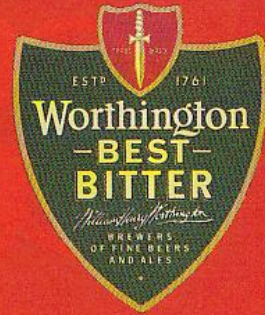




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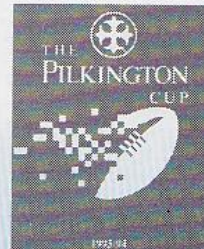
v



ORRELL

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 26th, 1994

KICK OFF 3.00 pm



Official Programme
£1.00

Peter Arnold

MAKE OR BREAK

One thing about Cup rugby. You do know where you are when the final whistle blows.

After a League match there's the process of seeing how everyone else has done, working out how the current standings will change, calculating points differences, and speculating what will happen if Trimplethorp beat Stiffarmbury next time out. That sort of ratiocination can quite take the head off your bitter, if you're not careful.

At least, after a Pilkington Cup match, if you've lost you've lost, and that's it and all about it, as they say around Tredworth way, and there's nothing left but to cry in your beer. If you've won, you celebrate modestly, wait for the rest of the results to come in and then possess thy soul in patience until the draw on Monday.

So by around 4.30, everyone will know if it's Gloucester or Orrell who have anything left to play for this season. Neither side is going to win the Courage League, and the only thought troubling the minds of the losers will be a nagging doubt about relegation. And they can at least console themselves in that they have reached the Cup Quarter Finals, which, after all, is no mean achievement in itself.

Looking around the fixture list for today, our occasion looks to be the most interesting on the calendar. It's the only exclusively First Division confrontation, and the sides look to be evenly matched. Admittedly, Gloucester won up at Edgehall Road, but there wasn't much in it. Gloucester are certainly playing better than they were at that stage of the season, but to judge by recent results, so are our very welcome visitors. Both sides can claim that they caused a few flutters in the dovescotes when Bath visited them. Both sides have injury problems.

Furthermore, both clubs are renowned Cup fighters with proud records to defend, and all thirty players, plus any replacements who might find themselves on the field, will badly want to win. One way and another, and despite what the

pundits may say, this is a very difficult one to call. I think all we can do is remember Confucius, and lie back and enjoy it.

The Cup, after all, is the Cup, and has a very special place in the hearts and minds of the Kingsholm faithful. Whatever its title – RFU Challenge Cup, John Player or Pilkington – just about everyone here will have their own memories of moments and matches which stick in the mind, of stirring individual and team feats, of opportunities taken and lost at rugby grounds all over England, up to and including Twickenham. And that goes for the supporters of both sides.

The one thing which we can all relish is that it is our respected and highly welcome friends from Orrell who are here to share Cup Quarter Final Day with us. We couldn't be in better company, and we hope that everyone who has made the long trip down from Wigan have a thoroughly good day out. And whatever the result, we'll look forward to seeing you again in the League on April 23rd.

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE STANDING

Sorry to keeping prattling on about this every time we have a big crowd, but it is important, indeed, a necessity under the Law, for us to make sure that all gangways and sets of steps are kept clear at all times. The reasons are obvious and to do with the Emergency Services.

I know how annoying it can be to be moved along by a Steward just when you've got yourself settled, not realising that you're obstructing a gangway, but said Steward is doing the job he's there for, and we'd be grateful if you'd co-operate if the occasion arises.

On a similar theme, if you're reading this in the Clubhouse, or in one of the excellent pubs across the road, it would be a good idea if you made tracks towards your favoured vantage point just a bit early today. It eases the congestion at the turnstiles, and also avoids a scrum just before kick-off.

Cont on page 12

**THE
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Peter Arnold cont.

I'm asked to point out that this goes for Stand ticket holders just as much as to people who prefer to stand up. There's nothing more infuriating than have to shuffle to your feet, or have your view obstructed by latecomers just after play has started.

Who asked me to point it out? A poor chap who dropped his hip flask while allowing people to push past him after the start of the Bath game, that's who. And you wouldn't wish that to happen to your mother-in-law, would you?

A WORD FROM PILKINGTON

Received a nice fax from Tony Cave of Pilkington plc the other day. There isn't much doubt whose side he's on, I quote:

"Gloucester face Orrell today, so with two northern clubs at this stage, what chance Pilkington seeing a team from their headquarters area being in the Final? This is the sixth year of the Pilkington sponsorship, so it may be about time."

