

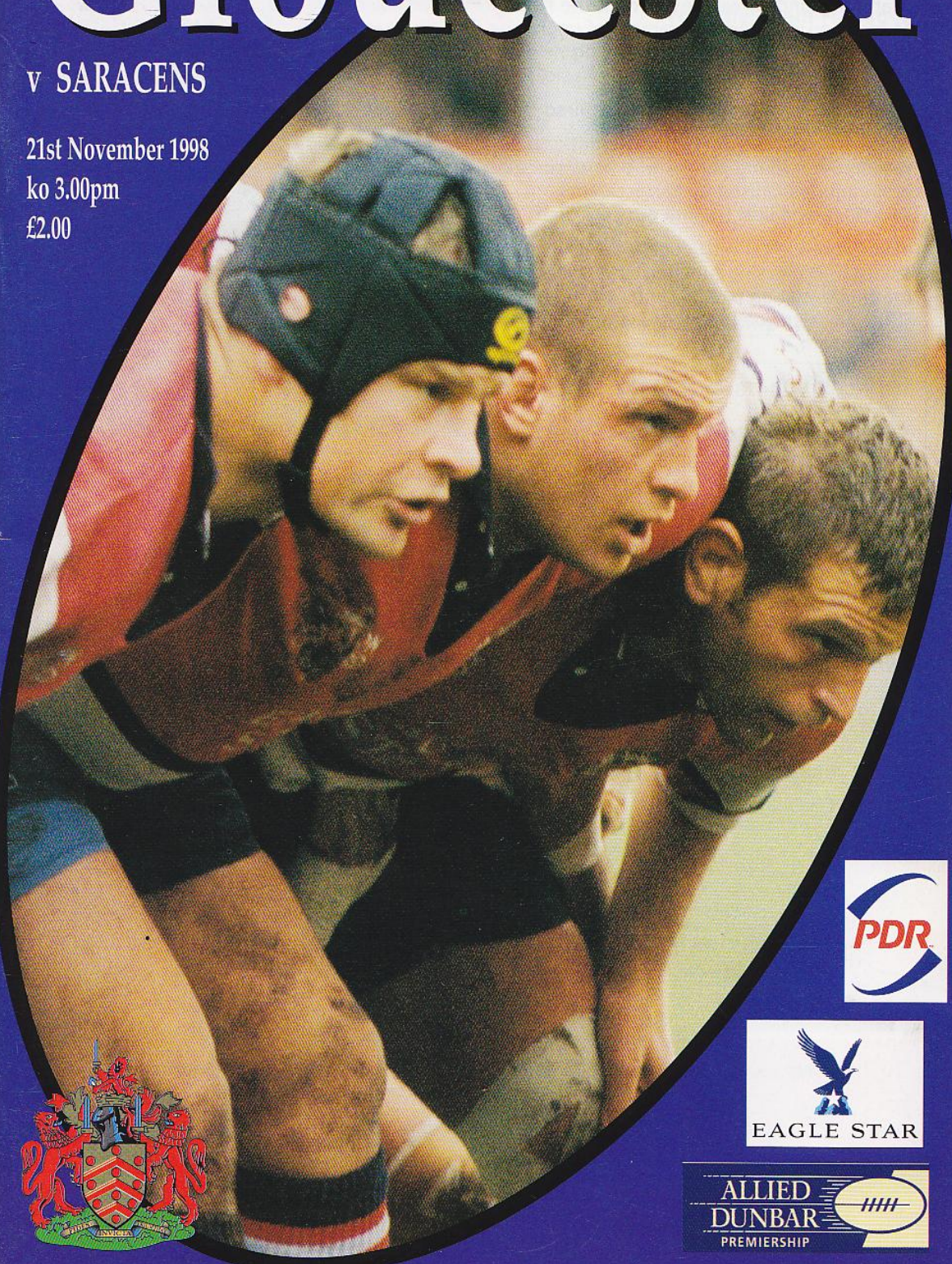
Gloucester

v SARACENS

21st November 1998

ko 3.00pm

£2.00



From the Team Manager

I must say I enjoyed our trip to Cardiff last Sunday. Although the result did not go our way, it was a thoroughly enjoyable game and it was nice not to have the usual pressure of a Premiership One game, where it is vital to get two points. This type of game gives Richard Hill and John Brain the opportunity to look at various players within the squad to see them perform at a higher level. I think that everyone who was there will agree that the commitment shown by the Gloucester players in a game such as this was to its usual very high standard. As you can imagine, there was quite a buzz in the air in Wales on Sunday afternoon after the national side's supreme effort against the

