

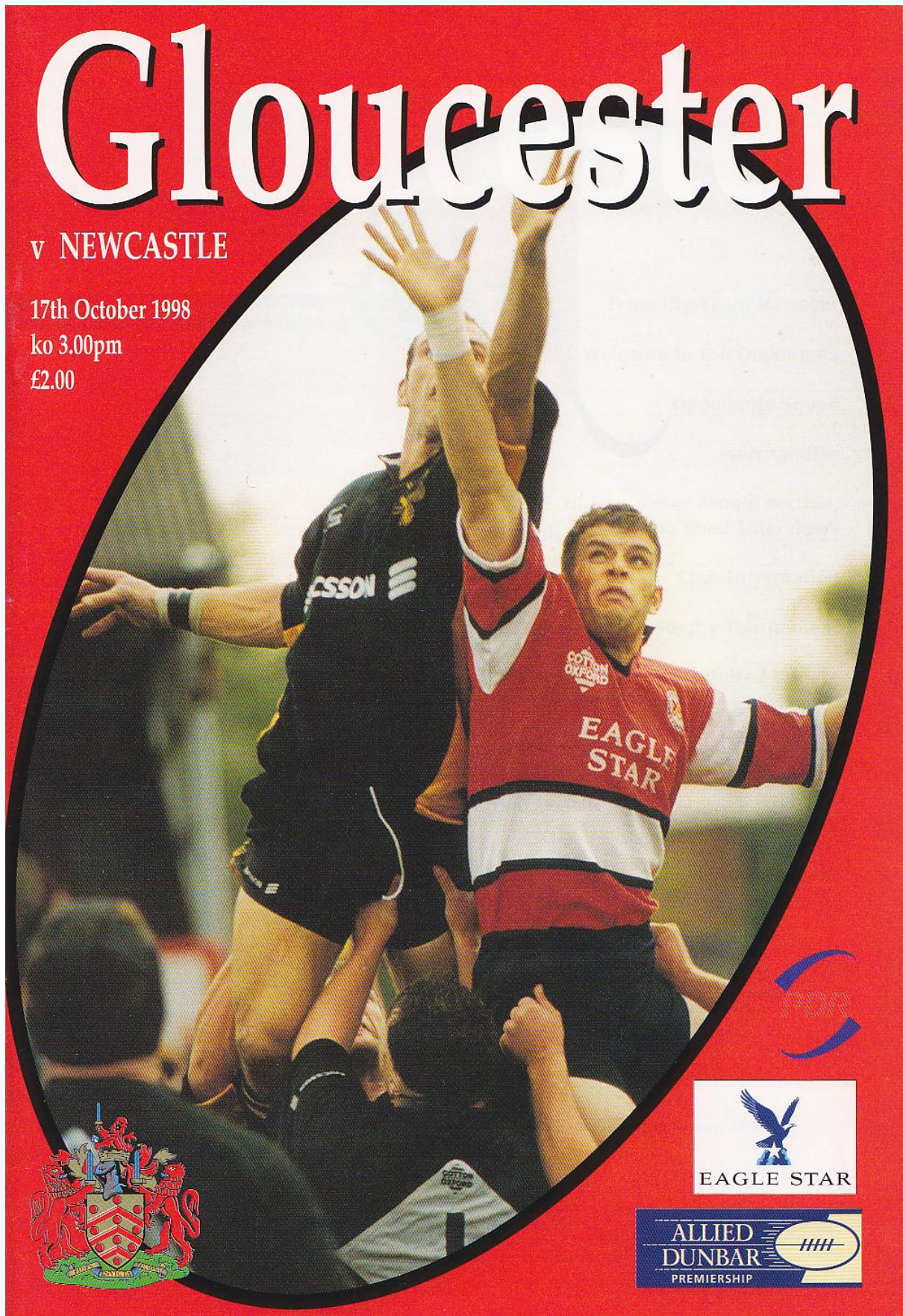
Gloucester

v NEWCASTLE

17th October 1998

ko 3.00pm

£2.00





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all pics Tony Hickey



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From the Team Manager

I would like to welcome the current league champions to Kingsholm and congratulate them on their very successful 1997/98 season and it was a great achievement for them having been recently promoted from the second division in their first year of Premiership rugby to win the title. I am sure that they are finding competition this season even harder as all the teams in the league have recruited well over the closed season and improved their playing standards. If we reflect to this game last season, it was one of the most exciting games we played with one or two unusual incidents. On the day, Newcastle were victors which probably secured them the league title. I am sure today's game will be as exciting with a very hard forward confrontation between the packs. Your support today will be required more than ever to 'gee' the team along and get us back into winning ways. It was very pleasing for me to see Martin Kimber play for the 1st XV as a replacement against Swansea on Saturday. As you are all aware approximately 18 months ago, Martin received a very serious leg injury which kept him out of the game for 12 months. Martin has been back in training and has been captaining the United side this season and for you who have seen United games I think you will agree that the

standard of rugby being played in the United this season is very good.

I hope you all have a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and enjoy what should be a spectacular encounter between both teams.

With regard to support, a lot has been said in reference to the Wasps match. I would ask you all to respect the referee and especially the children and families in the crowd who have come to Kingsholm today for an enjoyable and entertaining afternoon. I feel that the best way to describe the clubs feelings after the Wasps game is to publish a letter from Linda Cameron who in our opinion sums up the feelings of many of our supporters.

John Fidler

Dear Mr Fidler

I write to you as an ardent Gloucester fan, but after last Saturday's disgraceful display of chanting by a lot of the Gloucester crowd it makes me embarrassed to admit it. That sort of appalling verbal abuse and gesticulation directed towards a referee can only hinder our team's chances of progress.

