

The Gloucester Football Club

A Retrospect.

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HISTORY OF THE CLUB.

Whenever an individual or an organisation approaches a red-letter day, there is always a temptation to cast back the sight over the history of the past, to single out the red-letter days of long ago, and to dwell on the pleasant memories awakened. Thus there is nothing strange that, now we are so near October 10th, a day which, if not in date, will in circumstance be long remembered, we should be found calling to mind notable points in the history of the Football Club. Though this sketch is necessarily presented to the public in a comparatively imperfect state, and there are doubtless many residing in Gloucester who can call to mind many incidents and noteworthy facts which are here unaccounted for, the majority of readers will find that this column contains many facts new to them, and for much of the information relating to the earlier history of the club we are indebted to one or two of its oldest members.

The club was started in 1874, a recent year in ordinary reckoning, but a very long time ago in the history of Football. The intervening time has been more than sufficient to change the personality of the team four times. Taking an average of the length of time during which individual regular players have done battle for the club, the active life of a football player would be found to be not more than five years. Thus we can say that it is generations ago since the time when Mr. Francis Hartley, a solicitor in the office of Messrs. Haines and Riddiford, captained a scratch team of Gloucester players, who took part in matches with the College School, Hereford, and Worcester. Mr. Hartley was an ex-captain of the flamingos, one of the best London teams of that day. He came to Gloucester in 1874, and in the spring of that year he got up a scratch team to play against the College School, which was then in a very flourishing condition. Curiously enough that match was played on the very ground in Dean's Walk to which the club has now moved. It was considered of such success that games were arranged with Hereford and Worcester. These likewise took place on the Dean's Walk ground, but the locals were ignominiously defeated. The devotees of the Rugby game were full of enthusiasm and, nothing daunted by the thrashings received and the lack of interest on the part of the public, steps were taken to start a club. Messrs. Hartley, W.A. and J. Boughton, E.T. Gardom, and Riddiford were the moving spirits, and later in the year a couple of meetings were held, the first at Mr. Riddiford's in London-road, and the second at Mrs. Boughton's in Brunswick-square. The Club was successfully launched, but what was the record of its doings in its first season we are not able to say. At the end the first balance sheet showed that there were 35 members, and the total receipts for the whole season from all sources, £11. During the first two seasons Mr. Hartley was captain. In 1876-7 Mr. J. F. Brown succeeded to the captaincy, and it was during his tenure of the office that the game made rapid strides in popularity. The team were no doubt most fortunate in being led by such a captain. We regret

that we cannot place our hands on the records of these early years. The first we came across in our researches was that of the season 1879-80. Sixteen matches were played in that year, and of these no less than 14 were won. Such a position was not attained as the result of one season's work, and it may be taken that as during the preceding years the game was growing in popularity so the play was increasing in merit.

From the time of the launching of the club in 1874 the matches were played on the Spa with regularity. In February, 1875, however, a regrettable incident occurred, Mr. Sydney Lane sustaining a bad fracture of the thigh. Taking place in the early history of football in Gloucester, the occurrence had a serious effect on the attendance for some time, the ladies particularly absenting themselves from the matches. The principal matches then used to be with Hereford, Ross, Rockleaze (Bristol), Swindon Rangers, Cheltenham White Cross, and Clifton. Clifton used always to beat the city boys in those days, and it was not till 1882-3 that they received the first of those reverses which in time became as regular as their previous victories, and a good deal more severe. Among the players who took part in these matches were W. Hobbs (now schoolmaster at Tredworth, but then residing in the Forest), P. B. Cooke, H. J. Boughton, G. J. Dewey, E. T. Gardom, J. W. Baylay, H. J. Berry, W. S. Beaumont, and L. and R. L. Grist. Newport, the oldest of the Welsh clubs, which was started some years before Gloucester, was first met in the autumn of 1878. The match was played at Newport, and resulted in a draw. In the return at Gloucester W. Snushall, one of the Gloucester halves, sustained a broken ankle.

As we have intimated, 1879-80 is the first year of which we have any record before us. The fourteen wins which Mr. J. F. Brown and his men placed to the credit of the club were over Cheltenham White Cross, Swindon Rangers, Moseley, Cheltenham Training College, Rockleaze, Stroud, Ross, Cheltenham College, and the R.A.C., Cirencester. Clifton beat us easily on each occasion in that year by a goal and three tries, and by four tries respectively. Moseley was not the first Midland team which Gloucester met. Handsworth used to be a regular fixture, but as this team went down Moseley was taken on. We have an idea that 1879-80 was the first season. The Midlanders were beaten twice, in common with the other teams mentioned above. Altogether, so far as mere record is concerned, this season stands among the best of the Club. Twenty-eight goals and twenty-six tries (a better proportion of goals than has been the case for many years past) were obtained against only two goals and nine tries. The next season was not such a good one. Though a point less was scored against the club four defeats were sustained, two of these at the hands of Moseley, who thus had ample revenge for the reverses of the previous season. Newport again appeared on the fixture card, and administered one of the defeats, the fourth being received on the Cheltenham College ground. T. G. Smith made his first appearance this year. In the opening match of the next year we notice that the present captain of the XV, distinguished himself by scoring for the Colts of the city, but he does not appear in the First XV till two seasons later. Fourteen matches were won in this season of 1881-82, Newport being beaten twice, but Cheltenham College (two), the Irish Rovers, Clifton, and Moseley gave the teams five defeats. Worcester were badly beaten in the first match, and the entry in the score book, when the return should have been played, is "Not played: Worcester farked."

