**THE LINE-UPS**

**WEALDSTONE**
- ROYAL BLUE & WHITE
- Jonathan North
- Rhys Tyler
- Freddie Grant
- Connor Stevens
- Jerome Okimo (c)
- Godfrey Poku
- Tarryn Allarakhia
- Jeffrey Monakana
- Dave Pratt
- Daniel Green
- Jake Sheppard
- Christian Smith
- Stefan Brown
- Simon Mensah
- Femi Azeez
- James Clark
- Dylan Paterson

**HEMEL HEMPSTED**
- GREEN & BLACK
- Laurie Walker
- Joe Howe
- Kyle Connolly
- Jordan Parkes (c)
- Jacques Kpohomouh
- Tom Hamblin
- Kieran Monlouis
- Kavan Cotter
- Arel Amu
- Sanchez-Watt
- Daniel Rowe
- Darren Ward
- Mark Randall
- Jason Williams
- Jack Snelus
- Danny Boness

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Our play-off dreams were shattered by Dulwich Hamlet at the Vale last Saturday - and the unlucky Jeffrey Monakana failed to beat keeper Preston Edwards just when we needed an early goal.

**PICTURE:** Dan Finill (dfinillphotography)

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**REFEREE** Matty Buonnassisi  **ASSISTANTS**
- Mark Stevens and Lee Jessup

**MATCH SPONSORS**
- 1) The Weiner Family, and
- 2) SFC Wealdstone 40th Anniversary

**BALL DONOR** The Franklins

**NEXT HOME GAME** SEE YOU NEXT SEASON!
I would like to extend a warm welcome to our visitors from Hemel Hempstead Town, Manager Joe Deeney, his back room team, players and supporters.

Tradition dictates that I take this opportunity to thank all of those that have helped bring you our matchday programme this season. Tradition over the last seven seasons that I have been at the wheel also dictates that I miss someone out… so sorry in advance.

I will start with the core team of Messrs Tim Parks, Martin Read and Martin Lacey. It would quite simply not be possible to produce a programme of this standard without the incredible work and dedication of these guys, so a personal massive thanks to you all.

Thanks also to everyone who contributes content over the course of the season as articles, reports, pictures or statistics….. Content is King. Sud, Fingers, Guv, Jamie, Dom, Roger, Peter, Matthew, Steve, Attic, Dec, Dan, Nicole and all of the Supporters Club contributors.

Thank you to everyone who thanks me personally throughout the year or congratulates me on awards won (we are still the National League South Programme of the Year you know). As you can see this is a team production and I accept your praise on behalf of us all.

Finally a huge thank you to ‘The Friends of Wealdstone’ and Ruislip Social Club who financially dug us out of a disastrous IT black hole earlier in the year and without whom you genuinely wouldn’t be reading this programme.

Just time for some final reminders to grab your Early Bird Season Ticket bargains and to keep an eye on our social media channels for some exciting pre-season friendlies.

Enjoy your summer and see you all next season.

Mark

Match Sponsor The Weiner Family

Not withstanding Oli and Matthew being avid Arsenal supporters and season ticket holders, they have adopted Wealdstone FC as their second team and look forward to cheering The Stones on this afternoon. Whilst, Grosvenor Vale might not have all the creature comforts of The Emirates, the Weiner’s love being that much closer to the action and the intense atmosphere unique to The Stones’ home games. Oli will be wearing his replica shirt with pride this afternoon.

Match Sponsor SFC Wealdstone

Ball Donors The Franklins & Mascot Joe Franklin

Joe is 8 years old and is in Year 3 at Chalfont St Giles Village School. He started supporting The Stones last season after seeing his Grandad, Nigel, feature in the matchday programme. He loves to watch them home and away keeping a record of all the grounds he has visited. His favourite Stones player is Freddie Grant.

If he isn’t supporting the Stones he likes to follow The Arsenal and play Fortnite.

He plays for Chalfont Saints U/8’s and attends the Wycombe Wanderers Development Centre. His favourite position is Centre Midfield and likes a go on goal occasionally.
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Rory Fitzgerald
Interim Vice Chairman
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Dominic Whyley, Nick Symmons, Jon Pettifer
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MAJOR HONOURS SINCE 1950
LEAGUE TITLES
1951 / 1952 Athenian League
1973 / 1974 Southern League Division One South
1981 / 1982 Southern League Southern Division
1981 / 1982 Southern League Championship
1984 / 1985 National League Premier (Gola League)
1996 / 1997 Isthmian League Division Three
2013 / 2014 Isthmian League Premier Division
NATIONAL CUPS
1965 / 1966 FA Amateur Cup
1984 / 1985 FA Trophy
LEAGUE CUPS
1981 / 1982 Southern League Cup
MIDDLESEX COUNTY CUPS
1958 / 1959 Senior Cup
1962 / 1963 Senior Cup
1964 / 1965 Senior Cup
1967 / 1968 Senior Cup
1984 / 1985 Senior Cup
2003 / 2004 Charity Cup
2010 / 2011 Charity Cup
NON TITLE-WINNING PROMOTIONS
1997 / 1998 Isthmian League Division 2 (3rd)
1998 / 1999 Isthmian League Division 1 (3rd,annulled)
2003 / 2004 Isthmian League Premier Division

GROUND REGULATIONS
People are only allowed entry to The Vale on match days subject to the following rules and regulations:
1) The club reserves the right to eject from the ground any person who is considered to have committed any of the following acts:
   • Entering the ground through any means other than through the turnstiles or entrances
   • Entering the field of play before, during or after a game without prior authorisation
   • Being drunk, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs • Using violence of any nature
   • Carrying items which may be considered a danger to others, including cans, bottles, or glasses containing alcoholic beverages
   • Throwing any article onto the field of play • Climbing floodlight pylons, fences, stands or any structure or building
   • Using obscene or bad language likely to cause offence to others • Hitting the side or back panels of the Bulla stand
2) No spectator ball games.
3) The consumption of alcoholic drinks is permitted INSIDE the social club bar, garden and boardroom areas.
4) Vehicles parked on the Grosvenor Vale site are at the owners’ risk.
5) Wealdstone Football Club supports the FA’s campaign on pyrotechnics (e.g. flares and smoke bombs). Any misuse of such items in and around the Ground will result in those responsible being asked to leave the ground and, in line with football authority guidance, may result in a report to the Police, potential prosecution and a ban from the Club of up to three years.

The legal name of Wealdstone Football Club is Wealdstone Football Club (2000) Ltd (Registered Number 03953962). Shares in excess of 10% are held by Peter Marsden Property Finance Ltd & Wealdstone FC Supporters Club.

Wealdstone FC Board of Directors
A warm welcome to Joe Deeney and his management team, players and officials of Hemel Hempstead Football Club.

Today marks the last game of the season. It seems to have flown by, but we can be proud that as we enter the last game of the season, we very much have everything to play for. Yes, we need a bit of luck but we have to believe that it is possible. We have to take care of what we need to do and not worry about what we can't control. I urge you today to enjoy the day. Create a party atmosphere and back these boys for the 90 minutes as you have every week at The Vale.

Last weekend was full of mixed emotions. The Dulwich game was disappointing, and the feeling afterwards was painful. To then pick ourselves up and produce the display we did at Chelmsford was incredible and the boys yet again just showed the character they have. To have given ourselves a small chance epitomised this squads never say die attitude. The thought of coming to play a game out with nothing riding on it is an experience we’ve only experienced last year and we didn’t want to face that scenario again. This is something we impressed on the boys and they delivered for us on the day.