I thought the sponsors were supposed to remain neutral? Still, any bloke is entitled to support any team he likes, and he isn't saying anything I wouldn't in his spot.

He does make one good point. Of the three Division Two clubs who have got this far, one (Moseley) has reached the Final, while both Sale and Saracens have been Semi Finalists before now. So an upset is by no means impossible.

He also points out that the Shield Final precedes the 'real' Final nowadays, so that punters get two games for the price of one, that the date for Twickenham is May 7th, and why doesn't everyone order their tickets now?

Point taken. And we shouldn't let the occasion pass without thanking Pilkington for their continued and invaluable support. The season wouldn't be the same without the Cup.

COACHES FOR LONDON IRISH

Next Friday, we have a visit from London Scottish, and on the following Tuesday, our own version of 'two for the price of one'; the arrival of Exeter University preceded by the postponed Schools Final between Crypt and St. Peter's, so that should be a good evening out.

On the following Saturday we visit London Irish, and that's one we simply must win. If we do, survival in the First Division looks pretty safe. If not . . . well, let's just say that life could become a bit difficult.

If ever there were a day when the players could do with your support it's that one. A good old 'Glawster' roar at Sunbury would work wonders, and Trevor Pritchard is doing his bit to ensure just that by laying on coaches at £6.50 a throw. Get your tickets from the office.

LADIES DAY

And here's our third 'two for the price of one' for the day. We have a pair of Match Mascots, one for each side, and what's more, they're both of the feminine persuasion.

Samantha and Jessica Coleman, nine and seven years old respectively prefer to be known colloquially as 'Sam' and 'Jess'. They both go to Beech Green school at Quedgeley where they are known for playing a ferocious game of netball. Which doesn't stop them following in their father, Ian's footsteps as avid Gloucester fans, helped along by the fact that Tim Smith is a family friend.

You've probably studied Ian's work before, actually. He works at the Citizen's hi-tech printing plant at Staverton. Mum Julie stays fractionally closer to home by working in the offices of the Co-op.

Welcome Sam and Jess. Hope we see a lot more of you.

MORGAN STRIKES AGAIN!

Did you see Phil Smith's Diary in the 'Pink Un' two Saturdays ago? His lead story pointed out that, since the beginning of 1994, Ian Morgan had been selected as a replacement three times, and actually got on the field on all three occasions. Against Wasps he came on as a temporary replacement for Bruce Fenley when the scrum half cut his head, in the Cup game against Northampton he replaced the concussed Don Caskie, and he was also called upon to deputise against Pontypool when Ben Maslen cut his napper.

It won't have escaped your notice that 'Calamity Morgan' made it four out of four the other Saturday at the expense of Simon Morris, one of two such misfortunes which had incalculable effects on the final result of the Bath game.

Perhaps Barrie Corless should select Ian in the first place, and stop all the messing about. Or, better still, offer his services as replacement to the visitors.

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ROTTEN LUCK JOHN

I said 'two such misfortunes', the other, of course, being the broken leg suffered by hooker, John Hawker, very early in the Bath game. It really is rotten luck on the poor chap, following his broken neck which deprived him of his rugby for the second half of last season. Although it isn't a bad break as these things go, I gather that he's likely to be in plaster for anything up to a couple of months, which effectively puts paid to his season, and, to an extent, disrupts a front row trio which has looked more and more effective as each match rolls by. Nothing against Dave Kearsey - we're lucky to have a hooker replacement of such quality - but front rows are a unit, they get used to each other's techniques and eccentricities, and it takes time to weld together to maximum efficiency.

On thinking about it, the Fickle Finger of Fate has, of late, pointed unerringly at those players we could least afford to lose. Ashley Johnson's broken ankle deprived us of the services of an outside half who was making the position his own, Don Caskie's concussion gave us three weeks, at least, without all that flair and dynamism in the centre.

On top of that, to lose one's first choice hooker, and a centre of Simon Morris's class within the first fifteen minutes of a League game against, of all people, Bath, isn't just unlucky - it's downright malignant. I could have wished that the BBC's final, edited, coverage on 'Rugby Special', while generous regarding the Gloucester performance, had made more of that circumstance,

which could well have influenced the result decisively.

ANOTHER ONE FROM GWYN

As I type these notes, snow is teeming down outside my window, and the temperature is low enough to freeze the ballcocks off a brass cistern. If these conditions persist, a supply of appropriate reading matter may shortly become a required element in the battening-down-hatches procedure.