In the following year matches with such teams as Stroud, Newent, Worcester, and Cheltenham White Cross disappeared from the fixture card, and matches were only played with the strongest teams in the district (Clifton, R.A.C., Swindon Rangers, etc.) and Cardiff and Newport. Notwithstanding these facts, however, the club gained the celebrated unbroken record. Newport, Swindon Rangers, and Cardiff made draws, but they each received one beating in the course of the season at Gloucester's hands. H. E. Taylor and G. Coates were first associated in this season, Taylor having become an acquisition a year previously, which was also the last of Brown's captaincy. In the following season H. J. Boughton led the city men through a very successful season, only two defeats being registered (Cheltenham College and Newport). This was the year in which the bad feeling engendered between Gloucester and Newport came to a climax. The first match was played at the latter town and resulted in a victory for Gloucester by a goal to two tries. Every point was, however, disputed, and the result was therefore most unsatisfactory. In the return at Gloucester the hon. sec. of the Rugby Union refereed, and Newport won by a try to nil. Perhaps Mr. Rowland Hill will remember that Gloucester had not the bad manners to question the decision on that occasion. Swansea was also played this year and beaten by three tries to nil. Another red-letter day this season was Boxing Day, 1883. The first of those grand gentlemanly contests between the city men and London teams then took place. Mr. R. James, mainly through the efforts of ex-captain Brown, brought down a strong team, including Stoddart, and after a closely contested game Gloucester won by a try obtained by Bagwell. The day was made the occasion of a gratifying testimonial to Mr. J. F. Brown. Some £60 had been voluntarily subscribed, and a handsome gold watch and chain were presented to Mr. Brown. Mr. W. C. Lucy made the presentation in front of the Spa Pump Room and the proceedings were marked with the greatest enthusiasm. Although Gloucester were beaten twice in this season, a record was made in the scoring line. The total, 21 goals, 62 tries, which stood to the club's credit, has hardly been surpassed, so far as crossing the line is concerned, whilst the smallness of the opponents' combined scores (2 goals, three tries) has never been equalled.

In the following year there was a sad falling off. Seven defeats were suffered; only 16 goals and 16 tries were scored for, and as many as 13 goals and 7 tries were notched against the team. The defeats were administered by Cardiff (2), Newport (2), Clifton, Swindon Rangers, and R.A.C. (the first for many years). The only time the team did justice to their old reputation was when led by J. F. Brown for the second time against R. James's combination. In the next season the record was not so bad, three defeats only being sustained. Cardiff was, however, the only Welsh team played, and it was then responsible for two of the defeats. The seasons '86-7 and '87-8 were of a very mediocre character, seven and six losses being registered respectively, but in '88-9 the club awoke to its old reputation, and only suffered defeat three times. Swansea beat the City XV by a try, at Swansea, but at the end of the season Gloucester had an ample revenge, defeating the All Whites by three goals and two tries to a try. Gloucester was very unfortunate in the two Llanelly matches. Six of the regular men were away in the first match, which was lost by a try only, and in the return a try was obtained by both sides, and the "tinplaters" won by the place-kick. The ever-friendly rivalry between Gloucester and Cardiff ran to its highest pitch in this same season. Three matches were played with out a victory being scored on either side, and then in the fourth (the finest match we ever remember seeing) Gloucester finally won, though the game was anybody's right up to time. There was, however, a lamentable falling away in the following year. No less than three defeats were suffered at Cardiff's hands. Llanelly and Swansea each administered

a beating, and the three matches with Northern clubs, Huddersfield, Swinton, and Wigan (the last two in the North) all ended disastrously. The club was up again, however, in the last season. Its record is so fresh in the memory of all that we need only remark that, despite the two defeats, it is considered the most brilliant ever produced by the club.

We had hoped to be able to give a record of Gloucester's wins, losses, and scores from the commencement, but can only give them in reference to the last twelve seasons (since 1879-80). During this time the club has played 229 matches. Of these 156 have been won, 24 drawn, and 49 lost - truly a magnificent record. The record of goals and tries is perhaps more astounding. For Gloucester 256 goals and 407 tries have been obtained in these twelve years, and for the opposing clubs only 64 goals and 118 tries - exactly one-fourth the number of goals and little more than one-fourth the number of tries. We should have liked to have treated upon the characteristics of the Gloucester play during the history of the club, but space forbids, and we must content ourselves with very few. The style of play generally has very much changed in the 18 years of the club's existence, but we can fairly claim for it that it has largely set the fashion in these changes. It is a matter of notoriety that Gloucester has taught all whom it has met the value of the passing game; but the Welshmen are generally credited as being the first to play seven men behind the scrum. Gloucester, however, played seven behind as may as 12 years ago. Originally there were played two full backs, one three-quarter, and two halves. Then two men were played in each of these positions, and then one back, three three-quarters, and three halves (practically the same as the present system) were tried for a time.

The history of the club would not be complete without some reference to those players who have been associated with its ups and downs, however brief. The reference must, however, be brief indeed. Of the early players we have already spoken, and coming to 1879-80 we find that J. F. Brown, H. J. Berry, J. Fisher, J. Bennett, W. Snushall, H. J. Boughton, J. W. Bailey, P. B. Cooke, G. J. Dewey, and J. F. Grimes were the most notable of those associated with the victories of that season. In the following season H. J. Berry played regularly as full-back; Boughton and R. L. Grist were the three-quarters, W. A. Boughton W. Snushall, and W. F. Evans being the halves; T. G. Smith appearing for the first time among the forwards. In 1881-2, H. E. Taylor, P. C. Adams, and H. V. Jones appeared among the backs. Coates contributed in no small degree to the success of the 1882-3 season, and those who were associated with the play in the forward division were Bailey, Brown, Cooke, Dewey, Fream, Sloman, Smith, and Sanders. In 1883-4 Berry played for some time, but his brilliant career as a footballer was brought to a close by the injury to his knee. There were many changes in the back division during this year. H. E. Taylor, Coates, Cromwell; H. Taylor, Coates, H. J. Boughton; Taylor, Coates, and Bagwell playing at different times as the trio of three-quarters. H. V. Jones and W. A. Boughton were the regular halves, the third being J. F. Brown in the early part of the season, and Bagwell later on. Cromwell also played as full back, but Berry's place was eventually taken by H.E. Cadenne. There were very few changes behind the scrum in 1884-85, but in 1885-86 Oswell appeared at full-back, Cadenne going half, and Jones three-quarter. H. J. Boughton had relinquished the captaincy at the end of the former season and T. G. Smith had succeeded. Urquhart's short but brilliant career as a member of the club occurred at the end of this season. In 1886-7 Ball and Bagwell became associated at half; and Stoddart and C. E. Brown were also requisitioned in the back division. In the next season A. F. Hughes appeared as three-quarter back, soon to supersede Oswell at

back, and it was in this season that Taylor, Bagwell, and Coates played so well together. In 1888-9 George appeared at half, and R. Grist took a place on the wing. In the following season Gloucester were poorly represented at three-quarters, but last year W. H. Taylor, T. B. Powell, T. Bagwell, and W. Jackson brought back to the club its old reputation. We necessarily associate the doings of the past with the backs, but in justice to the forwards, whose changes have been too numerous to record, it must be said that the success of the back division must always rely upon the excellence of the forward play.