We would like to thank each and every one of you for your support throughout the season. This is a special club with huge potential and when we all come as one there is no doubt it is one of the best in non-league football. As we look forward, we have a renewed confidence in what we can achieve. Despite the recent uncertainty after some very positive meetings with Rory he has ensured us that he has the welfare of the club at heart and only wants success for Wealdstone. Our job will be to learn from this year, make the required tweaks and continue to progress this club. We should all be excited and believe that we will achieve the success we all want. Never stop believing.

Back to today and we have a local derby so Hemel will not come and roll over here. They will want to finish the season well so we know it will be a tough game. There is no second chance after today so the boys know what they need to do and we are ready to capitalise on any slip ups above us.

Enjoy the game and hopefully we’ll see you for a drink at the awards this evening to celebrate the season.

Bobby and the management team.
Welcome to the last game of the season with us mathematically in with a shout of the play-offs. A win today and a series of favourable results could sneak us into 7th place. However if we miss out, I suspect in the cold light of day, we’ll reflect on this season being an opportunity missed.

Plans are underway for pre-season and we will try and keep everyone informed over the Summer as and when there is news to share about players and the running of the club. The past few months have been especially tough as we looked to close out this season whilst retaining a budget that gave us a chance to make the play-offs, whilst planning forward looking activity which we hope will help the club progress.

The Summer will inevitably see a number of players move on and we thank everyone who has represented us this season for their efforts. I want every player to leave Wealdstone with a good impression and an appreciation of what a great club this is.

There’s lots of speculation about next season’s budget and in the same way we haven’t publicly disclosed our playing budget in previous seasons, there’s no intention of doing so for next season. We will start with a lower budget than was set for this season and consequently will have to use it wisely to be competitive. Bobby is aware of the budget and has had positive conversations with Rory around building for next season. Whilst comparing budgets across clubs in the division is rarely more than supposition, the budget we have will certainly not be ‘peanuts’ and I have every confidence we can over achieve if we all pull together.

There are clearly members of the current squad that we’d like to retain and, in most cases, discussions have started with those players. The nature of football at this level is that we may well lose one or two players that we want to retain. The offers we make will be fair and I believe competitive compared to other clubs at this level, however if a player is offered considerably more money elsewhere then we obviously risk losing them.

I’m personally looking forward to next season and the chance to start with a clean slate. There’s understandably some scepticism about our ability to compete, however one thing I know is that we’ll give ourselves a better chance of succeeding if we all pull together and get behind the Manager, the players and the Board.

I’ve always said that I want Wealdstone Football Club to be the club that every player in the area (and beyond) aspires to join. In my opinion, we have the best ground, the best pitch, the best fans and pay competitive wages. We also have a good track record of players progressing into full-time football – we have something to sell to players.

I also want Wealdstone Football Club to conduct itself in the right way, to have principles and values. How we treat other clubs, how we treat former and current players, respecting opposition fans, players and officials, all those things should be important to us.

Every single member of your Board wants to progress the club, every single one of us wants to be as successful as we can be on the pitch. I, like most other fans, read the forum and Twitter and whilst supporters should absolutely question the Board about the running of the club, and I respect everyone’s right to an opinion, there’s a couple of names unlikely to make it onto my Christmas card list any time soon! It’s easy to peddle an agenda and snipe but I am comfortable in the knowledge that our energies and efforts are being spent in trying to make OUR club better.

As always at this stage of the season, there are too many people to thank individually and collectively and we’re blessed to have such amazing volunteers and such a loyal and passionate fan base. From stewarding, to ground works, the pop-up bar, music gigs, Wembley fan visits, turnstile operators, tannoy announcers, our award winning programme, the brilliant club shop. Golden Goals, our catering, our ever improving social media and great photographers, Fingers!, our boardroom hospitality, away coaches, fundraising events etc. We should be mighty proud to be a part of the Mighty Mighty Stones. This club simply wouldn’t be the club we are without the amazing support and generosity of our fan base.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to everyone for their support this season. I’ve said before and I’ll say it again, this club is special and we have some of the best supporters at our level in the country. We also have a great history and huge potential.

Dominic
ultimately, as the season draws to a close, it will be one that ends with great disappointment as Wealdstone are likely to finish around 10th or 11th, pretty much where we ended the last campaign and lower than the season before. Four seasons in Conference South football have seen some highs and some lows. Our budget for the last two campaigns have been the highest and second highest in our history, so a return that means the play offs haven’t been reached can only be seen in those terms of disappointment.

There was great optimism in August. A number of signings had been made early and the management team had the summer to drill the squad and get their fitness levels to a standard that would hold Wealdstone in good stead throughout the season. Stones started well, with particularly a win over title favourites Woking at the Vale, in front of our largest gates. There were many more concerned about the trap door at the bottom than the play offs. To the immense credit of the management team and the playing staff, 2019 saw the resurrection of our footballing season which went down to the Dulwich and Hampton the week before. Yes, as I write this on the morning of our trip to Chelmsford, we have a faint chance of still getting a play off spot, but it would need the help of Malaysian betting syndicates that even Jeremy Albert wouldn’t bet on for that to happen. I suspect we just ran out of puff in the end. The small squad, reduced to keep in line which what the finances required, stretched too far and the management team were unable to refresh when required, whilst teams around us were able to bring in new players. So what went wrong? I suggest most of us are happy with our defensive line-up and the centre of midfield. You’d have to say our inability to score goals, certainly from the centre forward positions, has had a huge impact. As I am typing this, something has popped into my twitter timeline that sums it up perfectly: “Stones were a goal scoring forward away from getting into the play-offs”. It’s harsh maybe, but pretty much spot on. Bradley Bubb’s injury will not doubt be crucial when the season embers are picked over. Our leading goalscorer in the league has eleven, after which the next has six. You don’t go up with a scoring record so lame. Dulwich and Hampton defeats summed it up perfectly. Early domination, missed chances and then the opposition score and we can’t recover.

There has to be an underlying feeling that the generous largesse of Peter Marsden has been wasted. We may never be in a situation of being so flushed with cash again and what do we have to show for it: a Trophy semi final and a new stand? It seems painful that new and old directors allow us to go one season to a third of what it had been the previous two seasons. Despite this, we carried on over budget! Our form came to town and gave us a footballing lesson.

November saw the start of rumblings around the finances of the club. A meeting called by the board stated that there was a six figure hole in the budget, with our then chairman reducing his investment for the coming season to a third of what it had been the previous two seasons. Despite this, we carried on over budget! Our form on the football field fell away, no doubt affected by the boardroom issues that ultimately saw the chairman asked to stand down, but the players continued to be paid in full and on time. If the second half of November was poor, then December was horrible as we crashed out of the Trophy to lower league Biggleswade and didn’t win a league game all month, scoring a single goal. We were hurtling towards the cliff and there were many more concerned about the trap door at the bottom than the play offs.

