league and Cup success — this does not happen overnight, and may take a little longer to achieve. I think it is much more important to be building for success which we can maintain over a sustained period, rather than immediate, but short term results. In order to do this we have to be

producing our own players from within the club, rather than relying on the feed we already have from the excellent local clubs.

We must expand and improve on the very good Colts structure we have and develop an U21 side to provide the best coaching, fixtures and facilities in the area. We shall then stop the drift of existing young talent to Bristol, Bath or Cheltenham.

Our aim is to make Gloucester Rugby Club the centre of excellence for the South West, with a structure second to none, one which is able to provide and sustain successful rugby at all levels. This may take a little while to achieve but I can assure you it will be worth waiting for.

*Barrie Corless*

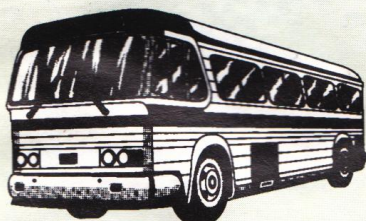
Mr. Corless is obviously under no illusions about the task which awaits him. His approach seems, to this humble observer eminently sensible. After all, no one ever told him the job was going to be easy.

The best thing we ordinary punters can do is get behind the bloke, and give him the time he asks for. Those who remember him in his playing days will recall him as a trenchant, forthright performer whose style wasn't a million miles away from the way we've always like the game at Kingsholm, so he should fit right in, once he's got his feet wet.

Would it be too much, I ask myself, to ask for a moratorium on the traditional 'Glawster' propensity for sniping at anyone in authority? For a season, at least. After all, we're all on the same side.

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### FIRST TO RUN OUT

The honour of acting as the first Match Mascot of 1993/4 goes to Mark Hodgson, who lives with his Mum and Dad, Sara and Ken, in Laburnum Road, Gloucester. Mark's all of 13 years old, which makes him practically a senior citizen in Mascot terms. In fact, he's not all that many years away from Colts qualification. Reg Collins, take note.

He's made a fair old start too, playing at prop at Beaufort School. So Messrs. Phillips, Jones, Deacon, Windo et al. had better start looking over their shoulders.

Mark has two sisters, and his Grandfather, leaun Hughes, is a very successful and popular Gold Bond agent. So now there's another good reason for taking on such an agency: not only can you make a few quid, but you might even see a young member of your family running out in the cherry-and-white strip.

Anyone interested, ring Andrew Benzie on 0452 419666.

### TOUGH START

There are those, centred around Sudbury I suspect, who regard Wasps as the moral victors in last season's Courage Clubs Championship, for reasons I wouldn't be controversial enough to into here. So one can't think of a much tougher start to this season's campaign than to have to take them on almost before the ink's dried on the fixture lists.

You'll undoubtedly want to be here next Saturday for that one. A good performance could set Gloucester up for the whole season.

Before that, however, the Colts entertain Moseley on Thursday next, and that will be a good indicator of the strength of our up-and-comers. Highly recommended.

After that, we have a visit from Cheltenham on Tuesday, September 14th, and that may be interesting, if only to see a few old familiar faces in unfamiliar colours. Not a bad ten days in prospect!

### COACHES

Had a call from Mervyn Ellway the other day to give me initial information about coaches to away league games this season. In general, there is every intention to run transport to just about all of them. There are one or two exceptions, however, and one comes very early. Newcastle Gosforth is just too far away to contemplate. Although there have been attempts in the past, they've never been really well supported, and the whole thing is just too much of a drag. So if you want to go up, better make your own arrangements.

I hope, by next week, I shall be able to give information about how to get there for those stalwarts who intend to make the trek.

Did you see, however, that the team is to fly up from Staverton on the Friday evening? Fans of ITV's 'A Team' programme will be pleased that B.A. Baracas isn't playing in the second row for Gloucester.

### TAILPIECE

If you glance at the attractive advertisement opposite, you'll note that it features Bell's Whisky. I mention the fact because Andrew Benzie tells me that the company specifically demanded that their ad. appeared opposite my copy. Quite a compliment for an old beer drinker who, nevertheless, enjoyed several visits to the Bell's Whisky barge when it used to call at Gloucester Docks.

The old saying goes: 'I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy,' but I can't think of one for a bottle alongside me.

Lang may yer lum reek', chaps!

*Ed Martin —*  
**IN PERSPECTIVE**

Whatever happened to summer? It seems only last week that we were at Kingsholm watching the Harlequins getting well beaten. Then came the Worthington Tens and the arrival of that Rugby expert Jim Rosenthal, one of those TV types who are **always** bigger than the event itself.

All was not in vain, as young (actually, not-so-young) Jim came to realise something about Kingsholm that we have known for years. Just before the final, he was heard to utter words to the effect: "This place has a hell of an atmosphere."

The boys from "The Press" were surprised that Gloucester won the whole caboodle. Had they forgotten two important factors? One, launch a knockout competition in rugby, and Gloucester wins the inaugural event. And secondly, Gloucester has had a lot of experience of "Tens" - after all, according to the cynics, we have been playing ten-man rugby for 100 years at Kingsholm.

With Worthington's silverware safely at Kingsholm, it was time for summer. For some, that meant the winter of the Southern Hemisphere.

June and July came - and went very quickly. We got up at some unearthly hour on a handful of Saturday mornings to watch the twenty-six inch monster. Best forget that!

Now, here it is - the end of August. Mr. Carling is now the PM of soccer. Those well known amateurs Christie, Jackson and Gunnell struck gold to restore some British sporting pride after the disaster called the Ashes Test Series.

So much for summer. The sanity of September is here. Sanity? The first fifteen playing two matches today - and one of them in Italy this evening to boot? And you all thought that the Benniton Treviso match was on the same day as the clash with United Colours of Lydney!

And talking about today... Blackheath - the club whose history includes being one of the original

football clubs who subscribed to the "Rugby" code.

The Blackheath fixture is, alas, not steeped in history, despite the fact that the two clubs first met back on October 8, 1898 at Kingsholm - the visitors posting a 8-5 win. While this is the 95th anniversary of the fixture, it is only the 24th time the two clubs have met (not counting the fixture against a combined Richmond and Blackheath in 1946).

One fixture that raises an eyebrow is the 17th meeting, in September 1951. Blackheath came to Kingsholm for a match on Wednesday evening. Watching this match for the *Citizen* was no lesser a person than the Sports Editor himself.

Whether he was making a bid for recognition as Britain's answer to Stanley "The Coach" Woodward of the New York Tribune (widely considered then and today as the greatest sports editor of all time)...

*A magnificent try by right-winger John Taylor - who streaked half the length of the field to plunge over in the corner - was the highspot of Gloucester's 14pts-8 victory over Blackheath at Kingsholm last night.*

*Receiving the ball near the half-way mark, Taylor ran like a greyhound. Over 3,500 spectators roared with delight as he shook off three opponents and gave vent to thunderous applause as, with a supreme effort, he threw himself over the line.*

The Gloucester side was not the regular team that evening - there were seven changes. But, as the un-named Sports Editor (the chap before Jack Hughes?) reported: "though patchy in parts, the display as a whole was most heartening and a credit to the reshuffled fifteen." The match was a prelude to the important Bristol match, three days later - and Gloucester won that "derby" 11-6.

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