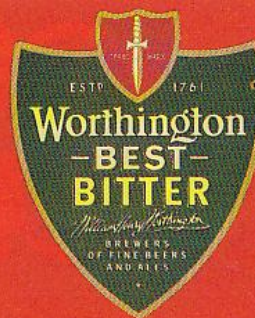




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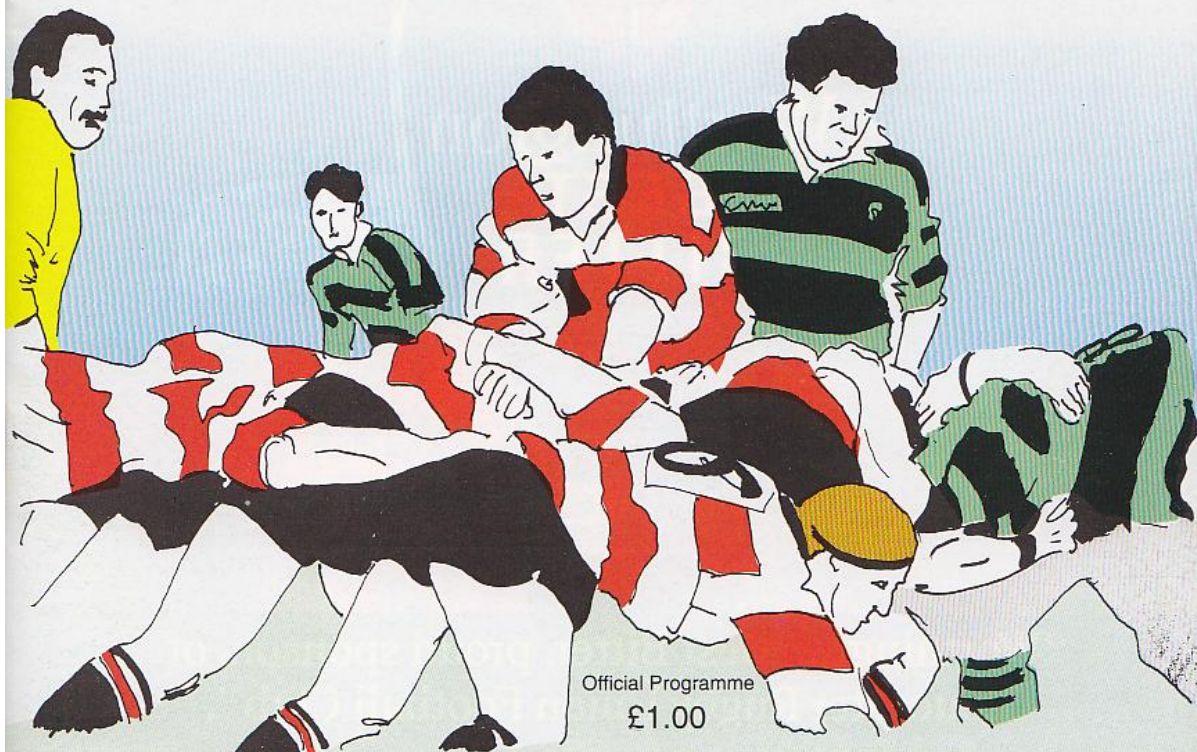
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v

PONTYPOOL

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 4th, 1994

KICK OFF 7.00 pm



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GLOUCESTER 24 (3G; 1P)
 (Black & White)

T	G	Pts	
			15. Jason Merchant
			14. Jerry Perrins
			13. Simon Morris
			12. Ben Maslem
			11. Andy Sharp

T	G	Pts	
			10. Paul Beech
			9. Julian Davis

T	G	Pts	
			1. Tony Windo
			2. Dave Kearsey
			3. Pete Jones
			4. Simon Devereux
			5. Pete Miles
			6. Pete Gianville
			7. Andy Stanley †
			8. Mark Nicholls

T	G	Pts	
			Replacements
			Ian Morgan
			John Hawker
			Rob Baxter

Referee: Tony Rossall - Liverpool Society

GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Cumulative Match Score

3	0		
10	0		
17	0		
24	0		
24	5		

†Captain

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PONTYPOOL 5 (1T)
 (Red White Black Hoops)

T	G	Pts	
			15. Bledwyn Taylor
			14. Hugh Jones
			13. Lee Jones
			12. Mark Ring †
			11. Paul Taylor

T	G	Pts	
			10. Jason Williams
			9. Richard Williams

T	G	Pts	
			1. Damon Thomas
			2. Terry Rogers
			3. Bob Phillips
			4. Matthew Francis
			5. A.N. Other
			6. John Short
			7. Matthew Taylor
			8. Paul Hewitt

Replacements:
 To be announced

24 FT 5



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Peter Arnold

HOW "FRIENDLY" CAN YOU GET?

