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THE KINGSHOLM GYMNASIUM

GLOUCESTER FOOTBALL CLUB'S NEW TRAINING QUARTERS

OPENED BY THE CITY MEMBER

The splendid gymnasium and training quarters which have been erected at the Kingsholm Ground for the Gloucester FC were formally opened on Saturday afternoon by Mr Russell Rea, MP. The necessity for some such accommodation on the ground has been generally recognised, and the players and Committee will now be comfortably "housed" under one roof. Everything has been done to make the building thoroughly up-to-date, and the Gloucester Club are to be congratulated on the possession of one of the finest football training quarters in the West of England.

THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY

There was a large attendance at the opening ceremony, previous and subsequent to which Mr F Rowland's band played selections of music. The City Member was accompanied by the Mayor (Councillor W Langley-Smith) and the City High Sheriff (Councillor FH Bretherton), both of whom wore their chains of office. Others present included other members of the City Council, and officials and members of the Football and the Athletic Ground Company.

The proceedings were opened by the Architect (Mr Harry A Dancey), who stated that the very pleasing duty had devolved upon him of handing over that building, which had been erected during the past three months by the Directors of the Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Company Limited, as a home for the Gloucester Rugby Football Club. He thought all present would agree with him when he said that such a building had been a long-felt want in Gloucester, and that for years past it had been to a very great extent a disgrace that such a wonderfully good Rugby Football Club as the city had should have had such poor accommodation provided for them. (Hear, hear.) Mr Dancey then handed to the Chairman of the Ground Company (Mr AW Vears) an ornamental silver key (in case) which he asked him to present to the City Member on his (the Architect's) behalf as a slight memento of that memorable occasion. (Applause.)

Mr Vears, in extending a hearty welcome to the City Member, remarked that it was not Mr Russell Rea's first visit to the ground, and he hoped it would not be the last. (Hear, hear.) They were more than pleased to have the City Member present, and on behalf of the Directors of the Ground Company he asked him to perform the opening ceremony, which he was sure in the goodness of Mr Rea's heart it would be a pleasure for him to do. After Mr Rea had opened the gymnasium, he asked him to hand it over to Councillor CE Brown (President of the Football Club), to be held and used by the Club during their tenure of the ground. Mr Vears then handed the key to the City Member, amidst loud applause.

Mr Russell Rea, MP, who was most heartily greeted, said he need not tell them with what extreme pleasure he was present upon that most interesting occasion. Obeying

the command of Mr Vears, he should reserve any remarks which he had to make until the tea which was to follow the match. Meanwhile, he had the greatest pleasure in declaring the gymnasium open, and in giving effect to his words by opening the door.

Amidst cheers, the City Member then unlocked the door, and he was followed into the gymnasium by a large number of spectators. Here Mr Rea announced that that apologies for unavoidable absence had been received from Mr HW Grimes and Mr RV Vassar-Smith. He next expressed the pleasure it afforded him to hand over a key of that beautiful and convenient building to Councillor Brown, as President of the Football Club.

Councillor Brown, after having received the key, said that on behalf of the Football Club he had great pleasure in accepting the tenancy of that building, which he hoped for many years to come would be the happy and successful home of Rugby football in Gloucester. (Applause.) For many years they had laboured under great difficulty in having the Committee room in one portion of the city, the training quarters in another, and both away from the Football Ground. They felt that they would be able to carry on their work much more easily and satisfactorily under one roof. The Committee would be sitting in one room while the players would be training in another, and he hoped that with the increased facilities the training would be much more effective than it had been in the past. Everyone present would recognise how very essential a well-trained team was to the club if they wished to compete with any success against the very strong clubs whom they would have to meet this season. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that by winning their matches they would make the Club even more popular during the ensuing season than it had been in the past. (Applause.) Mr Brown paid a tribute to the excellent and expeditious manner with which the Architect, Builder, and all others concerned had done their work, and after remarking that Gloucester had one of the best Rugby football teams in England, if not the best (applause), concluded by moving a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr Russell Rea for performing the opening ceremony, and to the Mayor and City High Sheriff for their attendance.

Mr S Davis seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried in an enthusiastic manner.

The City Member, in reply, said his thanks were due to those who had invited him, rather than theirs were to him, for having afforded him the opportunity of performing a ceremony which had given him very great pleasure. He could assure Mr Dancey that he should retain the memento which he had given him of that occasion amongst his most treasured possessions for the rest of his life. (Applause.)