Any so called fans who thought our match against Wasps was unfairly refereed have only themselves to blame.

Abusing the referee just serves to colour his judgement. At best under such circumstances he will be harsh, at worst penalise unnecessarily. I strongly urge you at the club to appeal to all fans to desist.

It makes me afraid that if bad crowd behaviour continues, it will severely hamper the team's success in future close matches, and also give Kingsholm a bad reputation.

Maybe you could print this letter or some similar plea in the match-day programmes.

I'm sure the players would rather hear only chants of encouragement for themselves and not foul language directed at the referee and the opposition.

Yours sincerely

Linda Cameron



Welcome to the Opponents



NEWCASTLE

The British sporting press never ceases to amaze; as soon as a team gets there and has received every acclaim that can be given in print they suddenly become no-hopers. The best thing since sliced bread is transported to the top then hurled from that great height; that is the scenario we seem to love most.

This season Richmond were going to win the title, were losers against Gloucester and would struggle for survival then were reborn; and we are just into October. Newcastle Falcons were champions last season, had a hiccup or two to begin this campaign and were quickly labelled losers. Yet all the doom and gloom was dispelled by the very same press when Wasps failed to register a win in the Northern wilds last time out. It's a funny old world.

Rob Andrew's Newcastle Falcons have soared spectacularly and confounded all the pundits by winning the Premiership straight from second division promotion. That in itself is a massive

achievement as the normal script says that newcomers to the high and mighty will struggle to get used to the pace and power of the first division. The Falcons had more grit than to accept that as written in stone truths and took the championship by storm.

The second-season syndrome affects players and no doubt teams too. Everybody has Newcastle in their sights and they are the team to beat right from the start; it makes a refreshing change from Bath being the benchmark from the first whistle. It also gives the targets a nice extra motivation to their general excellence as if Newcastle need any more motivation than Dean Ryan suggesting that they might like to run through that brick wall again, and again.