"Pooler?"

The very word takes us back to less complicated times, when, for a century or so, Gloucester had the most comprehensive Welsh fixture list in the country, when the word 'league' was only spoken of in terms of the 13-man game, and was simply a glimmer in the minds of certain wild-eyed fanatics.

In those days we had a real County Championship, and 'Division' was something you did at school. The major competitive focus was on the Cup, and the 'friendly' was king.

I use the word with the tongue almost piercing the cheek. Friendship and camaraderie were rife in the bar, but there was precious little love lost out in the middle when the Welsh hordes descended on Kingsholm. Yet I remember a Pontypool Committee man describing Gloucester as 'the nearest thing to a Welsh club in England', a sentiment we took as a compliment at the time. And we'd just beaten 'Pooler' that very evening.

Max Boyce comes to mind. On the very day that Severn Sound first went on air, the great Pontypool supporter was one of the first-morning guests. The interviewer had the sad duty of pointing out to him that Gloucester had beaten 'Pooler' on their own ground, the evening before, the first home loss they'd had for yonks. The ebullient and loquacious Max was reduced to a sad "Did they? Did they really?", and the subject was dropped. Yet, just a few weeks later, Max Boyce was interviewed at the home England v. Wales game at Twickenham, and declared "This isn't the home of English rugby. You go down to Gloucester for that!"

When one thinks of Pontypool in those days, one remembers a legendary pack of forwards, any one of whom could have represented Wales (or the Lions for the matter) and most of them did. Behind them was the awesome David Bishop who, after various traumatic interludes, fled to the League. I don't remember many players further

back than that unrelenting and mercurial scrum half, but then — "Pooler" rarely needed anyone else.

Pontypool memories abound. Do you recall the game when both hookers managed to get themselves sent off? Soon after the incident, Pontypool suffered a, possibly diplomatic, injury, and the replacement turned out to be one Bobby Windsor. That was effectively the end of that game.

As I started out by saying, Gloucester used to have the best Anglo-Welsh fixture list in England, but even in that company, Pontypool always had a special place at Kingsholm. It's good to know that at least one tradition has survived the onslaught of home-and-away League structures. For that reason, as well as in memory of some of the most fearsome encounters I ever remember at Kingsholm, Pooler are very welcome this evening.

The lights may be bright at Kingsholm this evening, but no more so than our welcome to our treasured opponents.

BATH NEXT WEEK

Back to the League a week tomorrow, with the annual visit of Bath. Well — they struggled to beat Orrell the other week, so who can say what may happen.

Doug Wadley asks me to tell you that tickets will be available for that game, but that the whole object of the exercise is to relieve possible congestion at the turnstiles. It's an ordinary League fixture, so there's no question of an all-ticket match, and season tickets will, of course, be honoured.

As far as the main Stand is concerned, only Stand season ticket holders will be admitted to the Grandstand until 20 minutes before kick-off. After that, anyone who has bought a Wing ticket will be very welcome.

If you're one of the thousands who prefer to

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**THE
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THAT TRIES
HARDER**



WISHES GLOUCESTER R-F-C ALL THE
BEST FOR THE 1993/1994 SEASON
AND WELCOMES ITS GUESTS
TO KINGSHOLM

Peter Arnold cont.

watch rugby squarely on their own two feet, then you might do yourself a favour by dropping into the office and picking up a ticket. They're available now, and also from the office from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon tomorrow. After that, they'll be on sale from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm each weekday afternoon.

As usual, the Cup match against Orrell on February 26th is an all-pay affair. Tickets will be available from Monday next until February 16th to Member only. After that, anything goes.

Incidentally, the Pilkington Cup draw having placed us at home on February 26th, this evening is the first of a run of no fewer than six home games. Hardly worth going home, really.

MIXED FORTUNES

... for a quintet of Gloucester players on the International scene this weekend. I suppose Ian Smith has the most justification for feeling a little aggrieved at finding his rear end parked firmly on the bench up at Murrayfield; he must have had high hopes of another cap when Morrison's injury created a vacancy at No. 7. And, in all honesty, when his replacement turned out here the other week, he didn't really show himself to be any better than our own Skipper. Still — there are four matches in the Five Nations, so perhaps his chance may come yet. Especially if England win tomorrow.

