

Gloucester

v LEICESTER

19th December 1998

Kick Off 3.00pm

£2.00



**Inside:
Richard Hill's
Mid-Season Report**

Souvenir Festive Poster

Simon Devereux and more...





GLOUCESTER 15



23 LEICESTER



Today's Match Day Sponsor:
Lloyds Bank Commercial
Service

15	Chris catling
14	Brian Johnson
13	Terry Fanolua*
12	Richard Tombs (capt)*
11	Philippe Saint-Andre*
10	Simon Mannix*
9	Ian Sanders
1	Tony Windo*
2	Chris Fortey
3	Andy Deacon
4	Rob Fidler*
5	Mark Cornwell
6	Kingsley Jones
7	Nathan Carter
8	Steve Ojomoh*
16	Mark Mapletoft*
17	Scott Benton
18	Andrew Hazell
19	Neil McCarthy
20	Adey Powles
21	Dave Sims*
22	Trevor Woodman

Full Back
Right Wing
Centre
Centre
Left Wing

Outside Half
Scrum Half

Prop
Hooker
Prop
Lock
Lock
Flanker
Flanker
No. 8

Replacements

*Denotes international

*Tim Stimpson	15
*Dave Loughed	14
*Stuart Potter	13
*Pat Howard	12
Leon Lloyd	11
Geordan Murphy	10
*Austin healey	9
*Graham Rowntree	1
*Richard Cockerill	2
*Darren Garforth	3
*Martin Johnson (C)	4
*Fritz Van Heerden	5
Paul Gustard	6
*Neil back	7
*Martin Corry	8
Replacements'	16
Details Not Available	17
	18
	19
	20
	21
	22

Referee
Nigel Williams

Touch Judges
Chris Reeks
Ashley Reay

Hilly's Christmas Report

Pre-season took us down to St Ives for a very hard working week at the beginning of August. The players saw the St Ives beaches in a different light to normal holiday makers where we were involved in grueling runs and rugby practice and even training in the sea. On return, we had organised three warm up matches against Newbury and Launceston away, and Cheltenham at Kingsholm. We tried not to include any of the players who had taken part in the tour to the Southern Hemisphere in these matches owing to the fact that they had obviously had a great deal of hard training and hard matches over a six to eight week period.

This also provided an opportunity for our new signing Simon Mannix to settle into the club and play his first rugby for Gloucester. Simon was recruited to provide us with much-needed cover at outside half, as we were unsure as to how long Tofty could continue to play without suffering injury. He has been a very abrasive and

courageous outside half who has kept injury free in my opinion largely down to the fact that he keeps himself in excellent physical condition and, pound for pound, is probably our strongest player in the club.

In hindsight, the matches against Newbury, Cheltenham and Launceston, although enjoyable, did not fully prepare us for the visit of London Irish

"At the start of the season, one of our aims was to achieve 6 away wins"

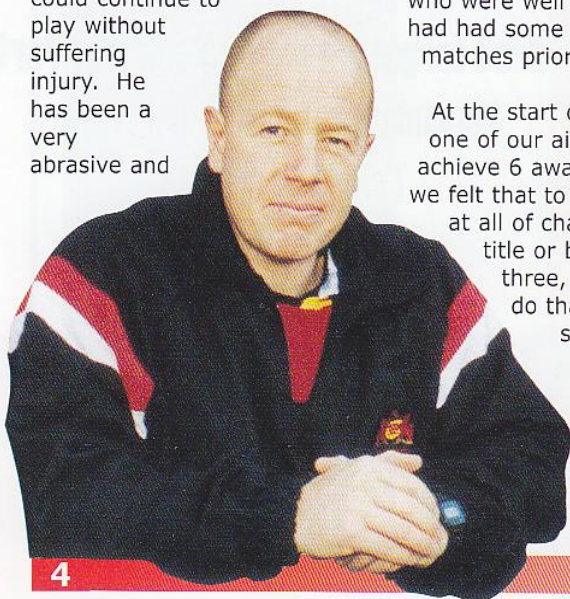
in the first game. There is no doubt that in future seasons, we must arrange fixtures against high quality opposition because we were run far too close for comfort by London Irish who looked like a side who were well prepared and had had some very physical matches prior to ours.