Springboks on Saturday afternoon. I am sure that the Welsh national side under the guidance of Graham Henry are going to be a force to be reckoned with in the Five Nations Championship this season.

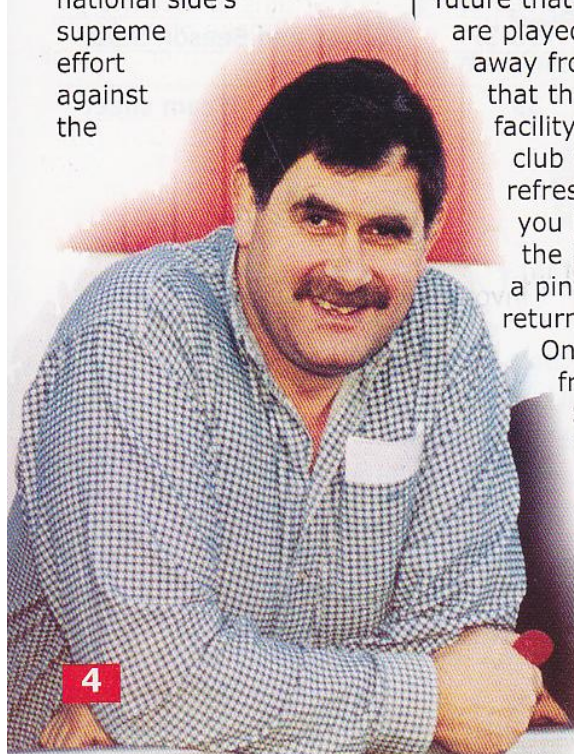
Again, it was great to see our loyal supporters at Cardiff and their vocal support was superb; I am sure they helped the team a great deal in the second half. I would like to apologise on behalf of Gloucester Rugby Club that the social club was not open prior to the supporter's coach leaving and again was not open on their return. I agree with everyone who had a slight moan at me on Sunday evening. I will ensure in future that when games are played on Sunday, away from Kingsholm, that there will be a facility in the social club for refreshments before you leave and that the bar will open for a pint on your return.

On the way back from Cardiff on Sunday night, we were discussing the forthcoming Tetley Bitter draw and my instructions from Richard

Hill was either to get Bristol at home or Worcester at home. As we'll all now know, we are at home to Worcester in the fourth round of the cup: the game is due to be played on Saturday 9th January 1999. This should be a great game of rugby and it will be nice to welcome our ex-players such as Tim Smith, Paul Holford, Bruce Fenley, Chris Raymond and Simon Morris back to Gloucester for what should be a great contest and a superb afternoon's entertainment. I am sure that the Worcester fans are looking forward to making the journey down the M5 for what should be a complete sell out.

Finally I would like to welcome Saracens to Kingsholm this afternoon for what I hope will be a thoroughly entertaining and good contest between the two clubs. Saracens at the moment are lying second in the league and I am sure they are finding this year's competition as difficult as all the other sides.