There is one incident in the history of the club which must not be omitted at this juncture, when several kindred clubs are fearing a turn-out from the Spa. Towards the end of the season of 1878-79 the club, in the hopes of filling their coffers, played a match by the electric-light. There were four lights, at least, there ought to have been four, but one failed entirely, and one of the others was very uncertain. The crowds did a great deal of damage to the shrubs and walks and the Corporation gave the Club notice to quit, and simply ordered that no more matches should be played. The few remaining matches (all by the second team, we believe) were played on the Dean's Walk ground; but the Club bided its time. A petition was got up, signed by 3,000 citizens, and presented to the Corporation on Barton Fair day. The result was that the Council unanimously voted to allow the Club to again enter into possession, and there the club remained unmolested till tuned out by the Cricket Club this Spring, the circumstances in connection with which there is no need for us to repeat. It only remains to be said that the Club is now established in a permanent home and opens its new ground to-morrow with the rosiest prospects for the future.

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In the season of 1890-1 about Christmas time, a very severe frost set in which continued, for several weeks, with unabated vigour, and Footballers everywhere were frozen out. The Executive of the Gloucester Club, however, with an enthusiasm, more to be commended for its earnestness than its advisability, took drastic measures to keep the already hardly used turf at the Spa fit for play. Many tons of salt were scattered on the surface of the ground, and the Committee had the satisfaction of bringing off its Programme, as originally arranged, but at the cost of the absolute ruin of the ground, which instead of a piece of pasture land assumed, as soon as the frost gave, the appearance of a newly ploughed piece of arable. For the purposes of Cricket the ground was almost entirely spoilt, and the Cricket Club had 1600 square yards in the centre of the field dug up and planted with grass seed. The outcome of this state of things was the following correspondence between Messrs. A. W. Vears and H. J. Boughton, both ardent supporters of Cricket and Football.

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THE SPA CRICKET FIELD.

A CRITICAL STATE OF AFFAIRS.

We gladly accede to a request to give publicity to the following correspondence which has passed between Messrs. A. W. Vears and H. J. Boughton:-

My Dear Boughton, -

Referring again to our several conversations respecting the present condition of the Spa field, I am strongly of an opinion that we should at once call together a representative body of the various clubs connected with the Spa, or say. If you like, the full committees of the various clubs, and discuss the situation.

We have now undoubtedly arrived at a climax. The Cricket Club or the Football Club must go. Personally I much regret this, and very much wish the field was a bit bigger so that we could avoid playing football on the cricket pitch, and that the two clubs might go hand in hand on the same field. But this is impossible, and we must face the inevitable. It would be manifestly unfair, looking at it from a football point of view, if the Cricket Club, who are tenants of the ground, were to give the Football Club notice farther on in the summer, or just before the commencement of the football season. That, I think, is a great reason why action should be taken at once.

It is easy enough to point out many reasons why the Football Club should have a ground of their own. I maintain it is to their direct interest to secure a ground over which they would have entire control; and that they can never have on the Spa. It is quite possible public opinion will be in favour of football being continued on the Spa, because the Gloucester public have been very much spoiled by having such a central ground, and would probably be a bit horrified at first at having to go, say half a mile to the football ground. But all the real supporters of the game would soon get over this feeling in the knowledge of the fact that a properly enclosed ground is necessary for the future welfare and prospects of the club. Football has become such an institution in Gloucester that I question if it would not be well, after the committees have met, to invite a sort of public meeting to consider the matter. Someone must take the initiative, so I address this letter to you with full permission to make what use of it you like, together with your reply.

Faithfully yours,

A. W. VEARS.

25 Brunswick Square, May 8th, 1891.

My Dear Vears,-

I am in receipt of your letter of the 8th inst., but absence from home has prevented my replying to it before to-day.

I may begin by expressing my entire accord with its contents, and I do not see any better way of solving the difficulty we are in than by a joint meeting of the two committees. I understand from Mr. Smith that a Cricket Committee has been summoned for to-morrow (Tuesday) night for the purpose of discussing the state of the field, when, I take it, the matter will be thoroughly thrashed out from a cricket point of view, and suggestions made for further consideration by the joint meeting, which might be held in the early part of next week.

I will, for a few moments, refer to the ground as a cricketer, and, in doing so, I say unhesitatingly it has been absolutely ruined by football, and can never be of any real use again until it has been re-turfed, whilst it must be plain to everyone that if it were re-turfed now the new turf would be cut up irretrievably the very first time football was played on it. It is useless attempting to disguise the fact that there can be but little probability of the Gloucestershire v. Surrey match being played here in August, and if we lose this match Gloucester may well bid good-bye to county cricket for ever. I am, and have always been, averse to taking a pessimistic view of things, but I really see little prospect of bringing off all our own first and second XI matches this year.

Now, as regards the Football Club, I feel with you for that it would be unfair and - having regard to the cordial relations which have hitherto existed between the Cricket and Football Clubs - unsportsmanlike in the extreme to delay giving the club notice to quit a day longer than we can possibly help; and I even go farther than this, and say that seeing how popular the winter game is with the citizens, we ought not to give such a notice unless we can find a suitable field elsewhere upon which the Football Club can play. A ground over which the Football Club would have entire control all the year round would be of great advantage to them, and if once procured - as it might be by a very small pecuniary sacrifice on the part of the thousands interested - it would, I am sanguine enough to believe, be a source of profit to those who found the sinews of war.

I gather from the last sentence in your letter that you anticipate my thinking it worth while to publish it, together with my reply, and this I will do in the hope that it may lead to useful suggestions being made by some of the many readers of the Citizen who take an interest in two of the best games every played by Englishmen.