At the start of the season one of our aims was to achieve 6 away wins because we felt that to have any change at all of challenging for the title or being in the top three, we needed to do that. In our second match, away to Richmond, we came through with a fabulous victory.

Although we did not play particularly well and were up against a very good Richmond side, it was through our heroic defence in both halves and a little bit of luck - Richmond had two players in the sin bin at one stage - that we managed to just edge a morale-boosting win in the Madjeski stadium. This was particularly satisfying as during the previous week, Richmond had beaten Newcastle convincingly.

After West Hartlepool, came our trip to Bath to test our away form. After we had gained a bit of self belief towards the end of the first half, we dominated the second half and I believe were unfortunate losers at 16 - 21. In the dressing room afterwards the players knew that a new self belief was creeping into the side when playing away from home. We hoped at this stage that the days of lacklustre performances away from home, the side capitulating when the opposition take the lead, were gone.

Our next game against Wasps at home was bitterly disappointing where in a way we deserved to lose because we did not play very well. A very bitter pill to swallow was the try in the fourth minute of injury time against Wasps which we conceded at least 2 minutes after the referee had indicated to our players that there was only 1 minute of play left. However we cannot make excuses and although it is very disappointing to lose our home record - particularly to a side like Wasps - we only had ourselves to blame. In



Hilly's Christmas Report

contrast to that, we had an outstanding win in the League against Newcastle where everything that we had been working on appeared to work for most of the 80 minutes. It was probably the best attacking performance in my, and the players' opinion, over the last three and a bit seasons.

The match against Quins was the low point of the season and was a disaster. Unfortunately, we caught Quins in good form and despite starting very powerfully we conceded an intercepted try and from then on things went from bad to worse. The next game against London Scottish was a poor performance and despite slight improvements against Bedford and Saracens there was still much work to be done.

One of the reasons for our dip in form during the season was I believe the uncertainty over Phil Greening. I was bitterly disappointed to have to make the decision to release Phil at the end after working with him over the past three seasons. Phil had very unfortunately suffered long-term injuries to his wrist and thigh and shorter term injuries with his rib. He was also put under pressure by good performances at hooker by Neil McCarthy and Chris Fortey and at the end, I had to take what amounted in the main to a commercial view that we could not afford to keep Phil on his current salary if he was to be our third choice hooker in the foreseeable future. I believe that in the long run, it would be the best thing for Phil to have a fresh start and I am sure at some

stage in the near future he will recapture the form which we all know he potentially possess and can then return to enjoying his rugby. Whilst it is always difficult in a player/coach relationship when you have to move a player on, I hope that Phil and I can remain friends and I sincerely wish him well in his new career with Sale Rugby Club.

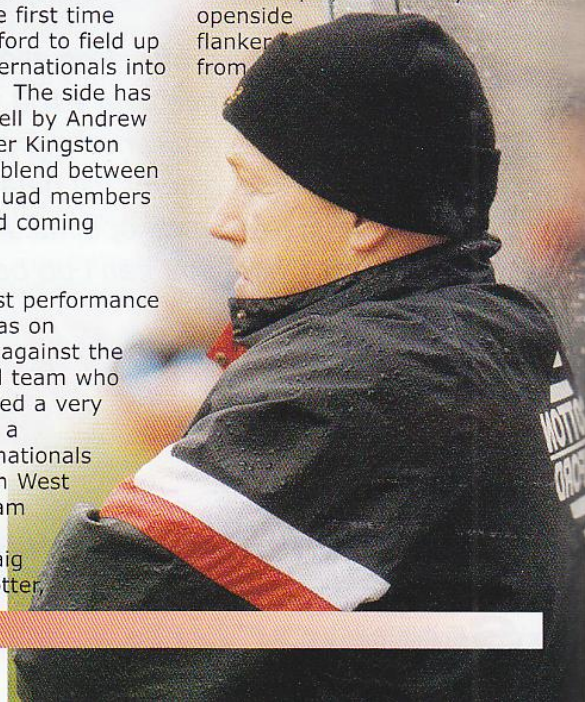
"One of the reasons for our dip in form was, I believe, the uncertainty over Phil Greening"