Many trees were destroyed to be used as paper for countless articles and opinions on how our visitors played a game of attrition which was predictable and boring to watch. The argument holds little water as the opponents had every

opportunity to be exciting, unpredictable and successful. But to beat Newcastle you have to face their physicality, bravery and 'in the face' rugby; their success has been based on pragmatic analysis of what wins big matches and clearly they did many things well. Not least was the accumulation of a squad that was capable of performing to the desired script.

Gloucester welcome Newcastle Falcons, but will not extend the welcome too far to the point of being over hospitable on the pitch. Admiration of their last season's success will soon be replaced by a strong desire to topple them because of that very achievement. So we should be able to look forward to nothing less than a hot-blooded encounter in the best tradition of close games between two tough sides.

Keith Richardson

A Word on Conditioning

Professional rugby in England has progressed rapidly in the past two years and it is a challenging and exciting place for any coach or player to be. What was good enough last season is now no longer enough so the club must continually strive for higher standards in order to compete in Premier division rugby. We do not want to just compete - Gloucester Rugby Club want to win.

Fitness and conditioning are vital aspects of the game for injury prevention and of course, enhancing performance. The better the players conditioning, the higher the level of training and when the team gets week upon week of quality training sessions, real, long term progression can be made. To achieve this, there are no substitutes for hardwork and teamwork from the coaches, players and medical team.

On the 5th September 1998 the gates opened for the start of the new season, but the preparation for the match began on June 8th - the start of pre-season training. With the core group of 20 players, those on international duty excluded, the intensive training through the summer got underway. Strength, endurance, power and speed. Flexibility, nutrition, massage therapy. These are some of the passwords to the modern players training regime which pre-season training focuses on. Programmes are carefully structured to allow a balance of work and rest. Recovery is as important as exercise itself, and the players must adhere to the programmes in order to reap the benefits that are guaranteed by disciplined training.

There is a tremendous athletic potential amongst the Gloucester players and achieving that potential will bring them out on top of the professional game. However, we are talking about massive gains in ability, that take more than just a pre-season training to attain, and therefore the emphasis on conditioning has not shifted with the kick off of the new season. On the contrary, the players must become more disciplined in order to cope with training as well as matches. Regular fitness tests ensure that players are striving to improve personal abilities even in the season.

To secure a future of home grown talent in the 1st XV, the modern training ideas should be adopted by players and coaches in youth rugby. Just a few hours hard work each week could mean schools or Colts rugby seeing players

fulfilling dreams of professionalism in just a couple of years. More importantly for younger players though, is the fact that rugby is far more enjoyable and injury free if you are fit. I hope to see many more Gloucester lads at club training in the seasons to come.

My thanks to all those people and organisations who contribute towards GRFC's development by allowing us use of their training facilities. A big thank you to you the supporter whose cheering and chanting echoes around Kingsholm long after the last fan goes home.



Ed Archer

BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE

As I sat at my desk on Monday afternoon wondering where inspiration would come from for this contribution to today's match programme, little did I realise that it would come half way through my radio programme. Yet there I was asking John Fidler to explain why Phil Greening had been placed on the transfer list, and how ironic this happens in the week of this match against Newcastle, the club which featured so strongly with the very first mentions of Phil Greening and transfers.

Kingsholm, April 29th 1995 is etched vividly in my mind. Harlequins, surely doomed to relegation, were the visitors who somehow managed to leave with the narrow victory. After the game, Brian Moore, who had announced the first of his retirements, assures the waiting press eager for his thoughts, that our hooker would be a worthy successor to his England jersey. For that was the day that Phil made his debut, the first of 40 league appearances, 67 in all.

The next season proved that performance no fluke. A succession of "bullocking barnstorming" displays in the Cherry and White jersey led to the England door being opened the following year against Italy. During this time came those transfer rumours, an endless

succession of them, with the "highlight" the one where today's visitors, then handy with the cheque book, were supposedly keen to hand over a quarter of a million pounds, soon reduced to a more believable £170,000. With supporters reassured by Phil's assertion that as a Gloucester boy he'd play for the club for 10p, how we looked forward to a season which would cement his place in English rugby. But last year proved again how cruel sport can be. Injury is no respecter of age or potential.

