

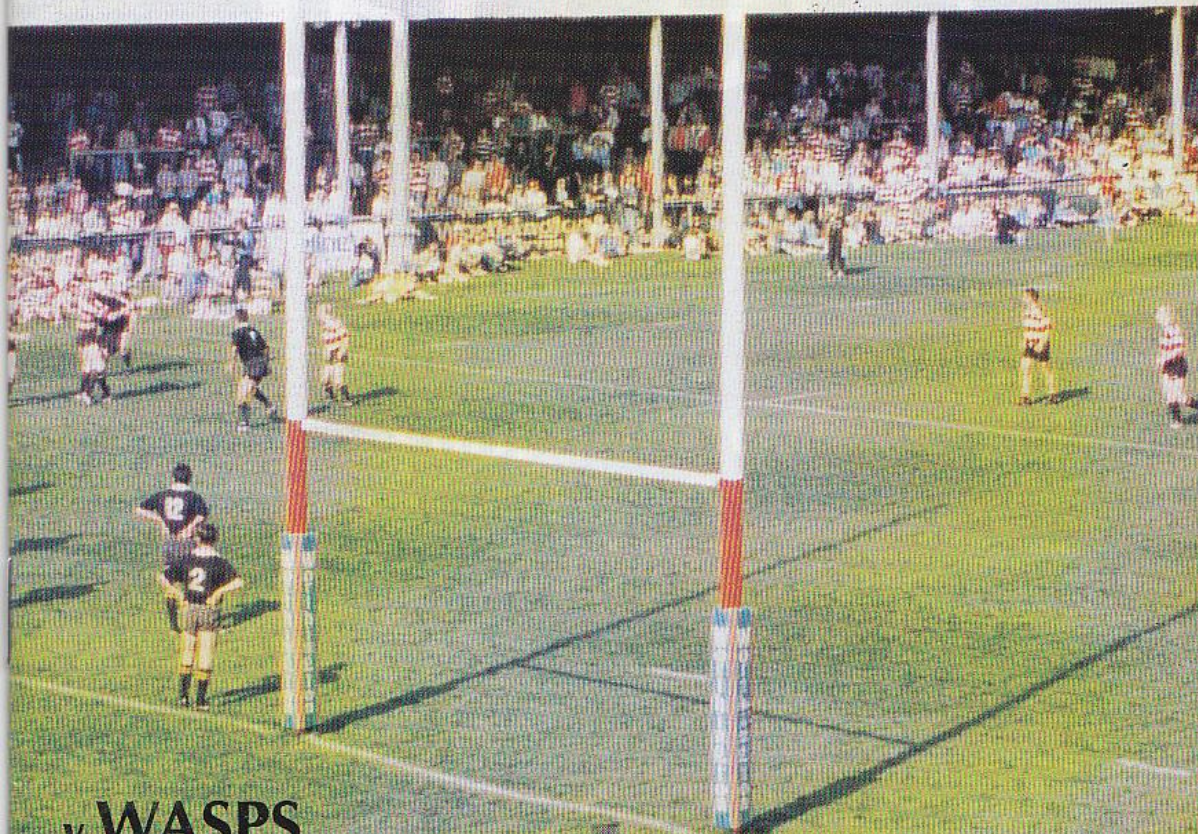
GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



FOUNDED 1873



Official Club Sponsors



v **WASPS**
Saturday 7th January, 1995
Kick off — 2.15 p.m.



Official
Programme
£1

..... Peter Arnold

SECOND TIME AROUND

Here we go again. Here's where we start the second half of the League season - which is almost a mirror image of the first. It can't, of course, be quite the same weekly slog as the earlier festivities the Five Nations Championship and the Pilkington Cup get in the way, but we do play all our opponents in the same order as we did before Christmas, so the parallels will be interesting.

The nice thing about the situation, as far as Gloucester is concerned, is that we re-start the proceedings with one of the most attractive fixtures in the calendar. Wasps are generally acknowledged to be, of all First Division sides, the one most committed to running rugby. All the way from full-back to tight head, if there's a gap, they'll run through it. Not only does that make for some spectacular entertainment, but it also gives the opposition a fighting chance, because, inevitably, margins of error are smaller.

By the same token, score lines tend to be higher. And, as we found to our considerable dismay at the start of the League season, one can find oneself on the wrong end of a considerable seeing-to if things go right for today's welcome and respected guests. The reverse can also be true, as Wasps found out when, fresh from around 100 points in their first two or three games, they came unstuck against a West Hartlepool side which had already yielded seven tries to Gloucester.