To the immense credit of the management team and the playing staff, 2019 saw the resurrection of our footballing season which went down to the Dulwich match before we bowed out, after a similar defeat at lower mid-table Hampton the week before. Yes, as I write this on the morning of our trip to Chelmsford, we have a faint chance of still getting a play off spot, but it would need the help of Malaysian betting syndicates that even Jeremy Albert wouldn’t bet on for that to happen. I suspect we just ran out of puff in the end. The small squad, reduced to keep in line which what the finances required, stretched too far and the management team were unable to refresh when required, whilst teams around us were able to bring in new players. So what went wrong? I suggest most of us are happy with our defensive line-up and the centre of midfield. You’d have to say our inability to score goals, certainly from the centre forward positions, has had a huge impact. As I am typing this, something has popped into my twitter timeline that sums it up perfectly: “Stones were a goal scoring forward away from getting into the play-offs”. It’s harsh maybe, but pretty much spot on. Bradley Bubb’s injury will not doubt be crucial when the season embers are picked over. Our leading goalscorer in the league has eleven, after which the next has six. You don’t go up with a scoring record so lame. Dulwich and Hampton defeats summed it up perfectly. Early domination, missed chances and then the opposition score and we can’t recover.

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To the immense credit of the management team and the playing staff, 2019 saw the resurrection of our footballing season which went down to the Dulwich
Greetings from the Vale and here we are bringing the curtain down on yet another season (or not depending on the results today!). I know this, IF we sneak into the play offs nobody will want to play us, least of all Chelmsford and Woking but it starts with beating Hemel who will be no pushovers today.

Since the turn of the year, it’s been a period of change and much greater stability throughout the club which has been long overdue. Funny how that has translated so well onto the pitch with a smaller group of players and tighter budget controls!

As a club we now have an excellent man at the helm in Rory and a more settled board to take the club forward.

There will be more announcements in due course to come in the coming weeks as the club secures the right deals on player recruitment, new sponsors and other outside investment.

I can assure all of you that huge strides are being made behind the scenes to give Bobby a decent budget to work with for the next campaign. We all want the same things as you to put the best team out on the pitch and glean some silverware.

One thing for sure is this board will never sanction the profligate spending that was allowed to happen with some stupendous and ill thought out contracts dished out to some players which came close to putting the club into serious financial measures. This is NOT the fault of any player mind.

We as a club have always honoured our contracts to players and always will do.

Thankfully from the swift intervention of Rory, Dominic and Nick Symmons - these gentlemen have had to cover a massive shortfall from the previous regime of nigh on £100K just to get us to where we are now otherwise we would be in trouble. I thank them enormously and so should you.

Bear in mind, this is after you take into account our £180K reserves built up in the social club over a ten year period that have largely wasted in side 2 years and now find ourselves down to a few thousand pounds.

Leo, Karen, James and all the staff do an amazing job at Ruislip Social Club and are already making inroads to replenishing those coffers since the turn of the year but this will take time over and above the increasing contributions it already makes to the football club on an ongoing basis.

We WILL recover from this but a real crying shame that the money could not have been put to better use.

It’s just such a pity that a couple of people sought to ignore the rest of the board and plough on regardless.

Lessons are now learnt with the right measures firmly in place.

Other good news sees our attendances continually rise and that is clearly down to the bargain season tickets offered by the club with over 450 signed up for this current campaign and hopefully similar numbers for next. Let’s not also forget we are many Premier & Football League fans second team by way of the long established discounted admission prices and we will continue to push this.

Imagine how good our attendances could be if we can turn around our home form since we came into the NLS which has been pretty poor.

The club are working to rebuild the bridges with the youth set up and incorporate ever stronger links going forward. They have over 450 players now wearing the famous blue & white - and are also a huge huge part of our future. The Ladies are going from strength to strength under the stewardship of Mark Barton as well.

I thank everyone connected at the club and too many to singularly mention for this and every season for all their incredible efforts to keep pushing the club forward. You are ALL truly amazing!

We are a unique and special organisation with incredibly passionate fans and fantastic volunteers so let’s galvanise this great club again and exceed the sum of our parts like I know we can do.

The snipers have had their say now it’s time to move on.

As a WHOLE UNIFIED set up moving in the same direction, we have no limits to what we can achieve both on and off the pitch.

By the way, don’t be too surprised if you get a phone call from Jez Albert or the like during the close season as you, the fans, will have a role to play in helping with some funding of a player or two. You’ve made the difference before and you can play a big part again.

Enjoy the summer, but first let’s see you all make the club’s “End of Season Awards” which kicks off this evening at 6.30 in the clubhouse while joining us for a beer or two as well.

Paul
As a young boy Jim, my brother, inspired by his hero Gordon Banks, started off footballing life as a Stoke City supporter. However it wasn’t long before our dad, who himself had been born in Wealdstone, took my brothers to Lower Mead and Jim caught the bug and transferred his loyalty to WFC. I was considered too young to go along, and had to make do with learning about Georgie Duck second hand.

However before too long Jim started taking me to games. I have happy memories of munching sandwiches together on the bus over to Lower Mead, singing on the terraces about Barbara Robson and getting my own heroes - Clevere Forde, The Cordices, Byatt and so on.

1985 was a memorable year. We were growing up and a little apart. But we were there. We met on the terraces of the old Wembley at kick-off and watched The Stones win the F.A.Trophy and clinch the cup and league double. It was the stuff of dreams.

We returned home to share our day with our delighted dad, who by then was starting to succumb to cancer, that had been diagnosed two years earlier. The man who had started it all, our own hero, died aged 53 a few weeks later.

I lost all interest in Wealdstone FC. That however, was not Jim’s style. He followed them closely wherever he was and whatever he was doing. A true supporter of the club. In time it was Jim’s turn to take his own boys, Eddie and Thomas, this time to Grosvenor Vale, along with his wife Liz.

For me 2018 will also remain a memorable year. After 33 years I made it to a game- the FA Trophy victory over Warrington. I was there with my son Ben, and with Jim and Thomas. Different ground, different everything but same fantastic atmosphere that we had experienced at Lower Mead and one that makes premier league matches look like a vicar’s tea party.

We had a great day. But we knew it wouldn’t happen again. Jim was like dad in many ways, and sadly this extended to health.

Jim died from cancer, also at the age of 53, on 11th May 2018. A hero for me and many others.

Peter

Steve Kingman Loving husband, caring father of 4 and loyal stones supporter sadly passed away 30th March 2019.

The Board and Management of Wealdstone FC offer their sincere condolences to the families and friends of Jim and Steve.
Fan in the Stand

Whereabouts do you live Hobby? I’ve recently moved back to Pinner after a short stay in Hemel Hempstead but I have lived most of my life in & around the Harrow area.

Are you working? Yes, I’m full time and have been with the same company for just over 30 years, based in Hayes, Middlesex.

First Stones game? The first game that I actually remember going to was Wembly in 1966 Amateur Cup Final versus Henson, winning 3-1 - although I’ve been told I was actually taken to a few games from the ripe old age of three!

What or who persuaded you to become a Stones fan? My Dad, Grandad and Uncles have all been Wealdstone fans since the 1930s. I also have a cousin that has caught the family bug (Mark) and now a couple of my grandsons (Kieran and Ashley) attend on a regular basis home and away.

Do you follow any other team? QPR results only (enough said) but Wealdstone have always come first since my school days... amazingly I always seemed to be unwell when Stones had a long away trip away such as Gateshead, Altrincham etc...

Massive. Even if I can’t get to games now I’m always glued to twitter and the forum & get regular updated texts from others who attend the games (like Big Dave).