The second team competition is thriving at the moment with club sides often fielding up to 8 internationals in the second team line out and we are ourselves for the first time ever can also afford to field up to 5 or 6 full internationals into our United side. The side has been coached well by Andrew Stanley and Peter Kingston and has a good blend between senior 1st XV squad members and good up and coming young players.

Probably the best performance of the season was on Wednesday last against the Leicester second team who themselves fielded a very strong side with a number of internationals including Dorrian West at hooker, Graham Rowntree, Fritz Vanheerden, Craig Joiner, Stuart Potter

Dave Logheed, the Canadian International and Tim Stimpson at full back. Although we had a number of experienced players like Scott Benton, Mark Mapletoft, Chris Catling and Dave Sims, it was also fabulous to see a large contingent of Gloucester colts from the previous one or two seasons like Chris Hall, Bennett Smith, Adam Harris, Adam Eustace, Andrew Hazell, Sam Pearman and Rob Jewell.

It is great credit to our Colts Management of John Haines, Nick Marment and Pat Kiely that these players came through the Colts system and judging by the results of this season's Colts there a number of many very talented players which we should see in our United side the following seasons. In fact, we have already seen two or three of the present Colts coming up into the 1st XV and playing against high quality opposition. For example, Sam Lasky the openside flanker from



Hilly's Christmas Report

Kelly College who played against Wasps and put in a very good performance against the likes of Andy Reed, Peter Scrivenor, and Josh Lewsey. Karl Rudski has also played for the United squad.

To sum up then, I am very pleased indeed with the way in which the Colts are bringing on high quality talent which is then fed into our United squad which is becoming better and better each season as the strength in depth and the age of the players increases. At the moment, they are still quite a young side and I am now much happier with the United squad performances both individually and as a team.

We now also have a new programme: Dave Pointon is running a representative U17s squad taken from the best young players in the area. We certainly have no intentions of taking the players away from their club sides at age 17 but we hope we can provide them with extra motivation and incentives, better training resources and coaching and, if possible, a career path at Gloucester Rugby Club when they become a couple of years older and can move into a Gloucester Colts squad. This system is working very well at the moment and we have already identified a number of very talented local players who might one day put on the full Gloucester Rugby Club jersey.

Our injury list has been relatively short this season and players who have suffered minor injuries have been rehabilitated quickly by our medical team. I would like to take this opportunity to wish a

speedy recovery to Phil Vickery, Simon Devereux and Pete Glanville. Simon suffered the worst injury but I am confident that owing to his determination he will be back with us before the end of the season. The selection continues to be a controversial issue because we now have many players who could equally stake a claim to be in the first team on a regular basis but who may be currently missing out. I have decided to try and gain some consistency in my selection and will do my best to continue with the players in possession unless they suffer a loss of form or a player on the fringe of the 1st team puts in continuous faultless performances in the United.

Prior to the match against Sale on the 12th December I had been fairly certain that we had finally got over our problems when playing away from home. I had seriously thought after our performances against Bath, Richmond and Northampton where we battled very hard that the self belief throughout the squad was approaching the level with which they play at home. How wrong could I be! Despite different approaches and different methods towards preparing for away matches we are still suffering from this lack of self belief away from Kingsholm. We produced a very good first half performance where we unfortunately did not score a try which may have allowed us to go and win well against Sale and this appeared to effect the physiology after half time when I was extremely disappointed that we had

almost conceded defeat at 19-3 down.