It would be a brave prophet who tried to forecast today's score sheet. All that can be said is that anything can happen, and probably will. The amount of talent on view means that all the options are well and truly open. And I do mean 'all'. The last time most of us watched Rob Andrew, for example, he landed twelve kicks out of twelve for the England side, and it could well have been thirteen and a new, undisputed world record, if Will Carling hadn't elected to run one

penalty which would almost certainly have gone over if he'd decided otherwise. That's a most memorable achievement by any standards, but with all the respect in the world, even here in the domain of Peter Butler, we'd rather see tries scored than penalties landed if at all possible. So, I suspect, would the players on both sides.

All things considered, it's very good to welcome Wasps as our first guests of 1995. We always enjoy their rugby, and we always enjoy the company of their players, officials and supporters in the bar after the game. Whatever the result we welcome them here unreservedly, and hope they thoroughly enjoy their first visit to Kingsholm this year.

WATCH THAT GANGWAY

Let's get the boring bit over first. I do have to remind supporters, from time to time, that the Fire Officer regards watching the game from gangways or flights of steps as a decided no-no. The reasons are obvious and we'd ask you to appreciate them.

NASTY ONE FOR IAN

At the time of writing, I don't know which decision Ian Smith has taken over his 'club-v-country' dilemma posed by his well-deserved selection for today's Scotland 'A' side. The irony is that if he'd been pushing for further *England* caps, the problem wouldn't have arisen, because the fixture list has, by and large, been sorted out accordingly.

My usual Sunday morning pint is taken in the amiable and interesting company of a couple of friends, one in his late 70's and the other into his 80's, both of whom have played a decent standard of rugby, and who have probably forgotten more about the game than most of us will ever know. Their conversation on the matter was fascinating.

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Peter Arnold cont.

Glyn kicked off with something to the effect that 'You can't blame a bloke for wanting to add to his International Caps. Any sportsman's ambition should be to represent his country, and good luck to anyone who fights hard to do that whenever he gets the chance. We all wish we had the ability to be in that situation. And anyway, Gloucester have never stood in the way of any player who gets a chance to play at the highest level.'

George ventured to disagree. 'Ian Smith owes everything he's achieved to Gloucester. His first duty is to the Club - which he did Captain, after all - and if they want him to play, that's where he should be. Gloucester might not want to stand in anyone's way, but it's only in recent years that League points have become important, so the situation has changed.'

The point of that conversation was that I could readily see both points of view, as, I imagine, can all of us. Perhaps Barrie Corless made the most cogent comment when he stated that it's Ian's own decision, and no one else's. It's still, for the moment, anyway, an amateur game, and a chap's entitled to play for whoever he likes.

And, if Gloucester lost today without Ian Smith, or win with him, can you honestly put your hand on your heart and say that one player's presence or absence made the crucial difference? I very much doubt it.

Personally, I'd say to Ian Smith - 'Best of luck mate! Whatever you've decided to do, I'll back you. You may owe a lot to the Club, but, by the same token, Gloucester owe a fair bit to you.'

**MORE TO LIFE THAN LEAGUES
AND CUPS**

Our untimely exit from the Pilkington Cup was nothing short of a disaster in a season which has seen more highs and lows even than last time round, and we thought that was eccentric enough. It does, however, have one very pleasant side effect. It has enabled Mike Nicholls to arrange a home fixture against Saracens, presently bestriding the Second Division, and always worth watching. That's on Saturday, January 28th, and I commend it to your attention.

There's another attractive Kingsholm occasion just three days before, on Wednesday, January 25th. At 6.15 p.m. that day, England Schools kick-off against Australian Schools, and

that should be a meeting to savour. I don't have to tell you that schoolboy rugby is always highly entertaining, and well worth the time and money. It will also be interesting to get advance notice of the sort of opposition the Wallabies will be throwing at us in a generation or two's time.

Tickets are available right now from the office: £6.00 Stand and £4.00 Ground, with the usual concessions priced at £4.00 and £2.00. Good value for money, I'd say.

Just one reminder to complete the list of unscheduled attractions. Keep March 11th in your diary, because that's the day we're expecting a visit from the formidable Northern Transvaal side. Having already entertained Transvaal and South African Barbarians in recent seasons, that game completes a memorable, and possibly unique, trilogy of matches against successive South African touring sides. Which is something to be proud of.