Dave Sims must feel a little disappointed too. I think we all felt that he wasn't picked for the Emerging England squad because he had been earmarked for England 'A', but as things worked out, he too finds himself on the benches.

A quick look at the eventual selection reveals the probable reasons. The choice of Dean Ryan as Captain effectively sealed off the No. 8 spot, and Bayfield's return for England relegated Nigel Redman to the 'A's, in spite of his storming performance against New Zealand. I imagine we could all argue about the decision, again with our own Northampton game in mind. Again, Dave's chance may well come before the season is out.

I don't suppose that Paul Holford feels quite so let down. His rise up the rankings has been meteoric. This time last season no one outside Gloucester had heard of him, while Messrs. Adebayo and Beal were established contenders, so to have forced himself into England 'A' reckoning at all is a considerable achievement. Time will tell how much farther he can go.

The most disappointing case is that of Andy Deacon. He's been knocking on the Selectors' door for a couple of seasons now, and not to have made the final cut, even as a replacement, is a bit of a blow. My own memories of the players selected ahead of him don't indicate that they can claim any degree of superiority over 'Deaks', so we must hope that there will be a change of heart somewhere along the line. The best place to prove his point is out in the middle, and he's quite capable of doing that, and then some.

Finally, congratulations to Richard West. His inclusion in the Emerging England side to play Spain on Sunday represents a story of 'Boys Own Paper' proportions, featuring a player who seized an unlooked-for opportunity with two very large hands. On the morning of Emerging England v All Blacks, right here, he wasn't playing, but he certainly made his mark when called in at the last moment. Best of luck, 'Westy'. We're all rooting for you.

So we have five players in the International reckoning, and that doesn't include near misses such as Simon Morris, Pete Jones and Don Caskie. Who said Gloucester is a side 'very definitely on the way down'?

Nigel Starmer Smith did, that's who.

THANKS TO ALAN

You may have read, heard on the radio, or even seen for yourself, this year's pantomime presented by the Abbeydale Players at Selwyn School. It was called 'Humpty Dumpty' and was based on fact and legend concerning the Siege of Gloucester.

Every pantomime has to have a chorus song, naturally, and the author, being a man of exceedingly good taste and sense of the fitness of things, designated 'Gloucester Boys' to fulfil that function.

Now, you obviously can't do that unless there's a fair old display of cherry-and-white on the stage. Enter Alan Townsend, who supplied a whole galaxy of scarves, caps and other miscellanea which the cast, at an appropriate point in the proceedings, brandished with great relish at the audience. The whole thing went a real bomb, with fortissimo renderings at all performances.

The Producer, Margaret Perriam, who lives just up the road at Longford, asks me to convey the thanks of the Abbeydale Players to Alan

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Townsend in particular, and Gloucester RFC in general for their help and encouragement. It added considerably to a highly enjoyable event. And it makes a change to see Gloucester RFC among the list of sponsors, rather than thanking other people for that sort of generosity.

I was interested to learn that the loudest rendition of all came at the children's matinee on Saturday afternoon. Apparently, just about all the kids knew the words and the tune, rather better, if truth be told, than one or two of the cast did.

All in all, it was probably the most memorable performance since the time the Gloucester Anthem echoed round the Palace of Westminster from the Members Dining Room at the House of Commons.

But that's another story.

LIGHTS FANTASTIC

Received a nice little message from Nigel Hawkins the other day. It simply read: 'Gloucestershire Building Consultancy wishes Gloucester RFC a bright future'.

You don't have to be a devout and practising punster to gather from those few words that Nigel Hawkins and his merry men (and, presumably girls - must be politically correct) are the outfit responsible for installing our magnificent new lights, in action for a whole match for the first time this evening.

In fact, the installation was given its first trial run under match conditions during the second half of last Saturday's United match against Leicester, but the story of our involvement with GBC goes

back farther than that.

You will recall that, back last year, after quite an extended search, the Club managed to provide much-needed extra training facilities, taking the strain from Kingsholm which had been over-used for years. This was a very significant step forward: I doubt, for example, whether it would have been possible to contemplate next season's introduction of an every-Saturday Under-21 system without such facilities. And I don't have to spell out for you the potential importance of that decision in today's rugby climate.

In the event, it proved possible to lease part of the Oxstalls School playing fields, providing a full-sized pitch. With, of course, floodlights for evening use, necessary if anything like either the quantity or quality of training and coaching required were to be achieved.