It's very timely, therefore, that I should receive, once again, some details from my Gwyn Hiatt, my mole within the County Library and Museums Service. As usual, he sends me details of an interesting rugby book which the Library is in the process of acquiring, and I thank him, sincerely, for his continued efforts in this direction.

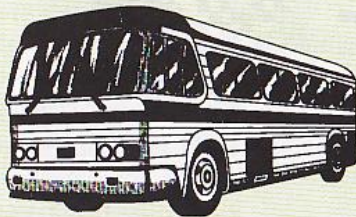
This time, it's a book called 'The Five Nations Championship 1947-93' and from the details I have would seem to indicate that it's a treasure well worth your perusal. You could even buy it at £12.99.

The author is John Griffiths, who is a schoolmaster from Hertfordshire who is also the statistician for the annual 'Rothmans Rugby Union Yearbook'. In his latest publication, he describes twenty of his most memorable Five Nations matches during the post war years, and also includes 100 detailed pen pictures of prominent players during that era.

One section of his Preface is bound to stimulate discussion wherever two or three rugby people are gathered together. Like many such

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THIS MONTHS SPECIALS

Date	Destination	Departure Time:			— Fare:—	
		Chelt	Glos	Others	Adult	Child Snr Cits
*Child Only						
MARCH						
Sat 12th	Crufts Dog Show, NEC or Birmingham Shopping	8.30am	9.00am	8.00amC	£3.50	£3.00
Sun 13th	Mothering Sunday (Tour & Tea)	12.30pm	1.00pm		£6.00	£5.50
Sat 19th	Ideal Home Exbn or London Shopping	8.30am	8.00am	9.00amC	£6.50	£6.00
Thurs 24th	Ideal Home Exbn or London Shopping	8.30am	8.00am	9.00amC	£6.50	£6.00
Sun 20th	Daffodil Sunday (Tour & Tea)	12.30pm	1.00pm		£6.50	£5.50

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Peter Arnold cont.

authors, he can't resist the temptation to pick his own all-time greats side from the players listed. For your interest, they are as follows:

J.P.R. Williams, Gerald Davies, Phillipe Sella, Mike Gibson, Serge Blanco, Barry John, Gareth Edwards, Ray McLoughlin, Peter Wheeler, Graham Price, Willie-John McBride, Delme Thomas, Jean-Pierre Reeves, Mervyn Davies, John Jeffrey.

From a man with a name like 'John Griffiths' I suppose we can forgive the fact that half the side are Welsh, but I can't accept that only one Englishman merits selection. There would be a case, I suggest, for allowing Serge Blanco to play in his usual position at full back, and giving the wing spot to David Duckham. Or Peter Jackson. Or Mike Slemen.

Similarly, I would think that Bill Beaumont and Wade Dooley wouldn't go much on being kept out by Delme Thomas.

Anyway, it's an author's privilege to do such things – and ours to argue with his opinions.

Mr. Griffiths does, however, raise a more serious point. *'The Five Nations Championship'* he writes *'Is under threat.'* He points out that the introduction of the World Cup, it has been argued, will marginalise the Championship, and that the fixture lists are now such that suggestions have been made to push the Five Nations back to the very end of the season.

He reminds us that the same arguments were used, not so long ago, with regard to the home international Soccer tournament, and that the competition has gone the way of all flesh.

I'm not sure just how relevant that analogy is, but such ominous rumblings have certainly been heard, and perhaps the time is now, if anyone wants to make representations about the matter.

Food for thought. And thanks, again, Gwyn. Keep 'em coming.

THE MARK AND ROBERT SHOW

There's good news, this week, about two players from the awesome range of talent which appears to be waiting in the wings against the time when some of our current players are thinking about applying for bus passes. (Well, not quite that, but you know what I mean.)

Congratulations to Mark Cornwell on being selected for the South West Under 21 side to meet Midlands at Bath on Sunday.

Mark has certainly been making his presence felt for Gloucester U21's all season, especially in the line out, and I suppose the writing was on the wall when he performed that same service for the South West U21 side against Gloucester the other week. Which is a touch ironic.

Spare a thought, too, for scrum half Dan Maslen, still at Cambridge, who has made the replacement benches for the same game. Dan is the younger brother of Ben Maslen who made his League debut for Gloucester against Bath.

Some of us have been a bit slow to cotton on to what is happening at Under 21 level: next season, the Gloucester outfit intends to run an every-Saturday side, for example, which should make for highly entertaining rugby, apart from anything else.