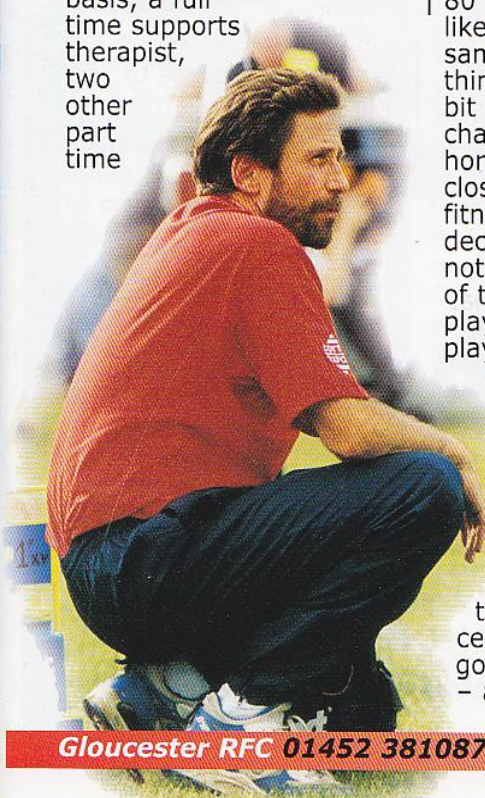
John Fidler
Team Manager



From the Physio

The Gloucester Rugby Club Medical Team now tackles over behind the scenes seven days a week, trying to keep the machinery of the team functioning so that they can turn out against the opposition come rain or shine. What a difference from the amateur days when I first joined the club in 1991 when a group of about fourteen people took part in a rota to cover the two training evenings a week and the 1st XV and United games at the weekend.

Today's team consists of two club doctors, who are local General Practitioners, consultants from Gloucester Royal Hospital who give us valuable support, myself as physiotherapist and an osteopath on a part time basis, a full time supports therapist, two other part time



physiotherapists, a sports masseuse and a theatre technician. Between us we cover the 1st team squad, the United squad and the Colts for all of their training sessions and matches. From 9.00am to 8.00pm you will generally find one of us at the club.

Our role is not just that of patching up the bits that go wrong but helping the players get to peak fitness levels and keeping them there. We are now challenged every day by athletes striving to reach the top of their profession, and we are trying to prevent injuries from happening before the event – a difficult job in the modern first class game with six foot plus frames carrying large amounts of weight on them at a great pace for 80 minutes, and meeting likewise objects at the same velocity!! As we think we have solved one bit of the puzzle another challenge appears on the horizon. We now work closely with the coach and fitness advisor helping to decide who can play or not. A very difficult aspect of the job is telling a player that they cannot play because of injury – especially if it involves a long break from the game.

The medical room is the centre for keeping players fit, treating injuries and getting players back to fitness. It is also the centre for all that chat, gossip, laughter and tears – and those same old

faces and bits of body keep appearing don't they.....! No names mentioned though we keep it all strictly confidential!!

On match days we can be found making our start of two hours before the game helping to prepare the players, whether with warming up muscles or taping joints. Once the team are on the field and playing our role is to keep them there. An injury during the game has to be quickly assessed and the decision made as to whether the player can carry on. We should mention here that on home match days we know we have the invaluable support of the Gloucester Ambulance Service whose highly trained paramedics are always on hand. Once the match has finished we do an assessment of all the players and can start treatment of cuts, bruises and strains immediately. We also make plans for treatments that need to be commenced the following day and into the 4 next week. All of this enables the earliest possible return to training and playing.

Our team has been generously supported both professionally and financially over the past seasons and we should like to thank everyone involved.

Chris Stephenson
Physiotherapist

Welcome to the Opponents



SARACENS

Two points of order before I talk about today's opponents. Firstly, my apologies for the picture of me which accompanies this feature. Not my choice. However, if you place it on your mantelpiece at home you may find that it serves a useful purpose in keeping your small children away from the fire. Second, I was quoted in a 'quality' daily last week, when talking about coaching Gloucester's forwards, as saying that I wasn't bothered about entertainment. Some have apparently taken this to mean crowd entertainment. I was in fact talking about the desire some coaches have to entertain players with their training methods and drills. The point I was making was that when I ask Dave Sims and Co to put down the 35 scrums, I can't dress up hard work as 'entertainment'. If we decide it has to be done, then we must do it. Of course, anyone who understands a little bit about the game could see what I was saying anyway.