Just as a few years before we'd talked of the young rising star Neil Matthews, to see that destroyed by injury, so with Phil. Sadly, the Phil Greening I've watched after injury hasn't matched the one still vivid in the mind from three years ago. And so in his enforced absence, the import Neil McCarthy and the home grown Chris Fortey have been allowed a chance to shine. Professionalism has done the rest. The money revolution that looked set to take Phil to Newcastle has

resulted in clubs ruled by the balance sheet. The only way Gloucester could afford the salaries of three hookers if Phil did play for 10p.

Graham Day
BBC Radio
Gloucestershire.



We Know the Feeling

Peter Arnold

What's with Wasps and tries after five minutes of injury time? It does seem to have become something of a habit with them. In case you missed the report, they inflicted one on Newcastle last Sunday. We do know the feeling.

Of course, there was one basic difference between the Gateshead example and our own miserable experience of the week before. At Kingsholm it meant a lost

game for the home side, whereas today's welcome visitors had taken the precaution of building up an unassailable lead before conceding the late score. In fact I'm told that Mr. Leota's last-gasp effort went a long way towards concealing a good seeing-to by the Falcons, and I'll bet their players didn't run up the touchline making rude gestures at the crowd when the whistle went either.

The star of the show was, apparently, young Jonny Wilkinson, who kicked seventeen points to add to tries by Gary Armstrong and Tony Underwood, which demonstrates a

nice combination of youth and experience if ever there was one.

While attempting to be diplomatic about it, it really isn't possible to make any prior judgements about today's game without thinking about the last time Newcastle Falcons visited Kingsholm. Let's just say that the match attracted comment all over the national press, that Newcastle went away with two points, and eventually won the Premiership by just one.

Who's to say that today's encounter won't prove to be just as influential when all is done and dusted next May

A comparison of early-season results is interesting. Newcastle started off tentatively, losing some games you wouldn't have expected. Recently, however, they appear to have been getting into gear, and providing the sort of formidable opposition we saw last season. Gloucester, on the other hand, have been a bit 'curate's egg' - parts of their games have been excellent. Other bits - haven't. While they have put in some

sparkling passages of play, the lads would be the first to admit that they haven't really produced a complete 80 minutes of the kind of rugby we know they can provide.

You could say that what we have here are two potentially excellent sides who have not been consistently playing to that potential. Sooner or later, someone is going to have to suffer for that.

Personally, I wouldn't put money on either side today, because it's very difficult to foretell how either team is going to perform. Both sides have the ability to win the Premiership if they get their acts together, and the ball doesn't bounce too unkindly too often.

Let's not forget, however, that Newcastle Falcons come here as reigning Champions. They would be very welcome for that reason alone, but they have always been eagerly anticipated visitors to Kingsholm, ever since they were simply 'Gosforth'.

But that's a whole different story. Nice to see you again, lads!



Going to Far?

I don't want to open the whole can of worms concerning the events surrounding the Wasps game, but one aspect of it hasn't been aired, and I think should be.

Being, like most people, thoroughly gutted by the whole affair, I took the opportunity to watch the Sky coverage of the whole match. And became even more gutted.

Right at the end of the game, with the Wasps pack camped on Gloucester's line, the ref was heard, quite clearly, saying "Thirty seconds more guys!", and that was all we heard. When he blew the final whistle, the little clock up in the left-hand corner of the screen read 85 minutes.

It may be that he had good reasons for carrying on - apparently, once a penalty has been kicked to touch, the throw-in has to take place (although refs don't always seem to apply that rule at half-time.)

It has also been suggested to me that he meant, and perhaps actually said, that there were about five minutes of injury time to be added in addition to the thirty seconds. If so, it certainly didn't come over that way on the telly, and that's the point I want to explore.