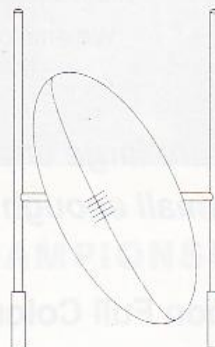
Two people who are certainly not slow on the uptake are Barrie Corless, always a great advocate of U21 rugby, and John Fidler who is the guide, mentor and friend of the Gloucester contingent. "It's so important!" said 'Fid' when I spoke to him on the matter last Saturday. And I'm not going to argue with Big John: it was never a healthy pastime, anyway. And talking of the Clan Fidler, congratulations also to young Robert of that ilk who has been selected for the England Colts squad for the game against London and the South West on Sunday. It's a sign of the times when a lad at Colts level, noted for his lock forward play, opts for No. 8 on the grounds that he doesn't think he's tall enough for the second row!

Well, young Robert, your Dad was never the tallest lock around, either.

TAILPIECE

It was nice to read, a week or two ago, Ed Martin's piece about that legendary Gloucester and England forward, 'Biddy' Halford. What Ed didn't say was that 'Biddy' was reported to have so many sons that he was trying to raise his own rugby team.

And we think our Colts are good.



Ed Martin – IN PERSPECTIVE

IT IS a well known fact that a home draw in the Pilkington Cup is relatively rare for the three clubs that have dominated the competition since it was launched as the John Player Cup in 1971. The so-called "big three" are Gloucester, Leicester and Bath.

As far as Gloucester is concerned, this is the 29th cup match to be played at Kingsholm. Of the 66 cup appearances, the Cherry and Whites have played away on 38 occasions, with 28 home dates.

Interestingly, the away record is considerably better than the record at Kingsholm when it comes to the Pilkington Cup. Of the 38 away matches, just eight have been lost, with four drawn. This gives a 73.68 per cent winning record.

Now, one of the draws was a draw – the May 1, 1982 cup final encounter at Twickenham with Moseley when the silverware was shared after a 12-12 stand-off. The other three drawn matches saw Gloucester "winning" two of them and "losing" the other.

At home, Gloucester has won 19 of the 28 matches, outscoring opponents by a 5-2 margin. The only drawn cup match at Kingsholm was the 3-3 tie against Richmond on February 10, 1979, when Richmond went through to the second round on the "away" rule as no tries were scored.

When it comes to quarter final matches, Gloucester has made three Kingsholm appearances, and nine "on the road". Of the home dates, one has been lost – the March 8, 1980 pairing with Rosslyn Park when the visitors squeezed through by a 6-3 margin.

A couple of seasons later, Gloucester disposed of Sale 13-6 (March 13, 1982) and then on March 9, 1985 Harlequins were beaten 31-12 – the last time a quarter final has been played at Kingsholm.

When it comes to cup matches between Gloucester and Orrell, there have been three – and two of them were in the quarter finals! Orrell won 16-10 on February 28, 1987 and Gloucester claimed a 26-16 win on February 22, 1992 – both those matches being played at Edgehall Road.

The only other meeting with Orrell in the cup was at Kingsholm on January 23, 1988 when Gloucester went into the fourth round after a 19-9 win.

All told, Gloucester and Orrell have met on 18 occasions since the first encounter on March 29, 1980 at Orrell when the Cherry and Whites claimed a 10-6 win. The series stands at 12 Gloucester wins, 5 Orrell wins and one drawn match.

Orrell posted their first win in the series with a 21-16 verdict on March 15, 1986 at Edgehall Road. Since then, they have recorded a further two home wins, in contrast to their six home losses and a draw.

At Kingsholm, Orrell were beaten on six consecutive occasions before they pulled-off their first win. This came on March 23, 1991 when Gloucester were overshadowed 16-9 in a League match. Their next visit also saw them getting the upper hand last season – a 13-8 win, again in the League.

And that was the last time Orrell visited Kingsholm . . .

GEORGE HOLFORD

THE TEAM photograph that included George "Biddy" Holford that was in the programme two weeks ago jolted a number of memories. Peter Arnold, who can always be relied upon to come up with an amusing yarn, tells me that "Biddy" Holford had rather a lot of children.

In fact, he could muster, according to our Arnie, a complete set of forwards, a scrum half and a fly half. What Peter did not say was if this was the, err, "birth" of the legend of Gloucester playing ten-man rugby!

The photograph was taken prior to a match against United Services. With Holford in the centre of the front row, it seemed likely that it was of the team in the 1919/20 season when he was captain. It looks likely that the photograph was taken in the 1923/4 season, Holford's final season with Gloucester.

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