Yours very truly,

HUBERT J. BOUGHTON

Linden Grove, May 11th, 1891.

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This correspondence initiated Meetings of both the Cricket and Football Clubs, and a small Sub-Committee of the latter body was appointed to endeavour to secure a suitable field.

Amongst several that were considered were

- (1) A Field in Sheephouse Road belonging to Mr. H. J. Cullis, which was available on very easy terms.
- (2) Buddings Field - which would have answered the purpose but was not available, the owner being adverse to the game.
- (3) A Field adjoining Bristol road - which, it was decided was impracticable on the ground of expense in laying out and draining.
- (4) The Castle Grim Ground which belonged to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but upon which Mr. A. V. Hatton held a Lease, and which he had an option to purchase.

When the Committee were in a position to submit Numbers 1 and 4 to the considerations of the members, a General Meeting was held at Goddard's Rooms, at which a very large majority decided that The Castle Grim Ground was the most suitable.

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Gloucester Football Club

The change of Ground

A General Meeting of the members of the Gloucester Football Club was held at the Northgate Assembly Rooms on Wednesday evening.

Mr. A. W. Vears took the chair, and among those present were:- Messrs. H. J. Boughton, T. G. Smith, hon. sec., C. E. Brown, J. W. Goddard, H. W. Bennett, H. Jones, J. Mills, A. J. Barnes, A. H. Dancey, L. J. Manning, J. Clark, C. Gough, H. G. Brown, T. Bagwell (Captain), H. W. Grimes, H. J. Mansfield, N. Phelps, W. C. Bailey, E. Pickford, H. White, Roach, H. J. Berry, C. H. Dancey, L. G. Simpson and many others.

The Chairman said the Committee instructed Mr. Boughton and himself to get particulars of any grounds that were available for the purpose of a new Football ground, and they reported to the Committee from time to time the result of their investigations. They all knew the circumstances under which it became necessary for them to seek a new ground, and it depended a great deal on what they did that night, as to whether they would be in readiness for next season. He asked Mr. Boughton to expound the schemes which were open to the Club, consisting of three Grounds, one at Sheephouse Road, one at Castle Grim, Kingsholm, and one at the bottom of Theresa Place, Bristol Road.

Mr. H. J. Boughton, who was received with applause, said that they had during the last 6 weeks been over a great many sites, but only three Grounds remained which they could

place before the Meeting. He proceeded to mention several grounds which they had visited, or respecting which they had made enquiries but which had not been available for various reasons. He mentioned amongst these what was known as Hanmans land in Howard Street, the ground at Alma Place, Bristol Road, Buddings Field, a field belonging to Mr. Gould adjoining the latter, and Paradise Field. One of these sites which were available was the piece of land in Sheephouse road, and he proceeded to explain the particulars of that Ground first. He had a Plan of the site which he exhibited to the Meeting, and explained that the space allotted to the actual playing enclosure was 110 yards by 75. It stood some 70 yards back from Sheephouse Road, and a Road up to the main entrance would be shortly completed, whilst another entrance would be made, so that in every way the site itself was highly suitable. It would cost £35 or £40 to level it, and though he was requested not to make the price public that night, it would be very much cheaper than any other Ground. Mr. Cullis, who was the owner of the land, was willing to let the whole of the purchase money stay on the land for two years, at 3¾ per cent. As to distance, it would be two thirds of a mile on foot from the Wagon Works, and it would be rather more than two thirds of a mile to drive from the Tram terminus. If they adopted the plan, which they hoped to do, and use the Baths as their dressing rooms, teams would be able to be driven there from the Station, and the Gloucester Team also meeting there, all would be driven together to the Ground, delays owing to absence of home men being thus avoided. There would be ample means for spectators to get out to the Matches at a very small cost, and compared with other places, a number of which he enumerated, the distance would not be great. He read a letter received from Mr. Cullis, in which some details were set forth, and stated that they would require to fence the site all round, which for a wooden fence, some seven feet high, would cost £175, they would have to spend £50 in levelling, and £250 in erecting Grand Stand etc. or £450, or £500, independently of the price of the Ground.

He then dealt with the next scheme, which had only very recently been offered them in its present complete state. It was at Castle Grim, Kingsholm, the owner Mr. Hatton having made them an offer of the whole of the land, which was just over 7 acres, and extended from Worcester Street to Deans Walk, and from St. Marks Street to the ditch at the opposite end of the land. They would have to play for the first year on one side of the land, on the piece known as the old College Ground, which would be large enough to play on. After that they would be able to take down the house in the middle (at present let at £35 a year) and have the whole of the seven acres to themselves. He gave the number of square yards fronting Worcester Street and Deans Walk, which might be sold for building purposes, and would perhaps realise £2000. The price of the land was £4400, which amounted to about 2s 6d per yard, and if they floated a Company to acquire the Ground Mr. Hatton was prepared to take £100 worth of shares. Then after considering the merits of the site the question arose as to how they were to get the money. Several gentlemen whom he had seen relative to the matter had promised to subscribe materially forwards the shares if a Company were floated. They would want about £2500 subscribed, as they could raise £3000 at least by Mortgage on the land. The Company would do everything connected with the Ground, and for that the Company would require a large slice of the Club's gate money - he could not put it at less than 40 per cent. If they sold land they would be able to pay off some of the Mortgage, and thus reduce their annual payment for interest. With regard to this scheme he thought it might do done if all the Football Club's supporters came forward to take up shares, though the Committee had always advocated that the Club should be the owners of whatever Ground they got rather than it being

in the hands of a Company, who let it to the Club at a rent. It seemed to him much more satisfactory that the Club should be the owners themselves, because there must always be to a certain extent antagonistic interests. With regard to the Kingsholm scheme he admitted that he was afraid it was too gigantic for them as a Club.

The other site was the land in Bristol Road adjoining Ashbee's Mill, which could be secured to the extent of 140 yards, by 120 yards, for £3100. Altogether the cost of this ground would be about £3340, and the frontage land here also might be sold. He regarded that also as too big a scheme for the Club to undertake, and it rested between going to Sheepphouse Road, and being owners themselves, and to one of the others, and renting under a Company. In conclusion, Mr. Boughton said they could get the Sheepphouse Road ground, land and all for something like £1500. (Applause).