Any half-way decent ref attempts to keep up with the ball at all times. That means that in televised coverage of a match, he's the only bloke who is in camera virtually all the time. He simply has no escape, and his every move and gesture is explored ad infinitum.

I've written in these pages on previous occasions that, in my humble opinion, the best refs are the ones you don't notice, but that's quite impossible when the game is on the box. Now, with referees wired for sound so that viewers can hear his every word, as well as those of some of the players and touch-judges, there's a whole new dimension to the things he has to remember. Not only does he have to watch his every move and gesture, but he also has to be extremely careful about every syllable he utters.

What is the poor chap to do? I would suggest that his concentration on the game, including off-the-ball positioning and incident, simply has to be impaired with the knowledge that he is under visual and auditory surveillance at all times. Let's face it: it's a hard enough job at the best of times, and we shouldn't be making it any more difficult than we can help.

There's nothing much we can do about the cameras if we want to be able to watch televised matches, but do we really need

microphones attached to the ref as well? It's all very interesting for those of us watching from home or in the pub, but not really essential for our enjoyment, is it? Haven't we gone one step too far in the cause of media coverage?

I've had some experience of the electronic spotlight myself, and know that even in my own, comparatively painless, exposure there is bound to be some stress involved. One does get better at it with practice, and it's quite possible that referees could be trained to handle the situation. However, I would suggest that that would imply full-time officials with time to spare for such training, and not people who would have to hold down a day job as well.

One of the concerns at the moment, is that we now have a professional game with amateur officials, and one story I saw recently met with my wholehearted approval. It seems that the RFU is to appoint six full-time referees, with the first three being in place by the end of this season. Great. But shouldn't that have happened right from the outset of the professional game?

The phrases "too little" and "too late" spring to mind.

NO LOYALTY ANY MORE

I know Clive Woodward has a difficult job on his hands, and that he has a duty to select the best available side for England in the forthcoming World Cup qualifiers, but I do think that sheer loyalty should be allowed to enter into

the equation somewhere. After all, Italy and Holland hardly represent a fearsome level of competition, do they?

I'd have thought that the Dutch match would have been an ideal opportunity to show a little appreciation to players who have demonstrated their own loyalty to their country in its hour of need. After all, they devoted weeks of their lives risking injury and getting horrendously smashed all over the Southern hemisphere, and deserve a little credit for that.

Mr. Woodward says he has picked "the best players in England", but how does he know? Some of his first squad members have hardly appeared this season, while the valiant warriors who went on the summer tour have, by and large, been turning out, come what may, for their clubs ever since the season started.

Like everyone else, I feel that Dave Sims and Rob Fidler have been particularly ill-used. There are good reasons why Steve Ojomoh, Tony Windo and Scott Benton have missed out, while Phil Vickery and Phil Greening - who didn't have one of his best campaigns on tour - have retained their places, but Rob and Dave stepped into the breach superbly when called upon, attracting glowing tributes from friends and opposing players alike. Arguably, they are the best pair of locks in England.

ANYONE WANT A GAME?

About ten days ago, Richard Hill made a very good point during a phone-in programme on Mark Cummings' morning programme on BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

Talking about the importance of creating and maintaining very good squads at Colts and Under 21 level, he pointed out that, quite apart from any other consideration, such a system has highly favourable financial implications. The Club would not have to pay inflated transfer fees for players who have come up through the ranks in this way.

Can't argue with that. It occurs to me, however, that an essential element in finding and developing young talent is the existence of a strong local rugby

base. The more well run clubs we have playing to a reasonable standard, the more chance we have of producing a steady stream of players with the potential to become performers at the highest level. Indeed, it was exactly that situation which led to Gloucester being one of the most feared sides in the land before professionalism was more than a dirty word in the corridors of power.

Against that background, I have been saddened to read press stories, over the past few weeks, concerning Tredworth RFC, its inability to fulfil Gloucestershire League One fixtures, and even having to struggle to field sides at Second Fifteen level, even when league players were available from the conceded matches.