Professionalism has transformed rugby both on and off the field, and I think you could argue that it has transformed today's opponents Saracens more than any other Premiership club. Until the 'P' word came along they were

regarded as a team that produced good players but couldn't hang onto them. I remember running (or should I say jogging) out against them at Kingsholm about 8 years ago and playing against

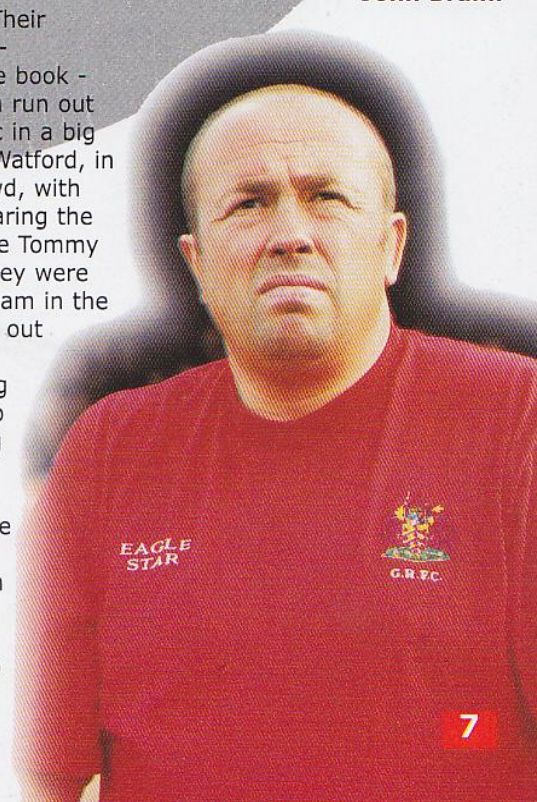
Jason Leonard and Ben Clarke. Tony Windo made his league debut for us (he tells me that he was only 15 at the time). The match was a draw. A year later Leonard and Clarke had moved on to Quins and Bath respectively. While Saracens ground at Southgate was in many ways being typical of London, with its tiny changing rooms, cold showers and tiny crowds, also had a more welcoming rugby/family feel about it than Quins or Richmond.

Now look at them. Their largely foreign (but - according to the rule book - not 'overseas') team run out to blaring pop music in a big football stadium in Watford, in front of a large crowd, with their supporters wearing the head gear of the late Tommy Cooper. Last year they were probably the best team in the league, just missing out on the title, but emphatically winning the Tetley Bitter Cup by totally outplaying their London rivals Wasps as Twickenham. They've embraced professionalism both on and off the field with a strategy which is designed to

bring about success.

Many of you may remember the game against them at Kingsholm last year when they came to us on a high and left on a bit of a low after being soundly beaten. That was a good Gloucester performance and made up for the near humiliation we suffered at Vicarage Road earlier in the season. Their recent form has been a bit patchy, but losses against Quins, Wasps and Newcastle have been put right in the last two games with wins against Richmond and Bedford. They might be a little below strength this afternoon but they are a quality team and we have prepared accordingly. So, enjoy the game and remember: keep the picture if you have children and an open fire.

John Brain.



SO IT'S WORCESTER!

Peter Arnold

If you had to dream up a Cup draw full of interest and drama, this would be it. Straight out of the Boy's Own Paper. Gloucester v. Worcester in the Cup at Kingsholm.

Consider. On the advent of the professional game, a whole sheaf of Gloucester players, for one reason or another, decamped from Kingsholm and trotted off up the road to Worcester, at that time a lowly outfit with high aspirations and a great deal of fire in the belly.