Most memorable game/s you’ve EVER seen? There’s been a few (all Wealdstone). Trophy Final in 85 / Kettering away to win the Gola League 1995 / Newport away in the trophy 2012 / Cambridge away again in the trophy 2012.

And most memorable Wealdstone game, and moment? Wembley in 85, winning the FA Trophy by beating Boston United & becoming the first team to win the Non League Double - and the celebrations continued well into the early hours.

What really gets your goat watching football? Players diving & rolling around like they have been shot.

Have you ever played the game yourself (to any level) and most memorable moments? Only for SFC Wealdstone (Only??? - Ed)

Any suggestions to improve your Stones watching experience at the Vale? To be honest there isn’t, the ground at Ruislip has come on leaps and bounds since we moved in & I can honestly say it feels like home after so many years on the road. I just hope the lease can be sorted for the long term.

Favourite current Wealdstone line-up? Northy - Tyler - Okimo - Stevens - Grant - Poku - Smith - Green - Mensah - Allarakhan - Bubb (when fit) Otherwise it would have to be Dave Pratt.


Best away trips to watch football? Aldershot (when we took approx 13 coachloads of fans in the FA Cup, 1975) + Reading + QPR + Newport County & Cambridge United, the atmosphere at those games were unbelievable.

What was your highlight of last season? The trophy run, only to fall at the semis again.

Best non-League ground you’ve visited? I’d have to say Boston United;

Best stadium you’ve EVER visited?. The new Wembley Stadium

Where do you like to stand (or sit) at the Vale? Either in The Bulla / Brian Collins or the new seated area at the turrett end

What are your expectations for the Stones for this season? Was always the Play Offs - and we still have hope

How does the current programme compare with others you see? There’s no comparison, it’s by far the best in the league & total value for money.

Any articles or features that you’d like to see? Not really, I wouldn’t of thought you could fit much more in it!

What do you think of the bars and catering at The Vale? Any beers or food you’d like to be added? I can’t fault either really.

It would be nice to have something hot and different during the winter months like curry n rice (if we ever get midweek games).

Do you buy much at the clubshop? Have done occasionally, also have bought online

How do you feel on the kit debate-solid blue shirts or quarters? I would go with the Solid Blue ones

What is your Wealdstone ‘claim to fame’? One of the famous two who wore the Boiler Suits back in the 80s. Say no more :) Finally, where do you see the club in five years time? We should be in the National Conference.
In the last home programme we continued the story of Stones’ greatest-ever goalscorer: George Duck, who netted 251 times in just seven seasons, between 1972 and 1979.

Parts One and Two covered his youthful career at Spurs, Millwall and Southend before making “the best decision of my life” and signing for Sid Prosser at Wealdstone. Then came the difficult decision to join Dagenham at the time, so it suited me geographically” said George.

“ar to be honest, it was just a deal to suit Dagenham at the time and it’s only in retrospect that I realise what I did. Let me say, in all honesty that I did not sign for Harrow Borough to spite Wealdstone… maybe it seems a bit naïve but I didn’t realise the intense rivalry. I was thinking more in terms of us moving from Leighton Buzzard to Harrow Weald at the time, so it suited me geographically” said George.

“I know there are a few supporters at Wealdstone to this day who will never forgive me for signing for Harrow. I understand and accept that.

“But to give you a bit of the background to it, Eddie and Terry had been sacked in my second season at Dagenham and I was astonished. We were second in the Isthmian League behind Enfield with a real chance of winning the title.

“But there were always people harking back to the glory days under Ted Hardy, and when he became available again it was only a matter of time before they brought him back to manage the side.

“To be fair, Ted was actually a straight-up manager and after I said I was quitting in support of Eddie, he just said “Stay and play, George”. I had scored 55 goals in my two seasons there and it seemed they wanted to keep me.

“But Dagenham were dead keen on signing Eddie Stein from Harrow…. so keen that it was set up as a two-for-one exchange with me and winger Steve Jones (the son of ex-Spurs legend Cliff Jones) going to Earlsmead and Eddie going the other way.”

“I remember feeling quite shocked that George had signed for The Hairdressers. It never occurred to me that he would be facing us on the pitch, with Stones just relegated to the Southern League and Borough in the parallel Isthmian Premier Division.

“Much water had flowed under the bridge since he had left Lower Meadow and maybe we thought he would be a spent force in the red shirt of Micky Tomkys’ team. Nothing was further from the unpalatable truth…..

**Saturday October 24 1981: FA Cup Third qualifying round, Wealdstone v Harrow Borough at Lower Meadow.**

The Stones were enjoying life in the Southern League and looking to bounce straight back to the Conference, this game coming after a run of 12 wins and a draw in 13 games.

A crowd of 1,138 were in attendance, seemingly most of them in the bear pit of the Elmslie End and howling for the heads of the opposition. There was real rivalry between the teams – Borough were building a decent team to challenge for honours and their number included former Stone David Pearce as well as the mercurial George, who was looking forward to returning to his old stomping ground.

“Lower Meadow was my Theatre of Dreams. It was strange turning left into the away changing room, but apart from that it brought back nothing but anticipation. I wasn’t really thinking about the fact I was playing against Wealdstone… I think only Nigel Johnson and Stuart Pearce were left of the team I had played in, and they were just kids really.

“The atmosphere was cracking and I scored an early header – then Dave
Howell, our centre back, bulleted one in at the Elmslie End to put us 2-0 up with about two attacks. Wealdstone pulled it back to 2-1 – and really, they should have been well ahead – but then I managed to score another, going round Ray Goddard and putting the ball in from a narrow angle. I slid on my knees to the corner flag and celebrated – I was just delighted to have come back to Lower Mead and scored a couple of goals.”

The game ended in acrimony with Borough keeper Les Currell pelted with stunning accuracy by half a dozen eggs. The game was stopped and Stones chairman David Martle came over to the Elmslie End fans to appeal for calm, while stewards roped off an area immediately behind the goal…. And not long after play restarted, Dave Pearce netted a breakaway goal against his old club to complete the humiliation.

“But Wealdstone beat Borough the next time!” George laughed. “Just seven days later we met again in the FA Trophy in a strange twist of fate… and that time we had all the play but it ended 2-2. In the replay we got absolutely stuffed 4-0 at Lower Mead.”

The dream of repeating his FA Cup win is still beat loud in George’s heart, however.

The following season, with Duck & Pearce forming a deadly partnership, Borough steamed all the way to the semi-finals with a stream of impressive wins - including a 5-1 walloping of holders Enfield in the last eight.

It led to the famous second leg, dubbed ‘The Miracle of Earlsmead’ by barely-believing Telford fans. Despite the bitter cross-Harrow rivalry, you had to feel for George and his team when they suffered tragedy just a week before the first leg. Dave Howell’s cousin Mickey, playing for Hayes against Borough, died after a clash of heads.

“It was terrible for the staff and players, and we travelled up to Telford under a great cloud. Obviously Howellsley wasn’t playing and we missed him – but it was an awesome performance that day that saw us win 2-0… and it might have been 3-0 when I had a goal disallowed for a tight offside flag” said George.

I couldn’t get to the Stones game at Weymouth the following Saturday, and instead arrived a bit late at Earlsmead fully expecting to see George book his second Wembley appearance in three years. Just as I came through the turnstiles, there was Dave Pearce right in front of me, wheeling away after scoring for Borough in the first five minutes.