I gather that eleven players left the club during the close season, but I've no idea where they disappeared to, if anywhere.

That is obviously a hard hurdle to surmount, but I doubt if it's the whole story. I am aware that other clubs are having similar difficulties, notably Widden Old Boys. So where are they all going? Has the incessant and much-hyped diet of soccer on our TV screens finally got through to a generation of young men whose fathers used to have more sense?

For Tredworth it is no longer a matter of attracting young players straight from school. If they are to survive in the short and medium term, they need experienced performers right now. Not that they're looking to poach anyone. Tredworth Team Manager, Danny Smith, is quoted as saying "There must be some players in the area, who want to play first team rugby, but can't force their way in at their current clubs."

In the pre-league days that wasn't a problem. If you found yourself without a game one Saturday, you took your kit along to another club, just on general principles, in case someone didn't show up or had to drop out at the last minute, or you asked around to see if anyone needed a player that day. As often as not, you found a game somewhere. In these days of registration of players, that isn't an option any more.

Coming back to where I started, it's to the benefit of GRFC to encourage the local scene. I therefore make no apology in advertising the fact that anyone who fancies a new club can contact Tredworth RFC by ringing Danny Smith on 01452 536723, Andrew Pennell on 01452 883568 or the club direct on 01452 525465.

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LONG SERVICE

The article which gave me the worrying news about Tredworth RFC appeared above an associated, but happier, story in the Pink 'Un. It concerned that old Tredworth stalwart, Tommy Nicholls who celebrates his 50 years with the club this month.

Congratulations, Tommy. It's a record to be proud of, and we congratulate you for it, with all our best wishes for the future.

Seems a pity I have to cap the story.

I ran into Roy 'Digger' Morris the other day. Almost literally, I may add, because he still takes up an awful lot of pavement, even at the age of 87. And it won't surprise anyone who knows his history to learn that the encounter took place just as he was about to go into his local betting shop.

In conversation (always worthwhile with The Digger), it emerged that he first became a member of Gloucester RFC in 1928, and it doesn't need an Einstein to work out that that means he has been associated with the Club, as player, official and nowadays the Senior Vice President, for 70 years.

Let's put that into perspective. When Tommy Nicholls first joined Tredworth, Digger Morris had already been at Kingsholm for 20 years. And that's longer than most people's entire playing career.

Wow !

Digger did everything except play for England, an honour he would certainly have achieved if a certain Mr.Hitler hadn't started his own kick-about. He is the only player ever to captain Gloucestershire in two County Championship Finals in the same season - the County had drawn with Lancashire at Blundellsands, and the game was replayed at Kingsholm (we lost).

He also skippered the Possibles versus the Probables in a final England Trial at Manchester, and what's more, led his side to victory, which caused consternation in high places. But R.Morris still didn't appear on the England team sheet. Some things don't change much, do they ?

Anyway, Digger Morris looks fit and well, and can still spin a good yarn. Long may he be part of the Gloucester scene.

HARDLY WORTH GOING HOME, REALLY

This time last year we were complaining bitterly because we weren't getting it regularly. This season they have given us what we were asking for in the shape of a home game every two weeks. Until now, that is. We have three Allied Dunbar Premiership games in the next eight days, which will be a challenge for the players and hard on our nerves, too.

At least we can be gratified that two of them are at home. After today we visit Harlequins on Tuesday, and are then back at Kingsholm for the London Scottish game next Sunday, that is, October 25th.

Both games have their points of interest. Harlequins have had a stuttering start to the season, which is about par for the course for them. They often begin badly and come with a rush at the end of the season. Just at the moment however, I'd back Gloucester to win either here or at the Stoop, and I hope I haven't put the mockers on things by saying so.

London Scottish haven't had a storming start, either, but there are signs that they are getting things together, and it will be nice to see such old and valued opponents back here at Kingsholm.