PINK UN'S GREATEST EVER OFFER!

The 'Citizen's' new Sports Editor, Kevin Pick, featured in our programme for the Moseley game, certainly doesn't take long to get his feet under the table. For today, and this weekend only, the famous 'Pink Un' will be on sale for just 10p.

I suppose we've become used to National papers playing ducks and drakes with their cover prices in their never-ending circulation wars, but this one is entirely different. I gather that our valuable and much appreciated sports paper returns from its Christmas and New Year hols. this weekend, and the special offer is a way of announcing 'Hello There! We're back!'

Very welcome too. In my various peregrinations around the country, I haven't come across anything quite like our good old 'Pink Un', and a weekend without it certainly leaves one with a feeling that something is missing. Long may it prosper. Charlie Haddock and all.

GOLDEN GAMBLE

There's another institution which is worth mentioning too. Golden Gamble has only been around for a couple of seasons, but it has taken such a grip on our consciousness that it seems to have been a part of the Kingsholm scene for ever.

That's rather the point. The lads who persuade you to part with a pound in return for a share in the takings, in and around the ground, at every home game do a perfectly good job - although we could always do with more optimistic punters. What doesn't seem to be so well appreciated is that you can have a modest flutter in aid of Gloucester RFC without coming within miles of the Ground, any week, every week, whether Gloucester is playing at home or not.

Agents for Golden Gamble are situated all over the place. You can expend the odd quid or two on any day of the week, simply by patronising them. If you don't know where your nearest one is, then ring 01452 419666 and ask for Karen Dudden, who will be delighted to enlighten you.

In fact, you don't even have to do that. You can arrange to pay through your bank, directly to the Golden Gamble organisers, for a specified number of weeks, such payments being made monthly or quarterly. Or you can pay one lump sum for the remainder of the season, and then simply lay back and wait for your prize money to arrive. Again, the beautiful and talented Karen will be very eager to give you full information and arrange matters for you.

As you'll know if you're a regular purchaser of this programme, winners are identified in these pages every time we print an issue. You may also have noticed that they are advertised regularly in the 'Citizen'. And, of course, half-time announcements at each home match inform everyone who this week's lucky so-and-so's are in good time for them to buy a round in the bar after the match. Remember, that furtive character

sneaking off after the final whistle, coat collar turned up, and head well down may not be purely unsociable, or aggrieved at the match result. He may have a pocket full of money, he's taking home to the wife before the horde of gannets descend on him. After all, two or three hundred quid buys a lot of beer at our prices.

So do have a yourself a regular flutter on the Golden Gamble. Not only good the winnings be very handy at this notoriously impecunious time of the year, but you'll be doing Gloucester RFC a valuable service by doing so.

The thought also occurs that your chances of winning are astronomically higher than they are on the National Lottery. And, although the potential rewards aren't as high as they are on the National scene, at least we don't make such a terminally boring ham fist of selecting the winners as the telly pundits do.

ON THE OTHER HAND . . .

. . . there's one way in which you can be absolutely sure of making a profit on Golden Gamble. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em they say, and you can do that by becoming an Agent yourself.

All you need is a reasonable number of customers, employees, club or society members, workmates, drinking partners, or just plain mates and relatives. All you do then is accept their regular pounds sterling, and pass them on to the organisers. In return, ten per cent of all your takings come right back to you. In addition, you get a further ten per cent of any winnings your own particular punters fall heir to. So you can't lose.

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Peter Arnold cont.

If your running a retail outlet, then it's a good way of getting people into your shop. Or persuading them to patronise your establishment rather than that of your competition down the road.

A Golden Gamble Agency is also an imaginative way to raise funds for a charity, or for a club, society or other organisation. A Community Association bar, for example, would be an excellent spot from which to sell tickets. And you don't have to be a local to benefit. If you're here from Lydney, Stroud, Cheltenham (or Sudbury, for that matter), you can still make money in this manner.

Worth thinking about, isn't it? Once more, Karen Dudden on 01452 419666 will be very pleased to talk over any proposition with you. Doesn't hurt to give her a ring, even if the idea is only a gleam in your eye at the moment.

Why not do that?