“It was maybe the worst thing that could happen” said George. “Telford just had to go for it – you can’t sit back when you’re 3-0 down on aggregate. But what I really remember is that three or four of our players just couldn’t handle it. They went into their shells.

“Clevere Forde especially, the winger who had been at Wealdstone the year before – he was our matchwinner, so clever and strong, players just bounced off him and me and Pearcey has said pre-match: ‘Just get the ball over to us, Clev, and we’ll get the goals’. But he was totally controlled by their right back, Anton Joseph, and we just stopped playing. Telford had a great following there and when they got a goal back you could see the belief flowing through them”.

I reminded George about the dramatic game-changing save by Telford keeper Kevin Charlton right on the full-time whistle. “Ah no, don’t make me think about that” he agonized. “Telford had made it 3-1 on the day, 3-3 on aggregate, and I think the players were settling for extra time when we had one last chance – the ball came over and I hit it on the volley from the edge of the box. I couldn’t have hit it sweeter. I was on my feet about to celebrate when the keeper somehow reached the shot and turned it onto the crossbar… it was like his arm came out of his sleeve an extra 18 inches! I think that was the best save I’ve ever seen and it couldn’t have come at a worse moment.”

I was standing behind that goal and can still remember the anguish among the Borough fans, who saw their Wembley dream evaporate at that very moment. The momentum was entirely with the Shropshire side, backed by around 1,000 travelling fans and it was no surprise when they scored twice more in extra time to win 5-1 on the day, 5-3 on aggregate. Their special train was delayed but nobody cared! Especially not the Stones fans who were rocking the supporters coaches as the news came through on the way back from Weymouth!

“It was desperately sad” said George. “I sat in the changing room afterwards and the players were upset, but not as upset as they should have been. Me and Jonesy

Above: Trophy misery for George. The Shropshire Star carries the story of Telford’s amazing comeback win over Harrow Boro
GEORGE DUCK CONTINUED

had been at Wembley three years earlier and we knew what they were missing”.

The following season, 1983-84 was an amazing time to be a football fan in North London. Harrow, Wealdstone and Enfield were the undisputed top dogs.

“They were three great teams: said George. “Stones got to the FA Cup second round after beating Enfield in a replay, and Harrow got to the second round too but we both lost – us to Newport and Wealdstone to Colchester. We won the Isthmian League, me and Pearcey getting the goals, but didn’t take promotion to the Conference.”

Was that Boro side better than Wealdstone in the 70s? I asked him.

“That’s a difficult question, but I have an easy answer: No! Boro had very committed players in Harry Manoe, Ray Metz, Dave Howell, Steve Emmanuel, Derek Doyle, Les Currell… but the DNA was different at the Stones. We had better quality players playing pure, easy on the eye attacking football. Win the ball back quickly; get it on the deck; keep it out of the mud; play it wide; quality crosses into the box; get on the end of them; and then GOAL! The greatest feeling in the world.

“Here are a few of those quality players; John Morton, Willie Watson, Ray Fulton, John Henderson, Eric Burgess, John McCormick, Bobby Moss, Freddie Barwick, Steve Brinkman, Billy Byrne, Terry Dyson, Adrian Egilte… I rest my case!

“And if the club had wanted to play the Wimbledon way I’d have been off inside a couple of years. I stayed seven years! That says it all really”.

George was now 32, had won two league titles and one Trophy winners medal but was still desperate for one last tilt at Wembley… but he passed up what may have ensured a glorious finale to his astonishing career.

“I think most people know this story by now, but in the summer of ’84 I met the Wealdstone manager Brian Hall at the John Lyon pub in Harrow, with a view to me returning to the club. How I wish that conversation had gone differently!

“I knew he had built a good squad at Lower Mead and the thought of coming ‘home’ was a big pull. But then the question of money came up and I was dismayed to hear that the club were still paying half the money in a wage slip, and half the money over the bar…. I had never liked that situation and I don’t know, even now, why it was handled that way. Every other club used wage slips, simple as that.

“Brian Hall wouldn’t budge and so I went and signed for Eddie Presland again, who was by then the manager at Hendon… it was a massive mistake. Hendon just didn’t have the players and in the end we just avoided relegation – I scored a volley at Epsom & Ewell to keep us up in the last game.

“All the time I was looking over at Wealdstone enviously and wondering what might have been. I was genuinely delighted for everyone at the club and I hold my hands up and say that was the biggest regret in my career, showing loyalty to Eddie again. I would have given everything to have just been in the Wealdstone squad and been travelling to Wembley. Would I have got in that double-winning side? Was I too similar to Mark Graves? Would the club have needed Andy Graham? Could I have played up front with Alan Cordice?

“No one knows the answer, but history might have been very different if I’d re-signed for the club at the John Lyon.”

Personally, I reckon George could very easily have filled AG’s shoes. In many ways he was a similar player – good touch and balance, and a devastating volley – and in one way he was better: In the air. George Duck, at 6ft, might not have been the biggest centre forward around but his guile and accuracy meant he was unparalleled outside the League for a dozen years.

It was a shame George missed out on the Stones’ finest hour as his career drew to a premature close with Hendon the following season, following a collision with a goalkeeper that broke his cheekbone. “I just got to the ball first and nodded it past him, and he caught me with his fist – an injury like Gary Mabbutt’s for Tottenham around the same time. I was in Northwick Park Hospital for two days, with my cheek all caved in, and I had no feeling in that part of my face for years afterwards.

“I was lucky to only suffer a couple of injuries in all those years – the other was stretched ligaments just after scoring my 200th goal for Wealdstone – but that was enough to make me think I should pack it in.

continued overpage
“Eddie Presland had left the club by then, and he contacted me to ask if I’d sign for his new club Dulwich Hamlet. I told him: ‘Eddie, I can’t keep following you. You’ve been sacked three times as my manager, shouldn’t that tell you something!’

“I loved playing for Eddie but that was the final straw for me. I had decided to get into the cabbying game, had learned ‘The Knowledge’ and got my licence, so there I was in my black cab alongside Willie…. a job I had for over 30 years. Every day we stopped and chatted about football in general, and Wealdstone in particular and I loved it.

“Football is a drug and it will never leave me. But finally I have to say that I always felt a special bond with the Stones fans - they treated me like Royalty and I agree with Tina Turner when she says you’re “Simply the Best” supporters I ever played for throughout my whole career - and what a wonderful day it was when the club kindly hosted that special sporting lunch a few years ago for me and Willie.

“The unpaid, behind-the-scenes work that all the volunteers carry out at Wealdstone is wonderful. It’s not un-noticed. You’re all very special people.”

(signed) George Duck No.10.

See you at the back post …

George, now 67 years old, is separated from wife Sue and lives on his own in a retirement block in Abbots Langley, working part-time in the Budgens store round the corner.

“It suits me down to the ground” he says. ‘For years I was a cabbie but I suffered an anaphalactic shock, out of the blue, a couple of years ago that is still unexplained. Several things can bring it on and I’d eaten an Indian meal while I had the flu - and I just passed out. I spent two nights in Watford General and had to give up my licence.

So now I play a bit of golf, watch a lot of football, keep up with the grandchildren (he has a son Chris and daughter Karen, who has three kids of her own, all girls) and do a bit of dog-walking for my neighbour.

“It’s a good life. I don’t get to talk enough about football but just wait till I get down to Grosvenor Vale!”