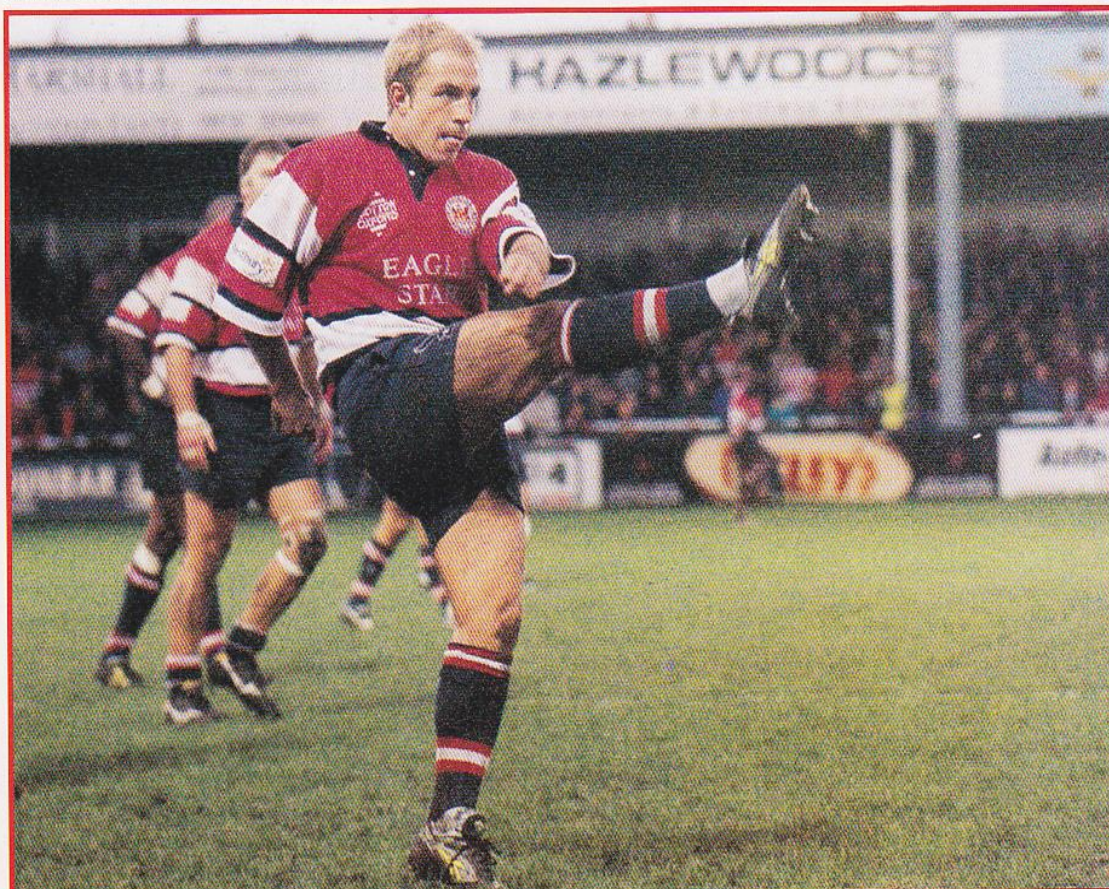
In the fullness of time, ambitions began to be fulfilled

and Worcester began to climb the ladder, thanks in no small measure to the likes of Tim Smith, Paul Holford and Bruce Fenley. Now, they are within a whisker of attaining Premiership One status. One more enthusiastic push is all they need.

So what happens? They get drawn against Gloucester at Kingsholm. Stephen Spielberg would have been pushed to write a more dramatic script. January 9th will be a very big day in their history, and if we were anyone but Gloucester supporters, we would be behind them all the way.

But we do happen to be Gloucester supporters, so we do have to admit that, in some ways, this isn't a very good draw for us. National sentiment, as always, will be with the underdog. We shall be expected to win it, but it's one of those games which would be perilously easy to lose. The Cup always throws up one or two giant-killing acts.

No doubt about it, it's going to be a fascinating day for all of us. It's certainly one you won't want to miss, so watch this space for ticket details.



Bad Luck Dev!

It did look nasty, didn't it? When Simon Devereaux went down during the Bedford game, some of us had the feeling we wouldn't be seeing him for a while, and so it proved. According to the report in The Times on the following Monday, 'Dev' has broken his

tibia, fibula and dislocated his ankle all at the same time: in fact, there doesn't seem to be a bone down in that part of his anatomy that hasn't been damaged.

I suppose that we could say that, as far as the side is concerned, it's just as well that the injury occurred when it did, if it had to happen at all.