THE TREDWORTH MAFIA IS IN

At least, the Junior Branch is. Our Match Mascot today is Jennifer Gresty, who is nine years old, and lives in Wellesley Street, Tredworth, hard by that fine old watering hole officially called the Duke of Wellington, but known for generations as 'The Stinkpot', for historic and, nowadays, thoroughly unjustified reasons. Obviously, she attends Tredworth School, just opposite, an educational establishment which has launched a fair few rugby players into the world over the years.

Jennifer's Mum and Dad, Linda and Keith, have one other daughter, Rachel, who is five. Jennifer herself comes along regularly to Kingsholm with Keith, but is, I'm told, absolutely hooked on her swimming, which is good to hear.

In fact, she'll be wearing her own rugby shirt today. At least, I hope she will. It was given to her for Christmas, along with a similar article of natty apparel in Harlequins colours. It wouldn't do to bring the wrong one along, would it? Especially with Wasps providing the opposition.

Thanks for coming, Jennifer. Give my regards to the old 'Stinkpot'.

WELCOME BACK

Obviously, we must offer a heartfelt welcome to Sky Television on their first coverage of League rugby from Kingsholm. But Ed Martin, who I thank, tells me that we have another circumstance which makes the occasion even more pleasurable.

The Director of the Programme today is controlling his first League game. His name is Nigel Dean, and if that name is familiar, then so it should be. As you may recall, if your memory is jogged, Nigel was the first Director of Sport for the fledgling Severn Sound, when it became our very first local radio station.

I don't remember any organisation coming to Gloucester with as much goodwill going for it. And Nigel Dean was one of the initial coterie which kept that goodwill rolling. It's certainly good to see him back, albeit briefly, and I look forward to sharing a convivial libation with him after the

game.

Nigel moves to Sky from the ITV network, and he must have had excellent reasons for doing so, because he gives up his chance of a trip to the World Cup in South Africa by doing so. I sincerely hope he finds his return to Kingsholm some measure of consolation.

Nice to see you back, Nigel. Remember Severn Sound's first day on air, when you interviewed Max Boyce, opening proceedings with the news that Gloucester had beaten the then all-conquering Pontypool the night before?

CLANG

Ed Marting also points out an horrendous error in one of the TV listings magazines. Apparently, today's coverage is described as coming from 'The Byways' ground, Gloucester. Oops!

TAILPIECE

Mike Price, my mole in Brummagem, was good enough to send me copies of the local press coverage of last week's Moseley game. Pretty fair, I thought, but there's one remark I'd like someone to show Mike Teague, before the match, if he's playing today. It might be all he needs to psych him up, if that's needed.

According to one reporter, someone in the crowd shouted, at one point, 'Give it up Teague! You're past it!'

If someone bought me a pint for every time I've heard that over the years, I'd be smashed by about four o'clock.



STOP PRESS

Andy Mitchell tells me that his overnight Coach to West Hartlepool is definitely on. Depart Kingsholm 8.00 am - Saturday morning 14th January.

Bon Voyage!

How Barrie Corless



Sees It

Well its back to the reality of League Rugby after a two month break. You may well remember the Harlequins game on November 5th when we recorded our first away league win of the season to move into 5th place in the league.

Since then a great many of our players have been involved in a disastrous Divisional Championship with the South West. Unfortunately due to poor selection and team preparation our lads didn't have a real opportunity to show their worth. The exceptions were Mark Mapletoft and Richard West who played an important part in the victorious Midlands side. Richard subsequently earned selection for England Emerging players against Canada.

From a club point of view the hangover from the South West disasters undoubtedly had an affect on the very disappointing cup performance at Wakefield. We have not learnt as a side that we must perform to our optimum level EVERY time we take the field, anything less is just not good enough.

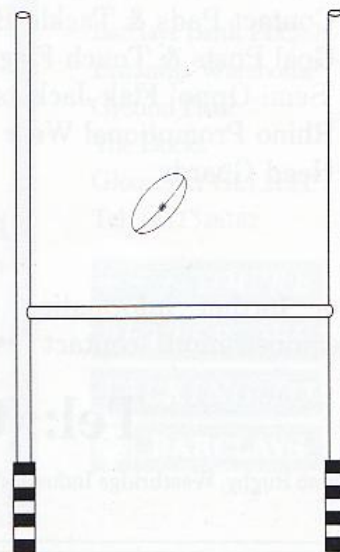
There were enough good signs in the early part of the league programme to suggest that the side is beginning to make real progress on the playing side. Although consistency is something we are still striving for.