I can assure all those travelling supporters who made the long trip to Sale and watched as Gloucester fell

"Prior to the match against Sale I had been certain that we had got over our problems away from home"

away in the second half that the team met on Monday to discuss some home truths about the performance and I sincerely hope that all the squad will now make a massive effort to repay the debt they owe those loyal supporters. Quite clearly the problem with the physiology away from home is still evident but I can assure all the supporters that we will do everything in our power to find a solution to this problem. It has now got to a serious proportion and the players are fully aware of their responsibility to provide the City of Gloucester with winning performances both home and away. Finally on behalf of the squad may I again apologise for the disappointment we all suffered at Sale and we hope to put it right this afternoon against Leicester so that we can all have a reasonably enjoyable Christmas.

Richard Hill

Welcome to Kingsley

It's nice to be able to welcome Gloucester's first Welsh player of the professional era to Kingsholm, especially one with such a distinguished record as Kingsley Jones. Anyone who wins ten Welsh Caps, and also skippers his country must have a considerable amount going for him, and we're sure he will prove to be a considerable asset to an already formidable back row.

We must, of course, regret the reasons which, we are told, prompted the decision to invite Kingsley to join the party. To lose two such admirable performers as Pete Glanville and Simon Devereaux to injury did look likely to stretch our resources a bit thinly, even though we have a couple of young player simply salivating for their chance to make the grade. Nevertheless, having seen Kingsley Jones performing for Wales, albeit only on the box, he's certainly a character I'd prefer to have on my side.

Being the experienced and streetwise player that he is, I don't suppose for one moment that he thinks he is going to claim a regular place in Gloucester's back row just by turning up. There's a great deal of competition around that area, and he's going to have to prove himself. That's a situation which is healthy for everyone, including the young players who are knocking on the door. We shall await

developments with considerable interest.

Kingsley isn't the first Welsh Captain to turn out for Gloucester. John Gwilliam, who played for Cambridge University and Newport before coming to Gloucester won 23 Welsh Caps between 1947 and 1954, and led the side for around a dozen of those occasions. Interestingly, he skippered Wales from No.8, but played for Gloucester at lock forward, where he was renowned as the master of the tap back from the line-out when the norm was for the two-handed catch. The reason he was demoted to the engine room at Kingsholm? Simple: we thought our own Bob Hodge was a better No.8.

Of course, the Gloucester-Welsh connection is a long and complex one. Until very recently there was always a Welshman or two turning out in the Cherry-and-White. I suppose the senior citizens among us will point to the legendary half-back pairing of Danny Evens, the scrum-half with the long-range pass out, and Willie Jones, probably the best drop-goal specialist of all time, but there have been many more than that, including out old mate and long-serving Committee member, Jim Jarred, who, I believe, captained Pontypool at one time.

There was also Doctor Paul Pritchard, a winger who could have been very good indeed



if his medical duties hadn't got in the way. And so on. Kingsholm regulars of any length of service will be able to compile a long list of Gloucester Welshmen.

And the traffic hasn't all been one way. Les ('Bumble') Jones, the Matson outside-half who made an enormous impression when he came to Kingsholm, moved on to Pontypool afterwards.

But the story I like concerns that effective and trenchant prop, Bob ('Dino') Phillips. Bob had a Glawster accent you could cut a brick with, so it became some cause for hilarity when he was drafted into the Welsh Development Squad. "Hey, Bob!" I asked him, "How come you get called into that Welsh Squad?"

"Ah, well, Pete," he replied. "I own a corgi!"

Simon Devereux



Last Saturday's defeat at Sale certainly left a sour taste in the mouth. I know all the players were bitterly disappointed and will be looking to make amends today.

The game itself from Gloucester's point of view was a classic example of not converting pressure into points, particularly when in the opposition '22'. However, despite failing to score until the end of the first half we were still in a goal position at 7-3 when half time arrived. We needed to score first when the game re-started but Sale scored a well worked try to lead 12-3. The next score 10 minutes into the half proved to be a killer blow, when from a Sale 3 man lineout a missed 'first up' tackle breached our defence resulting in a converted try for Sale to lead 19-3. To give credit to

Sale they were offensive in defence, which put us under pressure, but we still had enough possession and territory during the first half to have built a reasonable lead. I'm sure this would have changed the pattern of the game in the second half and probably the result.