A long, and interesting discussion followed, and Mr. H. W. Grimes after ascertaining from Mr. Boughton that if the Company were floated to purchase the ground the Club would probably have to pay say something like 40 per cent of the gate money to constitute their Dividend and pay working expenses etc. but that the ultimate object would of course be to get the ground into the hands of the Club itself, suggested that it would not be wise on their part to enter into any arrangements with a Company which would deprive them of the profits which an enclosed ground would undoubtedly produce. He thought that the Club itself might work the thing, and raise the money by debentures, which should be paid off at a certain stated premium. Thus the Club would get the benefit of the profits themselves.

The Chairman said that might be a better scheme than the one they had thought out, and could be considered when they came to details, if the Kingsholm ground was selected. Whether it was the Club itself, or a Company outside the Club, that did it, it would be the same Gentlemen who would take the shares. In answer to a question, he expressed his belief that if the Club itself started a limited liability Company the Rugby Union would regard it as a money making affair, and would look upon all connected with it as professionals.

A great many opinions were expressed on the relative merits of the two grounds, the Theresa Street ground never receiving a moments consideration, the vast majority of those opinions being very strongly in favour of the more central site.

Mr. Pickford thought the Sheepphouse Road scheme the best, because it was a question of paying one pound for the Kingsholm site, and five shillings for the other. He believed the scheme too big for them to undertake.

A member, in reply to Mr. Pickford, asked that gentleman whether he would rather pay five shillings a week for a shop in Sheepphouse road, than one pound a week for one in Eastgate Street, or in Worcester Street (Laughter). It was purely a business matter, and should be looked at from a business point of view.

Mr. Boughton answering a question said if the Castle Grim Estate were procured it would undoubtedly be an Athletic Ground, and they should utilise it in every possible way to raise money during the summer months.

A number of speakers expressed the belief that to go to Sheepphouse Road would mean a great falling off in the attendances, and one member anticipated the time, at an early date, if that course were adopted, when there would be no Football Club in existence at Gloucester.

The Chairman answered an enquirer with the avowal that it was not true that Association Football would be played on the Spa in future.

The matter was at length brought to a point by Mr. Bennett proposing a Resolution, which, at the suggestion of Mr. Grimes, he amended to read as follows; "That this meeting is strongly in favour of acquiring, on the best terms possible, the Kingsholm site as an Athletic Ground."

Mr. Phillips seconded and there being no response to a call for any other proposition the Chairman asked all those in favour of the motion to stand, upon which the whole assembly, with the exception of two or three individuals, stood up, and the Resolution was declared carried by an overwhelming majority amidst loud applause.

Mr. Boughton thought it would be well to form an extra Committee, to work in the matter with the Club Committee, in carrying on the financial arrangements, and the following were constituted an additional Committee.

Messrs. H. W. Grimes, C. A. Dancey, T. Gurney, G. Cummings, H. Mansell, L. H. Priday, W. F. Phillips, A. J. Barnes, H. J. Berry, Robinson, L. J. Simpson, ... Newth, and J. Clark.

Mr. Boughton proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Cullis for his generous offer, and for all the trouble and inconvenience he had put himself to in order to meet the Committee, and this being seconded by Mr. W. G. Roberts was carried, a vote of thanks being also accorded to Messrs. Vears and Boughton for the trouble they had gone to in placing the schemes before the members, and also to those who had assisted them, Mr. T. G. Smith being specially mentioned.

The Chairman said several gentlemen had already promised substantial support, and asked those present to give in their names for any number of shares they were prepared to take. He laid stress on the desirability of having as many small Shareholders as possible, and before the Meeting closed promises had been made to the extent of £750.

A letter was read from Mr. S. S. Starr (Treasurer of the Club) who is away recruiting his health, strongly favouring the Kingsholm site.

A hitch occurred however before the Public were invited to subscribe towards the purchase of the Ground, owing to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners refusing to convey the property to Mr. Hatton, on the ground that he had offered it for sale before he had himself entered into a formal Contract. This difficulty was after some correspondence between Messrs. Bretherton, Son, & Boughton, acting for the proposed purchasers, and Messrs. Whitcombe & Gardom, acting for the Commissioners, got over, and subject to the purchase money £4,400 being subscribed for by the local lovers of Football, a provisional Contract to purchase at that sum was entered into with Mr. Hatton.

The Committee and others interested themselves in the matter so well that 1400 shares of £1 in the proposed Company were soon taken up and then the following Prospectus was issued:-

((END OF LONGHAND MANUSCRIPT))

((IN HERE - ATTACHED COPY OF PROSPECTUS DATED 20 JULY 1891))

GLOUCESTER FOOTBALL CLUB

Bell Lane, Gloucester

20th July, 1891.

PROPOSED NEW GROUND

Dear Sir,

An opportunity has arisen of purchasing the Castle Grim Estate, situate at Kingsholm, Gloucester, comprising 7a. 0r. 21p., as a Football and General Athletic Ground for £4,400 (of which sum about £3,000 will be borrowed on Mortgage) and a Limited Liability Company, with a Capital of from £2,500 to £3,000 in Shares of £1 each, is to be formed for the purpose of carrying the scheme into effect.

The property comprises (in addition to the house and buildings in the centre of the ground, which will be pulled down) two houses and a builder's yard fronting Worcester Street, at present bringing in a rental of £39 a year, and which can be sold off without in any way injuring the ground from an Athletic point of view. There will also be a considerable quantity of land, with frontages to Worcester Street and Dean's Walk, which could at any time be sold off for building purposes if thought desirable.

The Ground is in every way adapted for Football, and with a comparatively small outlay can be made ready for play by the beginning of the coming season. It is only eight minutes' walk from the Cross and Railway Stations, and will have two entrances, one from Worcester Street and one from Dean's Walk.

An Agreement has been prepared and is proposed to be entered into between the Company and the Football Club, whereby the former will receive as a rent from the Club one third part of the GROSS ANNUAL INCOME of the Club, such aggregate amount, however, not to exceed in any one year £275, and in addition to this source of income the Company will let the ground for Cricket, Cycling, Athletics, and other objects of similar nature, during the summer months.