“Would I have got into the Stones double winning side? Could it have been me and Alan Cordice up front?”

CONTINUED OVERPAGE
The history of Hemel Hempstead Town FC is a complex past, with mergers between local clubs and numerous name changes before finally settling as the club as it is known today. Of the clubs that merged over the years to form the club as we know it today, the history of Apsley FC goes furthest back. Formed in 1885 as Apsley End FC, the club was based at Salmon Meadow and played in a claret and blue strip. The first record of competitive football was in 1889, when the club entered the Herts Senior Cup. Apsley End were then one of the founding member clubs of the West Herts Football Association and entered their first league competition in 1891/92, before changing the name to just Apsley FC two years later. Apsley won the Division One championship in 1894/95, the first honour in the clubs history. Around this time, many clubs competed in more than one league at a time; small numbers of competing clubs meant that entering more than one competition would allow the clubs to play more regularly. Apsley also competed in the Herts County League, entering as a founding member club in 1888/99. Apsley were one of the more successful local teams competing in the Herts County League either side of the First World War, winning three league championships along with many other high league finishes. In 1922, Apsley left the Herts County League to join the Spartan League.

Apsley competed in the Spartan League for 30 years, during this time the club moved home twice, first to Op's Meadow in Bourne End for one season, before moving to the new Wood Lane Ground, more commonly known as Crabtree Lane where the club remained until 1972. Whilst in the Spartan League, Apsley claimed three runners up spots in the lower divisions, there was a Division One championship place in 1933/34, but the club failed to make an impression in the Premier Division and were soon relegated. Apsley were one of 29 clubs who rejoined the Spartan League in the season immediately following the second World War, the club showed a great improvement in form and consistency at this time but again only had enough to give runners up spots to show for it. The clubs name changed to Hemel Hempstead Town, it had been some time now since the club had actually been based in Apsley, and following promotion to the Spartan Premier League for the 1951/52 season, the club left to join the Delphian League. Hemel didn’t the Delphian League alight, finishing in the bottom two of the division on five occasions during eleven seasons. The clubs best finish in the Delphian League was as runners up in 1961/62, this success was unable to be built upon as the following season continuous poor weather caused the Delphian League to be abandoned after Hemel had played twelve games. An emergency competition was organised giving Hemel a further eight fixtures, however the Delphian League disbanded once the season finished in 1963 and the clubs formed Division Two of the Athenian League.

In their opening season in the Athenian League, Hemel finished fifth in Division Two and were subsequently promoted to Division One due to restructuring. In 1964-65 Hemel finished as runners up in Division One, winning promotion to the Premier Division.

Hemel only lasted three seasons in the Premier with a best finish of ninth in 1966 before two consecutive relegations saw Hemel start the 1969/70 season in Division Two, a level which Hemel remained for nearly 30 years! In the summer of 1972, Hemel Hempstead Town merged with Hemel Hempstead United, the new club took the simple name of Hemel Hempstead and made United’s Vauxhall Road ground as its home.

The last ten years has been very eventful for Hemel with various ground improvements, 2 league championships, a play-off final win, two automatic promotions, promotion through restructuring, and a relegation, not to mention seven changes of manager. The first tasks of the new Committee which gained control of the club in 1997 were to change the name back to Hemel Hempstead Town FC, then to install successful Leverstock Green manager and ex-Hemel captain Mick Vipond as manager. The result was a quick promotion with Hemel winning the Division Three championship ata first attempt, conceding only 28 goals that season and scoring 86, quite a turnaround from the previous season. This was the first league championship the club had won since 1994. After a stuttering start to Division Two, Hemel parted company with Vipond in December 1998 and ex-Watford star and 1985 FA Cup finalist Neil Price was appointed as manager. Price guided the Tudors to 4th place and bettered this the following season when Hemel won the Division Two championship, only to be denied promotion due to insufficient ground grading.

In this championship season Hemel conceded just 27 goals in 42 league games, the best defensive record in the clubs history. Hemel followed this up with a 6th place finish and in the summer of 2001 Price was replaced at the helm by former Enfield manager Gary Phillips. By this time various ground improvements had led to a “B” grading for Vauxhall Road which made the club eligible for promotion. Hemel failed to find their feet in the 2001/2002 season and following the resignation of Phillips after a 6-1 defeat at the hands of Chertsey, ex-Hemel player Tony Kelly was appointed as manager. Following another 6th place finish, restructuring saw Hemel leave the Isthmian after nearly 30 years of competing in that league and for the first time Hemel started a season in the Southern League, competing in the Premier division.

The 2017/18, season saw the National League South increase play-off positions to the second to seventh placed sides in the final league table. With the prospect of a play-off position much more achievable, a competitive season saw many clubs fancying their chances at promotion. Despite some inconsistent form, a more settled Hemel squad than previous seasons did well enough to spend much of the season in the play-off’s and even in the latter stages of the campaign automatic promotion was still with sights. Eventually, a new club record finish of fifth place in the National League South secured a home play-off “elimination” tie (effectively a “quarter-final”) against Braintree, who beat Hemel on penalties on their way to winning the play-off. The Tudors reached the final of the Herts Senior Cup this season but conceded the final again Hitchin Town, due to Hemel staffs concerns about the safety of their players on the playing surface of the neutral venue. This season also saw landmark appearances for Tudors players Jordan Parkes and Kyle Connolly who each reached 200 appearances for Hemel, whilst the management team of Dean Brennan and Stuart Maynard took charge of their 300th game.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN

TUDORS WHO'S WHO

LAURIE WALKER - GOALKEEPER
Returned to Vauxhall Road in the summer of 2017, two years after departing from his first spell at Hemel. A hugely popular figure amongst Tudors fans, Laurie was a member of the 2013/14 Southern League Championship winning team and broke the record for the most clean sheets kept by a single Hemel 'keeper in one season.

DANNY BONES - GOALKEEPER
A former West Ham scholar who has also played for Colchester, Grays Athletic, Bingleswade Town and local side Kings Langley. Danny Joined the Tudors in 2017 and has spent a duration of 2018/19 on loan at home.

KYLE CONNOLLY - DEFENDER
Formerly with Arsenal and Boreham Wood. Joined Watford’s Academy in December 2011, trialled with Hemel in the summer of 2013 and signed by Dean Brennan for the 2013/14 season, during which went on to be awarded “Young Player of the Month”. In 2014/15 scored the goal of the season, a deft volley against Chelmsford City. A nasty injury sustained during 2015/16 side-lined him for a couple of months, but didn’t prevent him from going on to collect the Manager’s Player of the Year award.

TOM HAMLIN - DEFENDER
Signed from todays hosts Wealdstone in the summer of 2017. Tom is a no nonsense, old school centre back who moved to London in June 2013. Tom has played for Gloucester City in the Vanarama Conference North for seven seasons, prior to this he was also at Bristol City and Mansfield.

JOE HOWE - DEFENDER
Joined Hemel in the summer of 2017, finishing last season with Ryman League Premier Division side Leatherhead. Formerly with MK Dons, Northampton Town, Kettering Town, Welling United and Croydon Athletic, the defender made over 200 appearances for Ebbsfleet United over six years before moving on last year to National League side Chelmsford City before signing for Hemel.

DARREN WARD - DEFENDER
Vastly experienced central defender Darren has played over 500 games in the football league, with his previous clubs including Watford, Millwall, Crystal Palace, Wolves, Swindon Town and Yeovil Town.