I am frequently asked about refereeing by spectators after the game. You can ask people from both teams about key decisions during a game and

"There appear to be one or two refs who are of the opinion that they are centre stage and must remain so throughout the full 80 mins"

more often than not you will get two different opinions depending upon which team was given the advantage by the decision. I tend not to pass judgement when asked, for two reasons: Firstly, the referee's job is very difficult and virtually every match played has some key talking points which will revolve around a referee's decision. They are nearly always in a no-win situation. Secondly, it's no use crying over spilt milk, as the saying goes; blaming the referee is the easy way out.

However, what I will say is that the best referees are rarely seen during a match. They will strike a rapport with the players, whilst leaving them no doubt about who is making the decisions on the pitch. There appear to be one or two refs who are of the opinion that they are centre stage and must remain so throughout the full 80mins. This leads to a stop-start game, which is frustrating for both the players and spectators, spoiling any chance of an enjoyable and entertaining game of rugby.

Touch judges are there to assist the referees with decisions but there appears to be a Grey area as to the extent of their involvement. Some have their flags raised and lowered more times than Buckingham Palace whereas others remain completely anonymous for the whole match regardless of what is happening on the pitch. They have a vital role in assisting referees. To improve consistency there needs to be clarification on which decisions they are allowed to influence.

Rugby has been scarce at Kingsholm recently, owing to the internationals. However, the players have not been idle during this period. The coaching staff have used this time to raise the players' fitness levels, with - from what I'm told - a series of