The gross income of the Gloucester Football Club last year amounted to £660, and it is estimated that with a ground entirely enclosed, the income will not be less than £1000 during the coming season, especially when taking into consideration the excellent List of Matches which has been arranged; and it is further estimated that with the amount to be received from the Football Club and its income from other sources, the Company will be able to pay to the shareholders a dividend of certainly not less than £5 per cent. per annum.

The Company is not being floated for the purpose of paying large profits, but for securing a permanent and suitable Ground for the use of the Football Club; and it is because of the interest you take in Football, and in the Gloucester Football Club in particular, that we address this Circular to you, in the hope that you may be able to assist the undertaking by subscribing for Shares. We may mention that 1400 shares have already been subscribed for in numbers varying from 1 to 100.

If you are desirous of taking shares, will you kindly fill up and return the annexed form to us at the above address on or before Monday, the 27th day of July, instant.

Yours truly,

HUBERT J. BOUGHTON

A. W. VEARS

P.S. - A Draft of the proposed Agreement between the Football Club and the Company, and a plan of the Property, can be seen at the offices of Messrs. Bretherton, Son, and Boughton, Solicitors, Bell Lane, Gloucester.

To MESSRS. BOUGHTON AND VEARS.

I hereby agree to subscribe for Shares of £1 each in the Company proposed to be formed for the purpose of purchasing and laying out The Castle Grim Estate as a Football and Athletic Ground.

Name (in full).....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Date.....

((END OF ATTACHED COPY OF PROSPECTUS))

((IN HERE - CONTINUATION OF LONGHAND MANUSCRIPT))

From the day that this Circular was posted success was assured, and the Capital required was quickly supplied, and the Company floated with a capital of £4000.

On the 12th August 1891 the Company was duly registered, and records of the subsequent General Meetings will be found in this book.

It is only necessary to mention that the Ground was formally opened, and the first Football Match played, on 10th October 1891 an account of which, and of the subsequent dinner given by the Board of Directors, in conjunction with the Secretary and Solicitor, taken from the Gloucester Standard, is as follows:-

((IN HERE - AFFIXED NEWSPAPER EXTRACT - SOURCE/DATE UNKNOWN))

OPENING OF THE KINGSHOLM ATHLETIC GROUND

GLOUCESTER v. BURTON

The new ground at Kingsholm, known as Castle Grim, which has been acquired and laid out by the Gloucester Athletic Ground Company, at a cost of about £5000, was formally opened on Saturday. It will be remembered that, owing to the damage football caused to the cricket pitches at the Spa, the Football Club received notice to quit from the Cricket Club, who rent the field from the Corporation, and who, in their turn, were in danger of being dismissed by that body, who thought of adding the field to the public park; but that idea has apparently for the present been abandoned, and the notice to determine the tenancy has been withdrawn. The Football Club being thus without a ground, it was decided to float a company for the purchase of the Castle Grim site, and this, though fraught with many difficulties, was successfully accomplished. Though the footballers will be the company's best customers, the ground will also be used for athletics generally, and it is unanimously conceded that, when laid out as contemplated, with pavilions, stands, cycling track, etc., it will be one of the most complete in the kingdom. It is over seven acres in extent, and centrally situated, being on the tramway system, and within five or six minutes' walk of the railway stations and the Cross. The day chosen for the inaugural proceedings was a most unfortunate one. It commenced raining about six o'clock, and a heavy downpour was maintained for several hours, so that the ground had a "christening" both unexpected and unwelcome. This was regrettable from a playing as well as a financial point of view, for the match between Gloucester and Burton had been anticipated with great interest, independent of its association with the change of quarters, and there would have been a tremendous gate had the weather been fine. As it was there was a big attendance, and the sum taken amounted to £46 7s 3d. In addition there are over 700 members of the club, which is already an increase of nearly 150 on last year, and who, of course, were admitted by season ticket. A band was in attendance to enliven the waiting time, and, under the depressing circumstances, this was perhaps a wise provision. Gloucester and

Burton had never previously met, and while Gloucester were of course anxious to win their first match on the new ground, Burton were equally desirous of beating such redoubtable opponents. With these objects in view both clubs were very strongly represented. Gloucester for the first time this season had the services of S. A. Ball, W. H. Taylor, H. V. Page, and A. E. Healing, the two former of whom rumour credited with having retired from the game. Mr. Rowland Hill, hon. sec. of the Rugby Union, specially journeyed from London to officiate as referee. The head-quarters of the Gloucester club have been changed to the Spread Eagle Hotel, and here the teams met and were driven to the ground in breaks, accompanied by the officers and committee of the club. On arrival, the party was met by the directors of the company and Mr. T. Robinson, M.P., and as the whole party walked on to the field of play there was loud cheering. Mr. A. W. Vears, chairman of the board of directors, having handed over to the club officials the ground for the season, Mr. Robinson declared the same open. Preparations were then made for the commencement of the match, and Mr. Robinson set the ball rolling amidst loud cheers. Without attempting any detailed description of the game, it may at once be said that the Gloucesterians showed a continuation of that form which has given their organisation such a high position among the football clubs of the country generally, and the West of England in particular, and secured a brilliant victory by two goals four tries (18 points) to nil. Within seven minutes of the start Henshaw placed the first try to the credit of Gloucester, and before half-time Bagwell, George, and Powell also scored, Jackson kicking two goals. In the second half the Burtonians improved considerably, but they failed to make any impression on the home men, who, on the other hand, put on two more tries, J. Williams and Powell being the scorers. It was an interesting match all through, and, considering the wet state of the ground, a very fast one. The chief features of the game were a magnificent display by Hughes and the grand play of the Gloucester forwards, chief amongst whom were Page, Healing, and J. Williams.

The following were the players: -

Gloucester - A. F. Hughes, back; T. Bagwell, W. Jackson, T. B. Powell, W. H. Taylor, three-quarter backs; S. A. Ball, W. George, half-backs; H. V. Page, A. E. Healing, J. Williams, C. Williams, A. Henshaw, A. Cromwell, T. Collins, and A. Collins, forwards.