Steve Ojomoh is now well established, Pete Glanville is back from injury and looks very fit. Ed Pearce made his mark a few weeks ago. This time last season the loss of such an uncompromising back row man as Simon Devereaux would have been a severe blow indeed.

Not that that will be much consolation to 'Dev'. He was once described on Sky as a 'no frills No. 8', and although the description doesn't do him justice, it's accurate enough as far as it goes. One thing's for sure: Gloucester has never had a more committed and hardworking player. Although he doesn't get much publicity, he's a very effective performer, and loves his rugby. The idea of sitting out the rest of the season will be purgatory for him.

Just one more thought about the Bedford incident. It happened right in front of me, and I was very impressed by the speed with



which the referee, Mr. Fisher, got in there and cleared everyone away. If he had not been so quick, the injury could have been even worse.

At Kingsholm, we're always quick to point fingers at referees who have displeased us in some way, and the other side of that coin is that we should be equally prompt at giving credit where it's due. Thanks, Mr. Fisher for your speed of reaction.

Meanwhile, we can't do much about Simon Devereaux except send him our good wishes for the speediest recovery on record.

One good thing, Simon. At least you'll be able to enjoy Christmas without worrying about diet sheets and fitness regimes.

UNFORTUNATELY

The South West side received a right royal thumping at the hands of their London rivals, going down by 56 points to 8. Of the Gloucester contingent, only Rob Jewell made the starting line up for the side to face South Africa, and he's got a dead leg. Andrew Hazell, who injured his shoulder and had to come off, and Chris Hall were named as replacements. I must confess to having felt some forbodings before the game when I read that Adam Eustace had remarked that the squad had hardly trained together, and that they were hoping that everything would come together on the night. It obviously didn't. There may have been a time when you could get away with that sort of thing, but that disappeared when the game went professional. It also struck me that an inordinate number of people seemed to have played out of position due to injury. There were even two hookers on the side for a period.

Not one of the organisers' finest hours, I would have thought.

Never mind boys. The representative season is young yet, and as time goes on, no doubt the shortcomings will be rectified.

PROFESSIONAL WHISTLE BLOWERS

Following our experiences over the past twelve months or so, the news that the RFU have now appointed three professional, full-time referees will be greeted with unanimous approval around these parts. It is becoming more and more obvious, as time goes on, that you can't run professional rugby with amateur officials, and the development is certainly a move in the right direction.

Neither would we argue with the choice of the first three appointees. Two of them, Ed Morrison of Bristol, and Chris White of Cheltenham, are West Country refs. Which says something about the part of the

country which best knows its rugby. The third one is Mr. Lander, and after his virtuoso display in the Gloucester v. Newcastle Falcons game, we would greet his appointment with firm approval, also.

We are told that three other such appointments are to be made later this season, and we'll be fascinated to see who gets the jobs, and even more important, who doesn't. And no, I'm not going to mention any names, for fear of frightening those of a delicate constitution.

Applicants from The Shed should apply at the Secretary's office at Twickenham, and form an orderly queue, three abreast, on the right-hand side.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO NOBBY?

Did you notice Claudia Cox's piece in the Bedford programme about the possibility of Gloucester providing a mascot? It noted that almost everyone seems to be doing it - Leicester's tiger being a good example - and asked you to ring her if you have any thoughts on the subject. Of course, it was rather a pity that the article appeared just a couple of days before our television screens treated us to pictures of Bristol City's 'Citycat' and Wolverhampton Wanderers' 'Wolfie' coming to blows in the middle of the pitch, but that was hardly Claudia's fault, was it?

I must confess to feeling quite easy about the whole idea. Might be quite nice, but I wouldn't actually go on hunger strike if it didn't happen. But what I want to know is, whatever happened to Nobby?

It was before Claudia's time, while Mike Burton was running the club's commercial affairs, so she wouldn't know that we did, in fact, have such a mascot. His name was Nobby and he was a seven-foot prop forward, replete in cherry-and-white, and complete with hairy chin and scrum cap. I'm

told that certain members of the hierarchy at the time felt he wasn't really dignified enough for the image of Gloucester RFC, and he was made redundant.