The consultants on that job were Gloucestershire Building Consultancy, and very grateful we were for their expertise and service.

Then, as you'll remember, an evil minded storm just before Christmas, decided to demolish one of our old floodlight columns, just in the darkest part of the year. Obviously, we couldn't hang about, and the decision was quickly taken to replace the whole system, which was, truth to tell, beginning to show its age.

Under those circumstances, who else should we turn to but our tried-and-true friends at Gloucestershire Building Consultancy? As we expected, it turned out to be an excellent decision.

The whole scheme, not the least complicated, was designed, all components

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THIS MONTHS SPECIALS HALF TERM

Date	Destination	Departure Time:			Fare:—	
		Chelt	Glos	Others	Adult	Child Snr Cits
Tues 15th	Bristol (Zoo, Ice skating or Shopping)	9.30am	10am		£3.00	£2.50
	Moreton Mkt & Stratford	9.30am	9.00am		£3.00	£2.50
Wed 16th	Black Country Museum or Merry Hill, Dudley	9.00am	9.30am	8.30C+	£3.50	£3.00
	Cadbury World, Brmghm	8.30am	9.00am		£7.50*	£5.75
	London & Sightseeing	8.30am	8.00am	9.00am	£6.50	£6.00
Thurs 17th	Afternoon Mystery Tour	1.00pm	1.30pm		£2.50	£2.00
Fri 18th	16 Cotswold Villages	11.15am			£2.90	£2.90
	Burford Wildlife Pk	11.15am			£2.30	£2.30

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Peter Arnold cont.

acquired and manufactured, and the installation completed within six of the wettest weeks on record. Which, you'll readily agree, is a considerable achievement.

It isn't just a matter of switching the lights on, either. Nigel Hawkins claims that we now have the most sophisticated floodlight system of any Rugby Union ground in Great Britain - and possibly further afield, too. The lights can be used at half power, which we're told, should normally be quite good enough for the average match, or on full power to provide a lighting level more than adequate for the TV cameras, and that could well mean that, eventually, we shall see more big, prestige matches at Kingsholm.

Furthermore, we don't even have to switch all the lights on. They can be activated by halves and quarters, in any combination, to meet any conceivable training requirement with maximum economy.

About the only down side to the situation is that, as Alan Brinn told us the other week, the cost of the scheme means that the proposed extensions to the main Stand will have to be deferred for a while, but one can't have everything, and we have to get our priorities right.

I must confess that the name 'Gloucestershire Building Consultancy' was a new one on me. It shouldn't have been: they are, in fact the former Property Services Department of the County Council, first of all privatised under the fairly recent legislation, and latterly established in their present form through a management buy out. Their workforce, based down on the Quay, numbers some 45 people.

We have been dealing with their Landscape section, which can handle projects such as all-weather playing surfaces and similar facilities as well as lighting schemes. However, GBC covers a lot more ground than that. They can handle just about everything in the building line, including the classic architectural services and mechanical engineering.

But let Doug Wadley have the last word. "Gloucestershire Building Consultancy have been marvellous to work with, really marvellous," he told me. "Nothing was too much trouble for them."

And our Doug doesn't use language like that lightly. So if you have any sort of building requirement, and would like to handle it through one company rather than dashing hither and yon between several outfits, you would do well to ring 0452 425810. They've certainly done a great job for us.

STAR IN THE MAKING

Our Match Mascot today has the distinction of being the biggest one we've ever had. Indeed, although he's only 14, he is probably bigger than

some of the players.

James French has been sponsored by Midland Bank, who also sponsor the Schools U14 competition, the Final of which is being played right here before this evening's match. Part of that sponsorship includes a prize for the young player who scores most tries in the competition. James scored no fewer than eight, playing at No. 8, before his own School, Heywood, from Cinderford, were knocked out. His nearest rival is actually playing in the Final, has scored five, and as it seems a little unlikely that he'll score four this evening, it seems a good bet that the £20 Terry Warner gift voucher is in the bag for James French.

James is one of those enviable characters who seems to be a natural ball player, brilliant at any sport he decides to try his hand at. He's already playing at No. 8 for the Cinderford Club's U16 side — at 14, I would remind you — and is charging up the basketball rankings at a rate of knots.

The only ominous sign as far as we're concerned is that he has signed schoolboy forms for Luton Town Football Club. It's to be hoped that the lure of soccer doesn't attract him too strongly, and that his allegiance remains with the real game. We have a start, apparently. He comes to watch Gloucester play whenever he can.