Burton - J. P.. Ward, back; G A. Marsden, W. S. Lowe, F. M. Sadler, J. C. Gorton, three-quarter backs; Smith, F. C. Lowe, half-backs; F. Evershed, J. Clitheroe., H. Mayger, W. N. Greenwell, A. Gorton, H. C. Gorton F. Lloyd, and E. Evershed, forwards.

In the evening the directors of the company entertained at dinner at the Spread Eagle Hotel both the teams, the officers and committee of the Gloucester Club, and numerous other friends, besides which many citizens had purchased tickets and were present. Mr. A. Vears presided, and he was supported by Mr. Robinson, M.P., Mr. H. J. Boughton, Councillor Mousell, Mr. Rowland Hill, Mr. A. V. Hatton, Mr. T. Gurney, Mr. G. Cummings, Mr. C. Dancey, Mr. A. Woodward, Mr. T. Bagwell, Mr. W. S. Lowe (Burton captain), Mr. T. G. Smith (hon. sec.), and Mr. S. S. Starr (hon. treasurer).

The bill of fare of the club's new host, Mr. H. C. Grogan, having been unanimously "approved and adopted," the loyal toasts were duly honoured. Then came the opening remarks of the CHAIRMAN, who said that by their presence there they completed the inaugural

ceremony so happily performed by Mr. Robinson, and that he ventured to predict that that day would stand forth in the annals of the athletics of Gloucester as a red-letter day (applause), because when completed the ground would be second to none in the West of England as an athletic and recreation ground. He had heard it suggested that the promoters of the scheme were men of great faith. Perhaps this was true - to a certain extent he hoped it was, because without perfect faith in an undertaking of this kind, or indeed of any kind, nothing could be achieved successfully. He could promise their friendly critics that the directors would leave nothing undone to make the venture a substantial success and to deal with it in a thoroughly comprehensive manner, so as to popularise the ground and make it what he was sure everyone present hoped it would be - the home of all kinds of out door sports and recreation (applause). It was not in their power to command success, but they meant to try and deserve it, and if they did not succeed in pleasing everybody - and assuredly they would not - he would still ask all concerned to "Be to our merits ever kind and to our faults a good deal blind" (applause). The speaker went on to refer to the honour conferred by the presence of the member for the city and of Mr. Rowland Hill, remarking as to the latter that no greater authority upon football existed (hear, hear). He also said that the club were fortunate in meeting such chivalrous opponents and such good exponents of the game as the Burton team. In conclusion he proposed what he called the toast of the evening, "Success to the New Football Ground," and asked Mr. Robinson to first speak to it.

The toast was enthusiastically drunk.

Mr. ROBINSON confessed that he was "not much of a football man," but said he liked to share in the joys of his fellow citizens and sympathise with them in their sorrows. He believed it was in 1874 this club was started, and he had watched for years the increasing popularity of the game. When he was a boy he played football, but it was a very different game to that played now. The game became so popular at the Spa that the club outgrew its quarters there, and owing to the energy of some of the citizens, more particularly the directors of the company, the new ground was provided, and he was surprised to see what had been done in so short a time to bring it into condition. He felt sure the public would back up this pluck and energy, and wished the venture every success. Although the weather had been bad, he thought they might say that the present happy gathering had finished up a successful day. He admired very much the splendid record which the Gloucester club had last year, and the citizens would have to rely on them to maintain the popularity of the game (applause). Though Burton had been unsuccessful, they had played pluckily, and he hoped they would again visit the city. Mr. Robinson went on to refer to the serious accidents sustained by football players, and said he should like to see the game conducted so as to be as free as possible from accident (applause). In conclusion he said the club had done well in the past and that he believed it would do well in the future, and that the ground when complete would be equal to any in this part of the country.

Mr. H. J. Boughton, the warmth of whose reception was another evidence of his popularity, said it gave him great pleasure to speak to the toast, because he had since the establishment of the club played an active part in what he considered the nob's pastime of football (applause). He hoped the ground would be a success - it rested chiefly with the people of Gloucester to make it such. He had been anxious to see the football club leave the Spa field. As a cricketer he maintained that that field was not fit for cricket and football to be played

on at the same time; and there was a much stronger reason - that he believed it would be to the interest of the club to find a home of their own (applause). As his part in securing the new ground had been a humble one ("No"), he hoped the change would be to the interest of football in Gloucester and Gloucester Football Club in particular. He believed their funds would improve, their play would improve, and that they would be in future not only one of the best clubs in the West of England, but he should not be content till he had seen Gloucestershire the leading county and win the county championship. They were within an ace of doing it last year, and he believed that had they played on their own ground they would have made a good fight with the Lancashire team they met at Manchester. He had the pleasure of seeing that match, and it was chiefly owing to the state of the ground, and the fact that their men took the field to a certain extent in a demoralised condition (a laugh) that they lost the game. He hoped to live to see the day when Gloucestershire - and that meant Gloucester, because there was no other first-class Rugby team in the county - would be the premier football county in England. He asked them to stick together, and to stand by the captains of both the city and county teams. And he then believed that success would attend their efforts. Another reason why he was anxious to see Gloucester and Gloucestershire foremost in the football field was that he would like to see some of their men represent England in the international matches. He did not mean to say they had three or four men good enough for this, but he believed that for the past two years they had had a man good enough to represent England in any match in the person of Mr. G. T. Witcomb (applause and a voice: "The finest forward in England"). He was saying nothing as to the way in which the England team was selected, because he believed that with Mr. Rowland Hill as secretary it was selected in the best possible manner, and, as he had said before, he thought it was chiefly Witcomb's fault that he had never played for England, inasmuch as he did not go up to play in the trial match in London. He believed that had he done so he would have been selected, and that it would have been seen what ability he had. He was pleased the ground had been opened so auspiciously, and hoped that for many years it would be the headquarters of the Gloucester Football Club and that it would be the athletic ground of Gloucester.

Mr ALFRED WOODWARD, another of the directors, said he had never played a game of football, but he was an admirer of English sports, and this was why he took a great interest in the Gloucester Football Club, of which he had been a member from its establishment. After expressing a hope that the cricketers would not be turned off the Spa, he congratulated the football club on the successful opening of the ground and Captain Bagwell on winning every point in the opening match (cheers).