Mark Mapletoft lifting the sound of the Shed at last week's Wasps game

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DISTINGUISHED OLD BOY

Many notable people from all walks of life have run out on the sacred turf at Kingsholm over the past century or so, but I don't think we've ever been able to claim a President of the MCC as one of our own before.

A few seasons ago, one of the more popular trivia questions was to ask the name of the last England cricket captain to play rugby for Gloucester. You didn't have to be an expert on the history of either game to answer that, because the player is still very much with us, and has been entertaining us during BBC coverage of Test Matches for some years now. He's Tony Lewis, more

formally titled, A.R.Lewis (Glamorgan and England).

He also played rugby for Neath and Neath Athletic, and turned out for Gloucester for a couple of seasons while doing his National Service at RAF Innsworth. As if that wasn't honour enough, he has now been elevated to the most prestigious position in the cricket firmament, that of President of the

Marylebone Cricket Club. I wonder how many clubs can

claim both Presidents of the RFU and MCC in the ranks of their former players ?

Congratulations, 'A.R.' Come back and see us during your term of office. How about a twinning agreement between Kingsholm and Lord's ?

HAVING A PARTY

I probably won't make many friends by talking about Christmas this early in the year, but the fact is that venues for parties or get-togethers of any description do get booked up very quickly these days. May I therefore draw the attention of anyone who is charged with the responsibility of organising any such wing-ding that our Clubhouse facilities are available for such use ?

What's more, they have several advantages. Not only are they well equipped and extremely pleasant, but they are in the right place - easily accessible from virtually anywhere in the Gloucester area. There's plenty of car parking space too, which isn't always true anywhere close to the City centre.

By comparison with other facilities of similar standard, you'll find the price very reasonable, and I

believe there is a useful discount on bookings made by Club Members.

We're expecting quite a demand this year. If you are interested, it would be a good idea, to paraphrase Mike Burton, get your enquiry in first. Contact Claudia Cox in the Office.

TAILPIECE

Listening to Richard Hill's radio phone in, around ten days ago, I was pleased to hear the dulcet tones of my old mate Mike Price, aka 'Pricey of the Tump' adding his not inconsiderable weight to the questioning. Pricey being Pricey, and like any good West End Tumper, decided to make the most of the occasion by announcing to the listening millions that it was his wedding anniversary on that very day.

Good old Pricey. I'll bet he can even tell you the number of the shotgun.





GLOUCESTER

Today's Match Day Sponsor:
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15	Chris Catling
14	Audley Lumsden
13	Terry Fanolua*
12	Richard Tombs*
11	Philippe Saint-André*
10	Simon Mannix*
9	Ian Sanders
1	Trevor Woodman
2	Chris Fortey
3	Andy Deacon
4	Mark Cornwell
5	Dave Sims (capt)*
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7	Nathan Carter
8	Steve Ojomoh*
16	R Greenslade-Jones
17	Mark Mapletoft*
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19	Tony Windo
20	Neil McCarthy
21	Richard Ward
22	Simon Devereux



Full Back
Right Wing
Centre
Centre
Left Wing
Outside Half
Scrum Half
Prop
Hooker
Prop
Lock
Lock
Flanker
Flanker
No. 8
Replacements

*Denotes international

NEWCASTLE



Pete Massey	15
Jim Naylor	14
*Va'aiga Tulgamala	13
*Rob Andrew	12
*Tony Underwood	11
*Jonny Wilkinson	10
*Gary Armstrong	9
*Nick Popplewell	1
Ross Nesdale	2
Ian Peel	3
*Garath Archer	4
*Doddie Weir	5
Peter Walton	6
Richard Arnold	7
*Dean Ryan	8
Allen Chiltern	16
Martin Shaw	17
Mik Wood	18
Richard Horton	19
Steve O'Neil	20
George Graham	21
	22

Referee
Steve Lander

Touch Judges
A.C. Rossall
B. Ockenden