The last time I saw Nobby he was huddled in a corner of a store room at the studios of BBC Radio Gloucester. Pete Wilson, who is probably in his usual spot in the front of the stand this afternoon, headphones akimbo, doing his customary thing in the cause of providing commentary on the match, will remember the occasion. He had just been conned into wearing the warmish costume in the Mayor of Barton's procession, all the way from the New Olympus Theatre to the Guildhall, and was hot, thirsty and glad to get somewhere where he could obtain some liquid refreshment.

I never saw Nobby again, but surely he must still be around somewhere, and could be cleaned up and given a new strip.

After all, there can't be a better symbol of Gloucester RFC than a figure of a thumping great hairy prop forward, can there?

Thank you

Our thanks go to Les Haywood of Ebley, Stroud, who has donated several complete season of Kingsholm programmes to the club.

These programmes were saved by his late father Denis Haywood who was a regular spectator at this ground – and at Gloucester's away matches as well! You might recall that Denis, who played for the Hoffmans and Cainscross clubs, collapsed and died at the ground on September 13 last year during Gloucester's defeat of the French club Toulon 18-15 in the European Conference.

The programmes will be kept with others that are "on deposit" at the City's "Gloucestershire Collection" archive at the Brunswick Road Library where they are available for anyone to look at. Again, thanks to Les Haywood from the club committee.

If anyone has any old photographs, programmes or any other "Cherry and White" items they would like to give to the club, please contact the press officer Andrew Harley. In the case of old photographs, even the opportunity to "borrow" them for about 10 minutes to scan electronically would be appreciated.

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Continued from page 20



'TIS THE SEASON

Now for something altogether more cheerful. The season being the way it is, the First XV have only one more game before Christmas, and that against Leicester on December 19th, and you'd be pushed to think of a better way to usher in the Festive Season than by having a party with our old friends from Tigerland.

This also means that this is my last opportunity to give you some detail about the various festive goings-on planned for Kingsholm over the next few weeks.

In fact, you could be celebrating **TOMORROW**, as ever was. As you know, England face a tricky challenge from Italy on that day, and if you fancy watching the game, and incidentally, get some idea of what we're likely to face when the Five Nations Championship becomes Six, then why not do it here ?

From 12.00 to 6.00 you can avail yourself of the big screen while satisfying

the inner man with beer and - you've guessed it - pizza.

Mama Mia !

NEXT SATURDAY, November 28th, it's England v. Australia, and the bar will be open from 12.00pm to 11.00pm, and the idea is to run a barbecue. "Regardless of weather", it says in the notes I have. You'll have to turn up to find out how they're going to run that.

The bar will also be open for England v. South Africa on **DECEMBER 5th**, but I don't have any advance notice of any ancillary shindig.

The club's big Christmas party is scheduled for **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th** from 7.30pm to 1.00am. It should be quite a do, and a snip at £14.95 a head.

Members have their own party on **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22nd** (9.00pm to 1.00am) and it will cost £10.00 a head. That's also the night when Saracens second string come here to play United, so it might be a thoroughly entertaining evening.

On **CHRISTMAS EVE**, you could see the holiday in by coming along here until midnight. Can't think of a better time to have a noggin or so with old mates.

Finally, we shall be seeing the New Year in on **DECEMBER 31st** with a party which will cost you a mere £5.00 to attend. So the social scene looks a bit crowded for the next few weeks. See you along the way.

TAILPIECE

I have an invitation for you.

After the Bedford game I dropped into the old Coach and Horses for a noggin. You know the one: just on the corner of Hare Lane and St. Catherine's Street. I must confess that my main reason for going in was that it's nice to see such a celebrated Gloucester hostelry open for business after having been closed for yonks.

By the time I'd torn myself away from the Clubhouse and wandered round the corner, a small but select group of Bedford supporters had established themselves at the bar. Considering that they had just lost a match which they could conceivably have won in the last quarter, they were in remarkably good spirits.