There have been some welcome signs regarding players arriving at the club to strengthen our playing side. Phil Greening and Rob Fidler have emerged from the U21 squad and with Tom Morgan - another U21, look useful prospects. Robin Saltmarsh, a winger from Bristol, Dan Maslem, scrum half from Cambridge University are already making an impact with the club, and Peter Hart winger/full back, Birkenhead Park and Scott Benton, scrum half Morley/England Colts scrum half have registered for next

season. This gives added depth and quality to what is already a strong United squad.

Links with our traditional feeder clubs remain strong, and there are a number of promising players currently cutting their teeth in the Colts and U21 sides who have developed from the hotbed of Gloucester Rugby.

To those of you who so regularly support the club at home, away or both, may I take this opportunity of thanking you for your loyal support and wish you a happy and successful New Year.



Ed Martin

A headline in the Citizen's Football Final caught the eye the other day. "WHAT IS WRONG WITH RUGBY AT GLO'STER?", the headline asked. The article that followed tried to answer these questions.

"This week officials of the Gloucester Rugby Football Club had an evening's get-together with the players. They are really worried about the team. It is not merely that Gloucester are losing matches. In this amateur, leagueless, cupless game, that fortunately does not matter so much.

"What counts, is the standard of play, and that has fallen so alarmingly recently that the club committee do not know what to try next to stop the rot. I want to be constructive, and the first thing to do is to discover the cause of the trouble. I have asked myself a number of questions and from the answers perhaps may be found the remedy.

"First, are the players individually capable and experienced enough to make the grade in first-class Rugby. In nearly every case I can answer "Yes". More than threequarters of the side have played against first-class teams for at least a couple of seasons, and some of them much longer. They have shown at various times that they are not only capable of carrying out the basic principles of good Rugby, but have on occasions added clever work of their own.

"Is it a happy team? - Yes. So far as I am able to judge it always goes into action in the brightest of spirits.

"Have the players "gone stale"? - Some have. I think there are several players in the team who could do with a rest, not to be drop ped entirely, but to be stood down for a couple of games so that they could come back with renewed enthusiasm.

"Have injuries been the sole cause of the team's recent failures? - No. The Club has certainly been hard hit by injuries this season, and Watkins, Hodge and Crabtree who are out of the side at present, would undoubtedly make a difference, but they alone would not alter the standard of the team as a whole. Why? - Because Gloucester at present are not playing as a team.

"There I think we have reached the crux of the problem. Fellows are not backing each other up. When someone breaks away with the ball there is no one straining every muscle to get in position for a pass. The whole team ought to be keen enough to be trying to do just that.

"The remedy then seems to be not to pick what would appear on paper to be the best team at the moment, but to make a few changes for

resting purposes, and to impress upon the players the idea the each man will best enjoy his Rugby if he makes sure that he is taking and giving passes as often as possible.

"I cannot resist here advancing again my off-repeated opinion that Rugby is primarily a handling game and that I would willingly shoot the fellow who gives up possession of the ball by kicking, except as a very last resort. Of course, a full-back usually finds that he has to adopt this last resort and exceptional players like Willie Jones can often gain more ground by kicking than passing, but there is only one full-back and very few kickers like Willie."

So, there it is. What was wrong with Gloucester in the 1949-50 season, according to Rupert Cherry. January 1950 brought defeats by Newport, London Scottish, the Army and Leicester. Then came more defeats - Neath, Swansea, Cardiff, Northampton, the Royal Air Force Guy's Hospital and Stroud. Poor old RC, he must have been depressed - the only wins recorded between the beginning of the year and March 25 when the article was published were against United Services and Bath - everyone beat Bath in those days!

There appears to be quite a furore over The Shed. Now there is bound to be an even greater outcry when I reveal that there is a new name for this ground. It appears that Kingsholm is now out. And in comes "BYEWAYS". So welcome to the Byeways ground in Gloucester for today's clash with Wasps. While the origin of name "The Shed" is shrouded in modern mystery, the origin of "The Byeways" can be traced to late 1994 and, er, Sky Television. Nice one Rupert? - or is it a Barnesey ploy? The only "Byeways" we know about is the house of the illustrious Gloucester secretary (is this match being played in Doug's back garden — he says he has a Shed)

1.30 Rugby Union

**L
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V
E** Gloucester v Wasps from the Byeways. This Courage League match between two teams who like to play open, running rugby, promises to be a thriller. 87126533