Simon Devereux

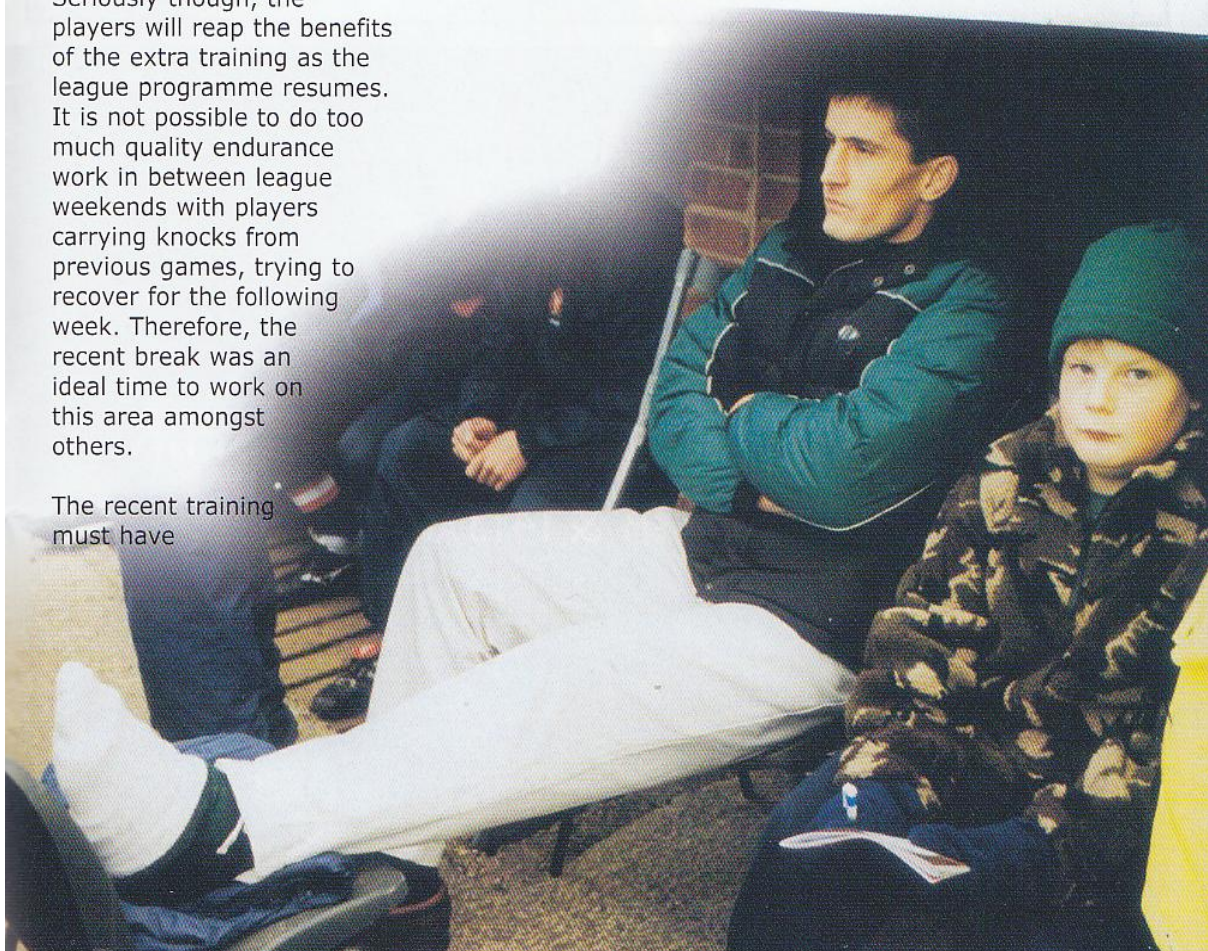
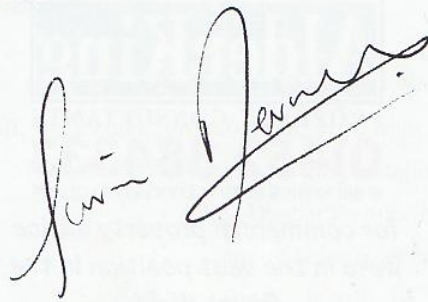
gruelling sessions. This included a mini triathlon involving a leg weights session, rowing and rugby related endurance, completed with virtually no rest between each. Chosen Hill has been visited a few times also and it certainly was for no picnic! Allegedly, the Kenyan national running squad enquired about joining us for some winter endurance training but took one look at the schedule and declined. We're still considering entering a team into next summer's Bermuda half iron-man event.

Seriously though, the players will reap the benefits of the extra training as the league programme resumes. It is not possible to do too much quality endurance work in between league weekends with players carrying knocks from previous games, trying to recover for the following week. Therefore, the recent break was an ideal time to work on this area amongst others.

The recent training must have

increased the players confidence in their own fitness levels. Only last week Tony 'Reg' Windo challenged me to the renowned 'bleep test' full confident that he could reach a higher level than yours truly. I wonder if my leg being in plaster had any bearing on this? Finally, today's game with Leicester is always one of the season's highlights. The players always

relish taking on the Tigers home or away. A win today would be a great early Christmas present as far as I'm concerned.



SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Cup draws and things, combined with the onset of Christmas and the New Year, has made this a complicated old period in the season. So let's have a round-up.

Our next engagement takes place on Saturday, January 2nd, when we entertain Bath. Sky have decided to cover that match, so don't forget that it will be an early (2.00pm) kick-off. That will be a sure-fire cure for New Year celebration 'morning after' feelings.

As you will know by now, the Tetley Bitter Cup draw has, for once, been kind to us and given us a home game against Worcester on January 9th. With all the 'Gloucester Old Boys',

(nothing to do with the distinguished Horton Road outfit), swelling the ranks of the visitors, plus the undoubted expertise of their rugby director, Les Cusworth, that should be a game and a half. Ticket prices have been severely reduced for that game, but writing almost a week before you read this, I have no chance of knowing how many, if any, of them are left by now. Could be worth enquiring, though. Don't forget that these Cup matches are, under the rules of the competition, all-pay affairs - and that means everything, including car park charges. Could be a good day for leaving your trusty vehicle at home. In between those to games, we have a tricky old Allied Dunbar game,

away to London Scottish on Tuesday, January 5th, so it will be a busy old eight days for the lads.