Reg Collins and Barrie Corless take note. You could have a star on your hands.

WAY IN TO THE COMPLEX

Once again, you'll only be able to get into the Complex via the double-door entrance at the end of the Clubhouse, and not through the Players' entrance. It worked well the other week, so the intention is to keep the system going from now on. Unless you hear anything different.

TAILPIECE

Mention of our new lights reminds me of the occasion when we entertained High Wycombe in the Cup. One of the major attractions that day was the Wycome supporter who climbed one of our floodlight columns and attached a life-size inflatable female (very) doll to it.

Before anyone gets any ideas, we'll have none of that there 'ere if you don't mind. We didn't spend £60,000 just for some idiot to go all light headed.



Ed Martin – IN PERSPECTIVE

IN THEIR infinite wisdom, the Gloucestershire County Council elected to dispose of the bound editions of the Citizen from the year "dot" to 1959 that were stored at the old "Central Library" in Brunswick Road. The theory was that the "collection" took up a lot of space - and the whole lot were on microfilm anyway.

There is one problem. Neither the British Library nor the Brunswick Road library had the Saturday evening "Pink" on microfilm for some 50 years. That meant that the local history department of the Gloucestershire Library Service dumped much of the county's detailed sporting history of this century.

It was just before last Christmas that the disposal was arranged, it emerged during the past fortnight. However, it appears that disposal does not mean complete destruction.

Very loud noises were made by this writer to the top banana of libraries at Shire Hall. And this, with the help of a letter from the Mayor's Parlour to Shire Hall, did have some effect - the librarian knows where the bound copies are and is currently seeing whether the "Pink Uns" are salvageable.

We can but hope that they are. If not, gone are the "expanded" articles and the "notes" column on Gloucester RFC by "W.B" (Bill Bailey), not to mention those wonderful sporting cartoons that appeared each Saturday evening reflecting one of the matches played somewhere in the county.

The whole affair came to light because the historian of Harlequins wanted some help with teams in early clashes with Gloucester. Could there be a question asked on the disposal in Parliament? Now, the historian at The Stoop just happens to work in the library at the House of Lords!

Fortunately, some "Pink Un" classics are preserved on microfilm. Like the one on Saturday April 24, 1909, when the good people of St. John's Lane invented "FOOTBLAL" in their heading for that day's FA Cup final between Manchester United and Bristol City.

Bill Bailey's "Review of the Gloucester Season" were normally also printed in the ordinary Citizen, so these survive, whatever the outcome of the evaluation of damage.

In the club's 50th year (1923/4), Bailey reported on a mixed season in the April 26, 1924, edition under the headline:

"GLOUCESTER'S BRILLIANT START AND WIND UP"

"Gloucester finished the season as they opened it, in brilliant fashion," he wrote. "Of the first eight matches, the City won seven and drew one, and then came two bad patches, seven defeats being sustained in the next twelve games, which carried the programme to over Christmas, and seven in the first thirteen contests in the second half of the season.

"At this stage, the outlook was anything but promising, but the players realising the position, struck a winning vein, and during the last month won all the remaining engagements (six) and aggregated in points 119 to 31 by opponents."

In those days, there were two types of fixtures - against Welsh clubs and against English clubs. The only English clubs to win at Kingsholm that season was Devonport Services who beat the Cherry and Whites 13-8 on November 10, 1923. Against Welsh clubs, and these results were the ones that really mattered, Gloucester fared quite well at Kingsholm up to December, drawing 8-8 against Cardiff and beating Newport 8-6.

Then came a 7-3 loss to Abertillery on December 22. But Gloucester managed to pull out a 5-0 win against tonight's guests, Pontypool, on January 19, 1924, and followed that with an 11-8 win against Llanelly (as it was spelled in those days) a month later. The first day of March brought bitter disappointment when Cross Keys edged a 9-6 win to make it two Kingsholm losses against the Welsh for the season.

The away record against Welsh clubs that year is best forgotten. Six visits were made across the border and six losses were recorded.

All told, Gloucester played 39 matches in the 1923-4 season (there were 24 wins, 14 losses and one draw). At Kingsholm, Gloucester played 21 matches, posting 17 wins, three losses and one draw.

Gloucester have met Pontypool on 72 occasions (the first meeting was a 5-0 Gloucester win at Kingsholm in December 1907). Thirty-two of the encounters have been won by Gloucester, 34 by Pontypool and there have been six drawn matches. Gloucester have won the last four encounters.

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