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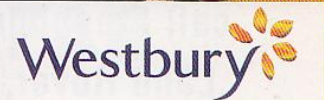
GLOUCESTER

V

BRISTOL

26th April 1997

**POINTS MEAN
INTERNATIONAL
PLACES?**



To be Continued...

There was a time when the final Kingsholm fixture of the season was a holiday occasion: usually a happy run-around against lesser opposition, followed by the occasional small sweet sherry in the Clubhouse. There was always a tinge of melancholy about it, because everyone was sorry to see the season come to an end, and, not infrequently, there were memorable moments.

Many people will recall the most emotional occasion of all, when Mike Burton, having announced his retirement, stood in front of the stand as John Watkins and his team paraded the John Player Cup around the ground, and, quite unashamedly, wept.

There was also the game - against Exeter, I think - where Gloucester scored seventeen tries and managed to convert just one of them. Keith Richardson was Captain that season, and ended that game by handing the ball to the ref. with a gesture towards the posts which graphically signalled; "Here ! You have a go !"

Not like that nowadays. Here we are facing a League encounter which is likely to be as stern a test as we've faced all season. If ever a side needed the points, it's Bristol, and the best possible side, from their point of view, to take them from would be Gloucester. Points difference could be a factor, too, so I suspect that the Old Enemy will be running every chance they get.

At the time of writing, Bristol have just lost a challenge from a rampant London Irish, fresh from their triumphs over Harlequins and Leicester, so the issue of play-offs may be decided by the time you read this. Whether it is or it isn't, I'd like to assure everyone here from down the A38 that no one in Gloucester wants to see Bristol playing in the Second Division of what I suppose we must learn to call the 'Allied Dunbar Premiership' next season. We wouldn't even wish that fate on Bath, being of the firm opinion that a top division,

whatever the spin doctors like to call it, without all three West Country sides wouldn't be worthy of the name.

We all know that neither Bristol or Gloucester has some divine right to play First Division rugby, but the proverbial gut will be busted to make sure that both sides retain their hard-won status.

If Bristol are fated to feature in the play-off games, then I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see a contingent from Kingsholm going down to the Memorial Ground to lend their support to our fiercest and favourite opposition.

This season, of course, honours are even. We beat Bristol in the Cup, here at Kingsholm, and then went down, rather disappointingly, I thought, at Bristol. Both sides will want to win this season's 'One Upmanship Stakes', even without all the other considerations riding on the game. Gloucester will certainly want to end their Kingsholm season in style.

But when you come right down to it, this is only the latest installment in one of the most famous and long-standing rivalries in Rugby Union Football. There is always a special flavour about the Bristol game at Kingsholm, and I can't see that it will be diluted by the financial considerations which dominate every club's ambition to retain or achieve First Division status. We would shout just as loudly, drink beer with the opposing supporters just as enthusiastically, exchange barbed comments before, during and after the game, just as amiably, if this were what is euphemistically called a 'friendly'.

Let's keep that firmly in mind as we wish Bristol all the best for their nail-biting run in to the end of the season, and bid them a sincere welcome to Kingsholm, once again.

As long as they don't actually win.

IT's OFFICIAL !

Phillippe St. Andre to join Gloucester !

Phillippe St. Andre, former Captain of France, and one of the finest three-quarters ever to run out on the Parc des Princes, wears the cherry-and-white next season

Bienvenu Phillippe !

Peter Arnold

5 Gloucester News

What do you think of it so far?

If you'd been asked that question six months ago, you would probably have responded with the time-honoured cry of "Rubbish !" So much has happened since and so marked has the improvement in playing standards been that there probably hasn't been a greater escape since Steve McQueen got all tangled up in the barbed wire on his motor bike. Quite simply, at the end of October, everyone from outside eyeshot of the Cathedral had simply written us off as a First Division club in 1997/8.

Everyone with one honourable exception. I well remember Stuart Barnes, speaking on Sky Sports stating that he didn't believe Gloucester were for the drop. He went on to extol the virtues of his old friend Richard Hill, and then used a phrase about "Old-fashioned West Country dog."

Barnsey was right. The rest of 'em weren't. He was completely justified in his faith in both our esteemed and popular Director of Rugby, and also in his appreciation of the sheer pride and passion which has had such a notable influence on the progress of the season. I suppose that the turning point came with the defeat of Wasps at Kingsholm, which was when the pundits stopped being patronising.