JACQUES KPOHOMOU - DEFENDER
Previously of Bangor, Southport and Droylsden, Jacques more recently played for Southern League Premier Division side Hartley Wintney before joining Hemel midway through the 2018/19 season.

JORDAN PARKES - MIDFIELD
Fans’ favourite Jordan re-joined The Tudors from Ebbsfleet United in September 2016. Parkes joined Ebbsfleet at the beginning of last season having spent three years at Vauxhall Road, captaining the side to the Evo-Stik League Southern Premier Division title and to the First Round Proper of the FA Cup. The Conference (National League) South player of the year for 2014/15 and a set-piece specialist, Hemel an undisclosed fee for Parkes after he scored 31 goals from midfield for the Tudors. He began his playing career at Watford, making his League Two debut in 2015/16. In 2014/15 scored the goal of the season, a deft volley against Chelmsford City. A nasty injury sustained during 2015/16 side-lined him for a couple of months, but didn’t prevent him from going on to collect the Manager’s Player of the Year award.

MARK RANDALL - MIDFIELD
A graduate of the Luton Town academy until his release in 2017, Jack impressed in the Hatters’ FA Youth Cup run in 2016/17, scoring a hat-trick against Dagenham & Redbridge, plus earning his first team debut as a late sub in a 2-0 win over Wrexham in 2018/19. Kieran is a box to box midfield who joined Hemel in the latter stages of 2018/19. Kieran was at Albans City the previous season when last season Hamilton Academicals paid a fee to take him to Scotland. Previous clubs include Stoke City, Charlton Athletic and Maldon & Tiptree.

KERRAN MONLOUIS - MIDFIELD
Kieran is a box to box midfielder who joined Hemel in the latter stages of 2018/19. Kieran was at Albans City the previous season when last season Hamilton Academicals paid a fee to take him to Scotland. Previous clubs include Stoke City, Charlton Athletic and Maldon & Tiptree.

MARK RANDALL - MIDFIELD
Spent his formative footballing years at Arsenal where he was touted by manager Arsène Wenger as a key Arsenal player for the future. He was released at the end of his contract in 2011 and subsequently joined Chesterfield, where he won the Football League Trophy. In 2013 he signed a two-year contract with Italian third-tier side Ascoli. In March 2014 Randall completed a move to MK Dons then in January 2016, following a mutual decision to terminate his contract with Milton Keynes Dons. Randall rejoined League 2 side Barnet. Spells with Newport and Crawley followed before joining Hemel in March 2019.

SANCHEZ WATT - FORWARD
On loan to the Tudors from Billerica Town. He has represented England at under-16, under-17 and under-19 levels, and is also eligible to play for Wales and Jamaica through his Welsh mother and Jamaican father. Watt is a product of Arsenal’s youth academy and came to prominence during the Gunners’ 2008–09 FA Youth Cup winning season and made his full debut for the Arsenal first-team the following season. He has featured on loan for a number of Football League clubs, including Southend United, Accrington Stanley, Blackpool and Leyton Orient.

AREL AMU - FORWARD
Joined The Tudors midway through the 2018/19 season, having already scored 14 goals for Dunstable Town in his second pro- life season at the Southern League Division One Central side. Original with Luton Town, Amu’s non-league journey has also seen him represented Barton, Aylesbury and Welling.

JASON WILLIAMS - FORWARD
Began his career with Southend United. In 2014 he joined Chelmsford City initially on a one-month loan deal, which was later extended, where he was in impressive form, scoring five goals in seven league games. Williams returned on loan to Chelmsford City in 2016. After being released by Southend, Williams joined Concord Rangers in 2017 but left the Beachboys before the start of the season to sign for Bishop’s Stortford. He moved to Kingstonian in February 2018 then Whitehawk in July 2018. He joined Hemel Hempstead Town in March 2019.

DANIEL ROWE - FORWARD
Joined The Tudors in March 2019, having been released from Braintree Town. Formerly of Boston, QPR and Leicester City.
### RESULTS & FIXTURES 2018/2019

#### AUGUST

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#### KEY TO SYMBOLS

- **FRIENDLIES 2018/2019**
  - **Hudson-Odoi**
  - **Cardiff City**
  - **Staines Town**
  - **Bromley**
  - **Buckingham**
  - **Dorchester Town**
  - **Wokingham & Reading**
  - **Dulwich Hamlet**
  - **Chelmsford City**
  - **Hemel Hempstead Town**

**HISTORY OF RESULTS & FIXTURES**

- **2018**
  - **2019**

**FAC** = FA Cup  
**MSC** = Middlesex Senior Cup

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**NOTE:** All matches are played on **Home** soil unless otherwise stated. **Away** matches are marked with **(Away)**.
### MATCH SPONSORS

A great way to celebrate a special occasion or advertise your organisation's support of Wealdstone, match sponsorship packages start at just £295 (fans) or £395 (corporate) as match day sponsor you will enjoy:

- Match tickets for up to four* (prime main stand seats if required)
- A fantastic advertising package, including publicity over the PA system, website and social media
- Boardroom hospitality includes pre match and half-time refreshments as well as a superb array of culinary delights post match, courtesy of in-house caterer Lynn Evans
- Match-day programmes for all in your party
- VIP car parking
- Name and present the ‘Man of the Match’ Award
- A memento of your day

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<th>MATCH</th>
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<td>Wealdstone FC Supporters Club</td>
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<td>CONCORD RANGERS</td>
<td>Barry Eynon – in memory of John O’Connor</td>
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<td>TRURO CITY</td>
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*Please note that we can accommodate multiple match sponsors and can tailor the experience to whatever are your requirements. For example, we can cater for as many as 25 people in our magnificent and new hospitality lounge. This facility has undergone a comprehensive re-fit with substantial investment courtesy of our club sponsors GPF Lewis & Ruislip Social Club. Our match sponsors and their guests are all entertained in surroundings befitting such a special occasion be it a birthday, anniversary or any other special event!

We will work with you to ensure you and your guests get to enjoy a truly memorable experience. If you or your organisation are interested in sponsoring a match here at The Vale, please contact Club President Paul Rumens (paulrumens59@gmail.com or call 07710 929692) to discuss.
ST ALBANS CITY You get just 32 pages for your £2.50 at Clarence Park this season – and given there are 14½ pages of adverts then all in all it’s a pretty small programme. A very bland cover as well in my eyes. Admittedly there are one or two decent articles including Manager Ian Allinson’s editorial but ultimately this programme is a mid-table affair. Score: 6/10

BIGGLESWADE TOWN A nifty front cover on this 32 page programme which despite having fewer advertising pages (10) than St Albans manages to deliver far less information. Does it really need the 2 centre pages to list both team’s line-ups and does it really need 2 whole pages for 2 league tables? Space filling in anyone’s eyes. Take away the 7-page Wealdstone FC History and there is virtually nothing at all to read. It’s a shocker really, but better than Hungerford’s effort!! Score: 5/10

SLUGH TOWN The front cover is in colour, and so are the adverts – but the rest is black and white. There’s plenty of scope for someone to lay-out which pages, frankly, is unexciting. There are no photos (apart from some small pieces of clip art) which seems unexciting. There are no photos (apart from the team photo across the 2 centre pages) which seems odd. The fact that it sells for just 2½ means that this 40 pager is just about value for money but it’s another mid-table effort really. Score: 5/10