In response to calls for a speech, the Mayor assured the company that he was more than delighted to be present and to know of the improved facilities which had been provided for those who gave pleasure to so many thousands of the citizens of Gloucester. Football was of itself undoubtedly a healthy recreation, it was devoid of vice or anything else improper, and participation in the game was calculated to improve the physique of the players and to make those who contemplated following a military career all the better soldiers for having indulged in that popular winter pastime. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that the Gloucester Football Club would continue to prosper and be increasingly successful. (Applause.)

The City High Sheriff expressed the pleasure it gave him to hear that the Gloucester Rugby team was one of the best, if not the best in England. Football was a healthy national game, and might it be so for many years to come. In order that it might be so they must keep professionalism out of it, and its absence was the great beauty of the Rugby game. (Hear, hear.) Might it remain what it was now, and as it was played in Gloucester for many years, and might that new building be the home of the game in the city for the next half century at least. (Applause.)

The visitors then made an inspection of the building, prior to the commencement of the match.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

The building has been erected immediately facing the entrance gates opposite the White Hart Hotel, and is set back about 115 feet from the boundary fence, the west end of the building coming to within 40 feet of the present pavilion. Much care was necessary in determining the exact position of the building, as many obstacles presented themselves. Chief amongst these were not to obstruct the vision of any spectator in the present pavilion from any part of the field of play, to leave sufficient space at the back of the building so that a cart or other vehicle may be taken through between the building and the fence at the back of houses in St Mark-street, and also to so arrange the building that the general public may have easy access to the present pavilion. This necessitated many consultations with the directors and officials before it was finally settled.

The main entrance faces the Kingsholm-road. On the left of the entrance is a door leading to the office, which is 15 feet long by 12 feet wide, with a counter dividing the public from the private portion. Members wishing to obtain tickets, or transact any business with the officials will pass through the office, and out on to the field of play, through an external door on the south side. Swing doors are arranged across the entrance corridor to screen the doorways to the private part of the office (on the left hand side), and the Committee Room (on the right hand side). The Committee room is 19 feet long and 15 feet wide, with doorway leading there-from direct into the bath-room used by the home team, so that the Committee may be in touch with the players on training nights. The large room or gymnasium is approached through an additional pair of swing doors across the main entrance corridor. This room is 60 feet long and 30 feet wide, with doors leading direct from the same on to the field of play. On the north side the bath-rooms, etc., are placed, separate accommodation being provided for the home team and for the visitors. The plunge baths are sunk below the level of the floor, and are about 8 feet square and about 3 feet deep, hot and cold water supplies being arranged for. Shower "roses" are fixed against the vertical walls in each bath-room at an angle of about 45 degrees, with regulating hot and cold taps, the object of fixing these at an angle being that a shower may be obtained (hot or cold) from head to toe, instead of falling on the head only if they had been fixed in the old-fashioned way, viz., vertically from the ceiling. Lavatory accommodation is provided in connection with each bath-room.

The large room is 16ft 6in high from floor to springing of roof, and about 26 feet to the apex. It is heated by hot water pipes laid in channels underneath the floor, and

these are so arranged that parts only may be charged if necessary, so as to economise fuel. The boiler-house is placed on the north side, and is approached from the outside. The one boiler will do all the heating required, and will also the necessary hot water to the baths, showers, etc. The hot water radiators are placed in the Committee Room for warming purposes, these being fed from the boiler, and will be used chiefly when the men are training, the Committee having arranged to meet on the same nights. The office will be heated by an electric radiator, which will of course be quite distinct from the warming apparatus generally, as this room will be required so much more frequently. The building is carried out partly in brick and partly in wood framework, the roofs being covered with Somerset patent interlocking tiles. The floors of the large room, office, and Committee Room are solid wood floors in mastic composition on "coke breeze" concrete. The remainder of the floors of the bath-rooms, etc., are carried out in a patent jointless floor of granolithic nature, but finished in deep red colour, the effect of which is very warm and pleasant.

It should be specially mentioned that the elevation of the building towards the field of play looks very unfinished at present. The reason is that the proposed additional grandstand, which formed part of the original design, has been omitted, but the building has been so arranged that this may be carried out at any future time, without pulling about or injuring the main structure, and the effect when this is done will be very different to what it now is.

The builders' work has been very well and expeditiously carried out by Mr A J Dolman, of Ryecroft-street, Gloucester, whose foreman (Mr Williams) has been most assiduous in carefully carrying out his duties. The hot water supply, electric lighting, and heating work has been carried out by Messrs Woodward and Co Limited, of Gloucester, and the cold water supply, plumbing, and sanitary work generally by Messrs Turner and Pritchard, all from the designs and under the superintendence of Mr Harry A Dancey, architect, of Gloucester, at a cost of £1,100.