Since then, Northampton, Leicester, Saracens and (saving your presence, lads) Bristol and London Irish have all gone down to defeat at Gloucester's hands, to say nothing of the unfortunates from West Hartlepool and Orrell. To reach the Cup Semi Final for the second season in a row was a mighty bonus in terms of morale and prestige, but my head says that perhaps it was a good thing we didn't progress any further. I'm not sure that our lads are ready for the wide open spaces of Twickenham, probably in the sunshine, yet. We're still bearing the scars from the last occasion on which we were faced with that.

I happen to believe that, at Kingsholm, we

now have the makings of the finest side that I, for one, have ever seen at Gloucester. But that is a very fragile thing. It can be blown off course by old whole variety of factors, including the departure of various promising players.

And that's why the recent Special General Meeting was so important. Make no mistake. Without the finance we *shall* lose players. By the very nature of things, the best young prospects are ambitious, and so they should be. The career is very short by normal standards, there is the instinctive wish to have a settled family life, and always the risk of an injury which might end playing days for good.

Against that background, even the most loyal performer is likely to receive an offer that he can't, in all good sense, refuse. Gloucester has to have the resources to fight off such depredations as long as possible, and make a few raids of our own.

After all, what are we celebrating here ? A Great Revival, certainly, but when you come right down to it, we're just mightily relieved to have avoided play offs against some very good, cash-rich clubs who have bought themselves some very good sides. All very well, but, like the man said, no bloody way to run a railway. Like any other club worthy of the name, we should be aiming for the European competition, and for the League itself.

If Richard Hill, who knows this better than anyone, says we need a few more class players, then no one in their right mind will disagree with him.

I'm told that, by the time you read this, the name of our investor may well have been revealed. All I know is that it isn't me.

But welcome, whoever you are. We need you.

Peter Arnold

Couple to go, Yet

Let's not forget that, although this is the end of the First team's Kingsholm season, we still have two League games to go - and neither of them are going to be easy.

On Wednesday evening, we are away to Bath, who will be wounded by their comparative lack of success this season, are beginning to reproduce the form we expect from them, and will be out to slaughter us, as they always are. Your presence at that little soiree is earnestly requested. Coach leaves Kingsholm at 5.00pm, and a seat will cost you £5.50.

Our final outing is against Northampton, who also seem to be running into some form, and not a day too soon from their point of view. They may have had a horrendous run of away matches, until last Saturday at West Hartlepool, but they have always been a very difficult team to beat on their own patch. Rather like Gloucester, in fact.

Again, your attendance would be greatly appreciated. The coach seat will cost you £8.00, and we'll be leaving Kingsholm at 11.00am.

Be nice to give the lads a good send off into the close season, wouldn't it?

WELCOME TO THE 'INVINCIBLES'

It's exactly 25 years since Gloucester won the first-ever Rugby Football Union Challenge Competition, which became the John Player, and then the Pilkington Cup. That season, the side played all its draws away, and on the way to Twickenham, where they beat Moseley, accounted for, among others, Coventry - then a considerable power in the land - and a London Welsh side which included eleven internationals (six in the pack) and a round half-dozen British Lions.

To mark the occasion, everyone who played in the epic campaign, the side which Mike Burton always calls 'The Invincibles', has been invited to partake of a little light refreshment in the Centenary Suite. I'm told that almost all of them have found it possible to accept.

It will be good to see them all in the same place again, and where more appropriate than Kingsholm?

Welcome, chaps! I'm sure you would have thrived under today's professional regime.

UNSUNG HERO

One of the nicest things I've heard lately is that, barring a last-minute surge in support for someone else, Shedhead's Player of the Year Award, elected by votes of our remarkable fanzine's readers, is Tony Windo.

If ever proof were needed that the much-maligned Shed really does know its rugby, this is it. After all, in the side, we do have a character who is the leading points scorer in League Division One, against the competition of the likes of Lacroix, Stransky and Lynagh, who has, what's more, been selected to go on his first full England tour. Can you think of another club's supporters who, given that background, wouldn't have given the vote to a sparkling outside half rather than a hard, forthright tight-head prop?

Tony richly deserves some recognition. Apart from proving a real handful against some of the world's most respected prop forwards this season, he has been a real power in the loose, and has scored one or two highly important tries. What's more, he goes about his business without fuss or bother, and doesn't respect reputations in any way at all. He is, in fact, the absolute model of a Gloucester prop forward.

No disrespect to the likes of Mark Mapletoft, Scott Benton and Chris Catling, who have all made names for themselves this season, but Tony Windo isn't the only unsung hero in the side. The mind also springs to Nathan Carter, who has been a real revelation, Martin Roberts and Don Caskie, who have played their hearts out all year, and Simon Devereaux, who has battled on superbly against a very difficult background upon which I needn't elaborate.

Thanks a lot, all of you. You've given us a season to remember.