We're still at home on Saturday, January 16th, when Richmond are to be the visitors. Please note that you may have this down for Sunday 17th on your fixture list, but it has been brought forward because Sky are to cover that one, too. Odd kick-off time that day. The TV people want a 4.15pm start. To finish the month off, we pay the return visit to Leicester on January 23rd, while the last Saturday in the month is Cup day again, so we could be absolutely anywhere - assuming we beat Worcester.



WHAT ROTTEN LUCK!

I was hit by a very unpleasant coincidence some days ago. I came across the news that Sale prop Andrew Smith had been forced to retire from the game due to an intractable and long-standing neck injury which simply didn't respond to treatment. Within seconds, I also read that Phil Vickery's run-out for the United against Leicester had been cut short when it had barely started by a recurrence of his own, similar, injury. I found that quite depressing, but it does show just how difficult these particular problems can be.

On the positive side, Smith is around eight years older than Vickery, and his injury was of much greater duration than Phil's. It's to be hoped, therefore, that the best possible medical advice can bring him back to full fitness as soon as possible. Phil must be absolutely gutted, but I think he'd be wise not to rush things at all. In practical terms, he can probably write off this season's Five Nations anyway, and it's better for Gloucester to struggle on without his services so as to have a thoroughly fit and formidable 'Vicks' back in harness in the fullness of time. There isn't much one can say to console him, but he might like to reflect that our own Phil Blakeway had a distinguished England career after he'd broken his neck, and we have no indication that young Phil's injury is anywhere near as severe as his illustrious predecessor at prop had to endure.

Obviously, we all wish Phil Vickery a speedy recovery. After all, we do want to see him doing the business in the World Cup next season, don't we?

ANYONE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CHARLES JOHN HALL ?

Another of my invaluable regular correspondents, David King from Dudbridge, brings to my attention a letter which appeared in the Stroud News and Journal towards the end of last month. He hopes that someone among the massed ranks of the Kingsholm Faithful might be able to help a thirteen year-old lad who is enterprising enough to be researching something of his family history. I don't think I can do better than quote the letter in its entirety.

I am doing some research on a former publican from the Stroud area. He was my great, great uncle and his name was Charles John Hall. He also played rugby for Gloucester and England around the turn of the Century. He was the landlord of the Bedford Arms, High Street, Stroud, the Sharpness Hotel, Sharpness, and several other establishments. I would be very grateful be very grateful for any information your readers may be able to supply.
Mark Keightly (aged 13)

David King has already established that C.J.Hall won two Caps for England, against Ireland and Scotland, during the 1900/1 season, a disastrous campaign for the National side, when they managed to lose all three matches, and used 28 players in the process. I can add that Hall was a prop forward, who probably got into the side because C. Daniel of

Richmond was injured. Incidentally, C. Smith of Gloucester played in the other game, against Wales, on the wing.

That's all I know. Unfortunately, young Mark didn't include his address in the letter, but if anyone can add anything, then no doubt the Editor of the Stroud News and Journal at 6, Lansdown, Stroud will be able to pass it on.

TAILPIECE

You'd probably picked up the fact that our own Kingsley Jones's father, Phil Kingsley Jones, is Jonah Lomu's agent. But did you also see that one of his successes is to get the All Black giant considered for the part of a villain in a forthcoming James Bond Film?

The mind boggles. Perhaps Kingsley could use his influence to get a few small parts for some of the startlingly handsome members of the Gloucester pack.

On the other hand, I would suggest casting Rory and Tony Underwood's Mum as Miss Money Penny. After the way Jonah treated her little boy in the last World Cup, I wouldn't give much for his chances.

Have a great time. See you next year.