CONCORD RANGERS Well, at least Concord changed the front cover on this programme for our league match but apart from this the programme was almost identical to the programme that was produced for our visit to Essex nearly 2 months previously for our FA Trophy tie. Very disappointingly there was virtually nothing to read apart from the usual match report. Sorry Tony, but this is a very poor effort. Score: 2/10

WOKING A glossy £3 affair as you would perhaps expect from a club with big attendances who were in the National League last season. A “big” programme too which some people like – although it doesn’t often mean that coat pockets aren’t quite big enough to put the programme in! It’s a 40 page programme with nearly half of those pages being adverts. A quick glance gives an impression of a pretty decent programme but a closer inspection reveals that it flatters to deceive – the main plus points being a 2 page look back to 1937 and a 2 page player interview with Greg Luer. It is lacking in content though and so not a contender in my book for a top 3 position. Score: 7/10

TRURO CITY Part of me wants to give credit to Truro for issuing a fresh programme for our February visit rather than simply re-using the original programme for our postponed trip on 22/12. However, a closer inspection reveals that Truro were playing Eastbourne on the Saturday and Wealdstone on the Tuesday so they went for a double header. A very small 28 page programme is what you get for your £2.50. I thought the lay-out was pretty good although the front cover was pretty naff. An average mid-table effort. Score: 6/10

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH. It’s not a bad effort this 48 page programme at £2.50. As they had just appointed new manager Mark McGhee this gave the editorial team something to write about and a farewell article about the outgoing manager too. I wasn’t sure what the Editor’s blog featuring Ivan Broadis was about really as he had no connection with Eastbourne – it seemed a bit random to me, albeit fairly interesting I suppose. As always, I quite like the large colour photo that formed the centre page spread. Score: 7/10

GLOUCESTER CITY. This is a £3 effort and exceptionally poor for the price. It’s a 40 pager but 22 of them are adverts. Excellent stats but nothing else really to commend this programme because once you strip out the usual “welcomes” from Manager and Chairman and then take away the usual blurb about us there really was little to enjoy – unless you like doing a quiz! Score: 4/10

WESTON SUPER MARE. Another £3 offering which was the programme from 9th Feb so nearly a month out of date but at least the editor did include a 4 page insert with an up to date league table. We were treated to a Fan in the Stand article featuring our own Alan Hill which one can only applaud but the programmes basically (a) lacking original articles (b) padded out with big font so that space is filled. Score: 5/10

BATH CITY. 50% of this 48 page programme is adverts so well done to Bath’s commercial manager. I really do not like the centre page statistics feature. In future you have to try and de-code what black boxes, green boxes, grey boxes etc mean. Quite a good looking Back page on previous clashes between Bath and The Stones and I also admired the Bath City Hero article on Billy Horton. All in all, a reasonable effort. Score: 7/10

TORQUAY UTD. Well, I was hoping for a great programme here from a Club that has the best ground in the league and the highest support (nearly 3,000 in attendance for our match). I was disappointed though as the small programme was only 36 pages with nearly half of these adverts. I wonder if the team photo across the 2 centre pages is featured in every programme or was it a one-off when we visited? Odd to see statistics that don’t show who played and don’t show the attendance either. Also, very strange for there to be a whole page allocated to a 16 line poem written by someone who purports to be “The Bard of TUFC”. At least though it only costs you £2 to buy this one. Score: 7/10

HAMPTON & RB. Most definitely one of the better offerings – in fact I think it’s the best of the rest. A cover price of £2.50 buys you 40 pages of which 11 are advertising. It’s well laid out and designed and looks professional. An interview with our own Tim Parks shows a bit of effort on the part of the editor. On the negative-side – do we really need a whole page just listing the teams in our division and their addresses? I thought the Old Historian might be reassuring about yesterday’s Hampton matches but no, it’s part 24 of a local history piece. Better than most though. Score: 8/10

WEALDSTONE. And now to the big one. Well, if you are reading this then there’s really no need at all for me to explain why the Wealdstone programme is easily the best in the division. Granted I haven’t seen the Chelmsford programme yet which is usually quite good either. The Stones matchday programme easily qualifies for a near perfect score. Just looking at the most recent effort (v East Thurrock, pictured left) a 56 page affair which has a whopping 25 pages (plus stats and more) or readable articles. Absolutely brilliant and congratulations to everyone who contributes to our wonderful publication. Score: 9.5/10

OVERALL SCORES

Wealdstone 9.5, Hampton 8.5, Billericay & Welling (both 7.5), Oxford, Chippenham & Weston (all 5), East Thurrock & Gloucester (both 4), Biggleswade (FAT) 2.5, Concord (FAT) 2.5, Concord 2, Hungerford (FAC) 1, Hungerford & Chelmsford were not rated.
Good Afternoon and welcome to today's final home match of the season against one of closest rivals Hemel Hempstead Town. Will it be the final match of the 2018/19 season? We shall see! Whatever happens, I hope that all of you will be coming the end of seasons awards night this evening to reflect and share a drink as one club.

Before going any further today, we will shall be having a minutes silence to remember to Chris Humpries' wife who sadly passed away after a long illness. You may have seen Chris, who is our Assistant Kit Manager, going about his business quietly but competently all season and our thoughts are with Chris and his family at this time.

There are a couple of points that I would like to cover at this time. Firstly, there has been some talk that the board of directors do not want promotion and I can assure all of you that this is not the case. It is no secret that we do not currently have the investment to compete in the national league premier and the ground would also need a great deal of investment. This being said we are all football people and not to take an opportunity that presented itself would be a complete disservice to everyone connected to our great club. Secondly, the budget for next season. It will be lower than this season as currently it is not sustainable under either the current or previous board. This number will not be publicised but the number currently being discussed as a minimum is this season's median average for this league from the leagues own official figures. Discussions with some of the current squad are under way and hopefully there will be some positive news over the next few weeks.

There are several meaningful discussions and negotiations currently in progress behind the scenes for both new investment and ways of increasing our own revenue streams. Whilst these are not ready to be announced, they are taking place and a sign of all the hard work that it going on behind the scenes.

It is only right that I pay homage to all the hard-working volunteers around the club for their fantastic efforts over the course of the season. The amount of work that goes on behind the scenes just so that 900 people can watch a football match on a Saturday has to be seen to be believed. From car parking to programme contributors, stewarding to player registration, without these jobs there wouldn’t be a game to watch. On behalf of all the board, I thank you all and if you want to give something back then please make yourself known to any matchday helper who will point you in the right direction.

Last Saturday night saw the latest fundraising event put on by WFCSC with two ex-Chelsea legends Paul Canoville and Nigel Spackman visiting the club and around fifty-five guests enjoying excellent conversation with a fish and chip supper. Despite us hoping for more, we are pleased to report that we made a profit on the night that will go to the club. We are waiting for the final numbers which should have been announced by the time you read this.

Please come and see us in the megastore behind the dugouts for the final chance to purchase sale items in person. We have the current home and white away kit on offer for £20 with only a few sizes left so grab a bargain. There are also mugs, clocks, books and much more on offer.

Mim is back selling her golden goals this week after her understudies Don and Lee Cross filled in last weekend. Mim will be just the other side of the turnstiles so bring your £1 coins for a chance to win £50 for the correct time of the 1st goal and £10 for the last.

Up The Stones

Mark