Mr. DANCEY and Mr. HATTON also responded. The latter said Mr. Boughton's share in the promotion of the scheme for the new ground had been a leading one, and that he looked upon him as one of the pillars of athletics in Gloucester. As long ago as last March he consulted Mr. Boughton as to whether, if he bought the ground, he would be able to sell it, and Mr. Boughton said he had no doubt a company would be formed for its purchase. On that he took courage and made a bid for it, and he thanked Mr. Boughton for the way in which he kept his confidence during the negotiations, to which was due the purchase of the ground. He was pleased the scheme had been carried out, because during the 27 years he had been in Gloucester there had always been a complaint that there had been nothing in the way of amusement got up for holidays, and he was looking forward to the time when there would be some successful holiday gatherings on the new ground.

The CHAIRMAN at this point said he thought it might fairly be hoped that some day or another the ground would be a remunerative investment for the shareholders.

Mr. BAGWELL, the Gloucester captain, then proposed the health of the Burton team. He said it was the first time Gloucester had played Burton, and that it was a pleasant and quiet game. He thought this was in great measure due to having a good referee, for it was not very often that they got a good referee, especially when they got into Wales.

The toast was honoured with football warmth, the "jolly good fellow" business being most vociferous.

Mr. LOWE, the Burton captain, responded. He thanked the company directorate for their hospitality, said his team had enjoyed themselves much, congratulated the Gloucester team on their splendid ground, wished them success, etc., etc., and concluded by proposing the health of the Gloucester team.

The Burton team having been assured with equal heartiness that they too were "jolly good fellows,"

Mr. T. G. SMITH proposed the health of the referee (applause), and said that so long as he remained secretary of the Rugby Union they might rest assured the honour and integrity of the game would be maintained. Now that they had a suitable ground he hoped Mr. Hill would see fit to make the fact known to the authorities and that a North and South match might be played here (a voice: "International").

Mr. ROWLAND HILL, who ought to and evidently did feel his extremely kind reception, said he took it from this that they had confidence in the body with which he had the honour to be connected (applause). To find that even in these troublous days of football the Rugby Union had the confidence of these important people in the West of England was a very great satisfaction and very great assistance to them. He was not quite a stranger to Gloucester. It had been his fortunate lot to see the enthusiasm of the Gloucester people in connection with football, and also to see the very high standard of football play that their team had attained to. It was some years ago that he, strongly pressed by his friend on the right (Mr. Boughton), first had the privilege of coming to the city. He was delighted when he arrived here on this occasion to see some of the old faces which it was his pleasure to see on the previous occasion, and he was convinced that if anything was likely to create success it was a kindly, forbearing, courteous consideration for old servants (hear hear); and when old servants were well treated, as a rule the organizations which they governed were those which achieved success. He had been delighted to see the worthy member for the city taking part in his first football match, and must congratulate him on being a very fine place kick (laughter). He was sorry the Burton team protested against the worthy member playing for Gloucester, because if they were gainers thereby he was a loser, as no doubt he would otherwise have seen a most scientific exposition of the game (laughter). He strongly reciprocated one remark he made - that nothing was more likely to damage the game in the eyes of parents than the fact that they were able to say that accidents happened. He admitted that accidents were bound to arise in a game which brought out the very highest qualities of physical athletics, but the executive did everything they could

to minimise accidents. They had passed the most stringent regulations to put down rough play. They had a body of referees who were determined that wherever they saw rough play they would interpose and turn the player off the field (applause). If this were done with an iron hand by the referees he thought there could really be no serious accident. Rough and brutal play they would always offer a most determined opposition to, and he was delighted to say that in the match that day he saw not a sign of rough or brutal play (loud applause). He thought the game was played in accordance with the best traditions of English sport - both sides extremely keen to win, but the one that lost recognising that unfair play did not help to victory, and there was nothing more noble in the whole field of sport than for the defeated side to show they could accept defeat properly (applause). Whilst he most heartily congratulated the Gloucester team on their play, and had confidence after seeing them that they would carry on the best traditions of the club, and if possible be more successful in the future than they had been in the past, he would refer to a remark - he thought a perfectly fair one - that possibly Witcomb ought to have got into the greater team (applause). He admitted that his name was brought before the executive, but he thought his hearers would recognise that it was a work of extreme difficulty to select men from the whole of England without a fair opportunity of seeing them (hear, hear). From all quarters of England they were continually being told that in this or that parish or town there was a wonderful player. Several of the executive tried, by travelling a good deal over England, to find out who were the good players, and if gentlemen would not assist them by playing in the important trial matches arranged under the auspices and management of his committee, it placed them in a very difficult position in selecting teams (hear, hear). In three weeks time, he was pleased to say, an important match would be played in Gloucester - the West of England would play the Midland district here. It would be a match played under the auspices of the Rugby Union committee, and several members of the committee would make a point of coming down to see the play, and he hoped those who had authority either in the Midlands or the West would do everything they could to get the most thoroughly representative teams. He again thanked the Gloucester club for the kind treatment he had experienced that day. He assured his hearers that at times he felt inclined to say his day's work was over in connection with football, because he had had a fairly good innings, but the kindness and courtesy and confidence he had received in all parts of England made him cling on to a game to which he was passionately attached (loud applause).

The Burton team then left amid cheers to catch their train.

Mr. BOUGHTON proposed a vote of thanks to the following for their voluntary services:- Mr. Kilminster and his band, Mr. Simmonds for the breaks, Mr. Conway Jones for the bunting, Mr. Pickford for decorating the goal posts, and Mr. Wood for the gift of the football.

Messrs. KILMINSTER, JONES, and PICKFORD duly responded.

Mr. T. GURNEY proposed the health of the treasurer, Mr. S. S. Starr, who appropriately acknowledged the compliment and proposed the health of Mr. Boughton.

Mr. GEORGE CUMMINGS submitted the health of the chairman, who he said was a thorough good sportsman.

The last toast was "The Press," and the proceedings, which had been most harmonious and enjoyable, concluded with "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Save the Queen."

((END OF AFFIXED NEWSPAPER EXTRACT))