Part of the reason was that they were extremely pleased with the reception they had received in the various parts of the ground they had patronised. The consensus was that, with Northampton, our supporters are the ones they most like to foregather with. And they'd like to return the compliment.

They asked me to thank everyone for their hospitality and good humour, and also directed me to extend an invitation to Gloucester supporters to sample some of the delights of Goldstone Road when we visit them in the New Year. That, I'm pleased to do. It's nice to be appreciated, isn't it ?

Simon Devereux's



It was touch and go whether I would be fit for today's game with Saracens, but solely on the recommendation of the medical team here at Glos, I have had to pull out at the last minute with a dislocated ankle and broken leg!

Most of you will already know I picked up the injury during our last league game at home to Bedford which we eventually won 31-21 after Bedford had managed to claw back from 25-0 to 28-21 before 'Mapes' slotted over the final penalty.

From a forward's viewpoint, the first half had to rate as one of the most enjoyable and effective performances of the season so far. Personally, I believe that prior to playing Northampton away, our forward play had become fragmented and a little disorganised to the extent that we weren't

playing as a unit. We had lost focus and, as a result, went back to basics in training. i.e. we worked on scrums, line outs and re-starts: get these right and everything else will follow. We are continuously looking to improve our play and the next step for us must be to maintain our concentration and performance over the full 80 minutes.

The second half against Bedford began and continued with them running the ball from everywhere, something which they have done effectively in most of their previous games. Although we weren't having much possession, I felt we were still very much in control of our own destiny.

Some twenty minutes into the half, a loose ball was snapped up by a Bedford player near the half way line, whom I tackled and attempted to 'turn over' in the process. As I did this, another of our players joined the tackle from the opposite side, at which point my leg was caught beneath both bodies as we hit the ground. The ankle twisted outwards and I knew something had broken. Immediately, I said, "Stop the game" and in a bizarre moment, all the players around me stopped and the ref looked at me with a confused expression. "I've bust my leg," I said, at which point he blew the whistle to stop the game

officially.

Our physio Chris - affectionately known as 'Syrup' - was first to attend to me. I told him, looking down at the lump bulging in my sock that "It's bust." His immediate response was, 'We don't know that yet - it could be your shin pad sticking out' at which point I notified him that I don't wear shin pads. "Oh, that's bust then," he replied. Nice one, Syrup!

Next stop was Gloucester Royal Hospital where my ankle was re-located and x-rayed. Big Fids joined me at around 5.00 p.m. when some 30 minutes later he started to break into a sweat. Concerned for his welfare, I asked if he was OK. He then explained that he'd just found the whole team's complement of beer vouchers in his pocket and he would have to leave to confront the many irate, thirsty Glos players at the club.

I was eventually transferred to the Winfield Hospital where I had a small operation at 9.30 p.m. Sunday morning began with a phone call from my roomy on numerous away trips - Glanners. This was followed by my first visit from Messrs Williams (former United coach), Windo and Deacon. The multi lingual Deacs appeared a little green around the gills with perhaps

Injury Diary



Simon Devereux is carried off against Bedford

the brightest coloured head since the Ribena berry. He proceeded to plonk himself down in the corner after a grunt and read every sports supplement in every newspaper I had whilst the other two kept me entertained with conversation. Another grunt from Deacs signalled the end of the visit and all three left. I later translated his grunts as "Good morning, Devs, how are you?" and "Goodbye Devs, get well soon."

Virtually everyone at the club visited or phoned throughout Sunday and Monday which definitely helped to cheer me up. I was quite moved when Andrew Stanley visited on Monday and brought me a bunch of grapes. "They are seedless" he pointed out. This may not mean much to most, but to 'Stan' the gift

represented a significant financial outlay.

Finally, today's game with saracens will be another extremely tough game regardless of international calls etc. I would urge you to get behind the team as always, but especially if things are going against us, that is when we need it most. Hopefully, we should see another hard fought Glos win at Kingsholm.

Simon Devereux

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Centre
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Prop
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Lock
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Saracens
team subject
to change
owing to
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duties