Peter Arnold

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Gloucester News

How Alan

Club Chairman, Alan Brinn, has done an enormous job this season. If ever there were a hot seat, Alan has been sitting in it. To have to handle all the usual responsibilities which chairing the Committee of a club like Gloucester, and then, to cope with the sudden arrival of a Limited Company which provides a whole new tier of management, plus the trauma associated with the birth pangs of the professional game, must have provided a level of pressure which would have buckled the knees of most of us.

And remember, Alan has a business of his own to run, too.

Yet, through it all, he has retained his usual good humour and pleasant way of dealing with anyone and everything he has encountered throughout this oddest of all seasons.

I thought it would be nice, therefore, to invite him to close the season with a piece right here. As usual, it arrived, right on time, and that 'good humour' phrase is exemplified in it.

Thanks, Alan, from all of us. We really do appreciate all your efforts on our behalf.

I wanted to take the opportunity to wish you all a happy summer and to thank you for your support this season. After the first five games we were already looking over our shoulders at Division Two, but we knew that Richard Hill had other ideas.

The impact, both on and off the field, that Richard has had is immense and the players led by Dave Sims have responded magnificently.

John Fidler (Team Secretary) and the coaching and fitness staff have given great support to Richard and the players, and the Committee and Board of Directors have worked very well together in helping the club to cope with

professional rugby.

In fact all the changes that have been made so far have had the interests of the Club as a priority by everyone who has been involved. After the members meeting a couple of weeks ago any further changes that may take place will have the same emphasis on the well being of the Rugby Club.

Now a 'Behind the Scenes' talk of professionalism which involves two ex-players Mike Potter and Keith (Wilf) Nicholls.

Officially their job is to look after the playing kit but it is much more important than that (or so they tell me!!). When travelling away they are wine connoisseurs, agony aunts, story tellers and many other things. In fact their fame has spread so much that they told me they have had an offer from the Harlequins.

I have been in touch with the Quins about such an illicit approach and asked them how much they would want from us to take them away!! Only joking guys!

Seriously, though, they do a marvellous job and are an important part of the backroom team. Thanks both.

Finally a bit of nostalgia - this afternoon the squad that won the first ever Cup Final are here at the invitation of the club and their Captain Mike Nicholls. It is 25 years ago that the team beat Moseley at Twickenham and it will be a great reunion with many tales to be told and I wish them all a happy and memorable day.

Regards to you all

Alan Brinn
Chairman G.R.F.C.

Peter Arnold

Brinn Sees It



STOP PRESS

For your diary. Gareth Chillcott is arranging a Dinner for Wednesday, September 10th. Phillippe St.Andre and other new signings will be present - plus, hopefully, our new investor. A not-to-be-missed occasion !

Over half of next season's hospitality boxes have already been sold. Anyone with ambitions in that direction should get in quick !

CATCHING 'EM YOUNG

Our final Match Mascot of the season is ten year-old Danny Hughes, who attends Abbeymead Primary School with his brother, Bradley. However, while we're getting used to next season, Danny will be settling down to life at Churchdown Comprehensive, where I've no doubt, they'll be teaching him a thing or two about rugby.

Not that that will come as any surprise: he's been playing at outside-half for Old Cents minis for about five years. Better watch out, Tofty. Danny Hughes is breathing down your neck. He also plays soccer, and admits to being an admirer of David Beckham of Man. United. His favourite rugby player is Phil Greening.

Ambition ? To be a professional soccer or rugby player, or "A policeman like his Gramp."

TAILPIECE

Did you hear about the Welshman attending the England game at the Arms Park this season? Apparently, he strolled up to one of the souvenir sellers outside the ground, and enquired if he had any Union Jacks. On being answered in the affirmative, he said;

"What colours are they?" "Red, white and blue, of course." "Oh good ! I'll have a red one!"

Have a good cricket season. See you in August (Gawdelpus!)

Peter Arnold



Saturday 26th April 1997

Kick-off 3.00pm

GLOUCESTER 20
Cherry & White

BRISTOL 20
Blue & White

15	Chris Catling	Full Back	Josh Lewsey	<i>T</i>	A
14	Mike Peters	Right Wing	Paul Hull (I)		E
13	Craig Emmerson	Centre	Fraser Waters		C
12	Don Caskie	Centre	Kevin Maggs	<i>T</i>	D
11	Mike Lloyd	Left Wing	Ben Breeze		B

10	Mark Mapletoft	Outside Half	Paul Burke * (I)	<i>2c2p</i>	F
9	Scott Benton	Scrum Half	Dean Dewdney		G

1	Tony Windo	Prop	David Hinkins	<i>2c2p</i>	H
2	John Hawker	Hooker	Barry McConnell		I
3	Andy Deacon	Prop	Kris Fulman		J
4	Rob Fidler	Lock	Phil Adams		K
5	Dave Sims *	Lock	Jim Brownrigg		L
6	Pete Glanville	Flanker	David Corkery (I)		N
7	Nathan Carter	Flanker	Richie Collins		O
8	Simon Devereux	No.8	Eben Rollitt		M

	Laurie Beck	Replacements	Robert Jones (I)	P
	Audley Lumsden		Andrew Wadley	Q
	TBA		Simon Martin	R
	Andy Stanley		Craig Barrow	S
	Trevor Woodman		Darren Yapp	
	Lee Fortey		Craig Short	

Referee
C Rees (London Soc./RFU)

(I) International
*** Captain**

Touch Judges
K Beaumont (RFU)
C Leeke (RFU)



Mark Mapletoft

Points Mean International Places?

Mark Mapletoft takes off for Argentina in three weeks time with every chance of winning an England cap despite his status as the country's fourth-ranked fly-half behind Mike Catt, Paul Grayson and Alex King.

England's need for a back-up goalkicker during their six-match tour is such that he has only to stay in one piece to justify a place on the bench, at the very least, as essential cover for any one of a number of emergencies.

In an ideal world, Mapletoft would be going in his preferred position as a fly-half. His success at Gloucester this season, not least in front of goal, and an acute shortage of native place-kickers in the English First Division has persuaded Jack Rowell to call him up in his original position of full-back. The first and second choices, Tim Stimpson and Nick Beal, having been chosen by the Lions, England will surely reward Jim Mallinder with a cap at last at the age of 31. Should anything happen to him or, more to the point, to Catt, then Mapletoft will be called upon to kick the goals, as happened to another Gloucester full-back, Peter Butler, during England's tour of Australia back in the mid-Seventies.

In competitive domestic rugby this season, nobody can match Mapletoft's scoring power, not even Gareth Rees, the Canadian captain who has never been more accurate than over the last few weeks of Wasps' impressive surge towards the title.

Only three other kickers in the top ten for the season are English, Grayson, Jon Callard, no longer a regular at Bath, and John Liley, even less of a regular in recent weeks at Leicester. In addition to Rees, five of the remaining nine have all been capped by other countries, Paul Burke (Ireland), Simon Mannix (New Zealand), Thierry Lacroix (France), David Humphreys (Ireland) and Joel Stransky (South Africa).

The try chart has more of an English ring to it, Darren O'Leary streaking ahead of the field with 26 in 25 Cup and League matches for Harlequins, including nine in three Pilkington ties against Cheltenham, Rotherham and Saracens. Adedayo Adebayo, in joint second place with Tom Beim of Sale, the England under-21 wing now wanted by Wales, would surely have been closer had he not lost a month in mid-season because of concussion.

Peter Jackson - Daily Mail

Top Ten Points Scorers

(Courage League, Heineken and Pilkington Cup matches only)

		Total	Tries	Cons	Pens	Drops
1	Mark Mapletoft (Gloucester)	334	11	39	62	5
2	Gareth Rees (Wasps)	313	3	47	68	0
3	Jon Callard (Bath)	260	3	55	45	0
4	Paul Burke (Bristol)	251	4	33	53	2
5	Simon Mannix (Sale)	225	6	30	44	1
6	Paul Grayson (Northampton)	216	4	32	40	4
7	John Liley (Leicester)	215	4	27	47	0
8	Thierry Lacroix (Harlequins)	195	2	31	39	2
9	David Humphreys (London Irish)	163	3	20	34	2
10	Joel Stransky (Leicester)	138	2	10	33	3

Top Try Scorers

		Total	League	Euro	Pilk. Cup
1	Darren O'Leary (Harlequins)	26	13	5	8
2	Adedayo Adebayo (Bath)	17	13	3	1
3	Tom Beim (Sale)	17	11	2	4
4	Jeremy Guscott (Bath)	16	10	2	4
5	David Tiueti (Bristol)	15	9	4	2
6	Stephen John (West Hartlepool)	12	12	0	0
7	Shane Roiser (Wasps)	12	7	2	3
8	Nick Greenstock (Wasps)	12	6	3	3
9	Nick Beal (Northampton)	11	6	3	2
10	Mike Catt (Bath)	11	7	4	0
11	Mark Mapletoft (Gloucester)	11	5	4	2
12	Jim Staples (Harlequins)	10	7	3	0
13	Steve Hackney (Leicester)	10	4	3	3