

BY TIM PARKS



**Saturday January 13 1968,
FA Amateur Cup 1st round
Proper: Torpoint Athletic 2
Wealdstone 4**

A bit of a treat this week! You were probably all expecting a four-page special on our FA Cup 3rd Round trip to QPR, which fell on this day in 1978, but it's the 40th anniversary of our great cup run next season so I'm waiting to give it the big treatment then.

Instead... we have some recently-unearthed archive footage of the historic Amateur Cup jaunt to Torpoint, Cornwall in early 1968. And it was exactly as far as our Southport trip next Saturday: 215 miles door to door, just in a slightly different direction!

No doubt the pilgrims of 1968 were equally excited as ourselves. Actually, you can ask one of them today as the chap sitting in the front of supporters club coach No.3 (pictured right) looks suspiciously like our very own Ray "I'm Never Going Again" Corner.

Most of the Stones fans that day set off on overnight coaches from Harrow, in the days before the M4 and M5, and in dreadful weather. One of the buses actually had a puncture in the middle of the night, just outside Exeter and a replacement was sent to rescue the disgruntled passengers. The team travelled in more civilised manner on the train from

A few parallels with Southport.. in 1968, over 200 Stones fans travelled 215 miles in search of cup glory...

Torpoint here we come



One of three coachloads of Wealdstone supporters who set off on Friday night on the long trial to Torpoint. That "I'm for Victory" sign was prophetic — and if the fans look happy in our picture, what were they like on the way home? One coach had trouble at Exeter but a replacement was found and the party arrived in plenty of time for the match.

The Harrow Observer got in the spirit of things by sending a photographer to capture the fans as they set off on Friday evening. Right: The programme

Paddington, staying overnight in nearby Plymouth (Torpoint's ground being just over the River Tamar from that city) - but the main problem was ceaseless rain which turned the Defiance Park pitch into 'a soggy pudding' according to the report overleaf. The referee would definitely

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have even started the game were it not for the 200-and-more travelling fans who had made the journey (please take note, Southport ref for next Saturday if the pitch seems a trifle on the damp side).

But it went ahead; we won; and in fact Vin Burgess' side made it all the way to the semi-final that season after further wins over Kingstonian, Nottinghamshire side Eastwood Town (after a replay) and Barking. But that side, talented though it was - and many thought it more gifted than the one that had lifted the trophy two years earlier - had a fatal propensity for totally underperforming on the big occasion and they surrendered 2-0 to underdogs Chesham United in the semi final at Fulham.

A game that must be considered as the all-time Stones' Greatest Let-Down....

Let's hope our lads give it their all next week, equally far from home. The last time we played a Cup tie in Lancashire was a year before the Torpoint trip outlined above - in 1967, when the Stones lost their hold on the Amateur Cup by bowing out to Skelmersdale United 1-0.

WEALDSTONE TRIUMPH AT TORPOINT

Torpoint Athletic 2, Wealdstone 4
(Attendance: 1,500)

WEALDSTONE battled through appalling conditions to land a worthy 4-2 F.A. Amateur Cup first round win against equally determined South Western League champions, Torpoint Athletic, on Saturday. The goals came from Dave Swain (two), Bernie Bremer and Johnny McCormack, against a penalty by Barrie Stephens and a 51-minute score by Dave Underhay.

But such were the playing conditions, a mudheap of a pitch allied to driving rain and sleet throughout, that all 22 players really earned an F.A. Cup of their own. Taunton referee Mr. E. J. Knight, too, deserves a word of praise.

Sliced

He started the match a couple of minutes early, then sliced half-time to five minutes in a gallop to get the match out of the way. He made no secret afterwards that if this hadn't been a cup-tie with Wealdstone making a 210-mile journey he would not have started at all.

And even despite his determination as the rain poured down at half-time, Wealdstone officials were anxiously wondering if the whole trip would have to be made again.

Defiance Field was a saturated pudding as the match got under way but the drenched spectators had only to wait 10 minutes before Wealdstone

Torpoint side seemed to realise that this match was winnable and they gained further confidence as both Swain and McCormack, particularly the latter, fell time and again for the offside trap.

Lindsay again sparked off a Wealdstone revival just on the half hour, his pass to Bremer leaving with a nice chance duly taken for 1-2.

Great save

Back came Torpoint and two brilliant saves in quick succession by the confident Williams halted their efforts before Lindsay, Bremer and Slade were back buzzing across the mud of the home penalty area. Bremer was finding life quite interesting even though any effort at a long pass was prone to skid madly off the pitch and he laid on the third goal with a nice cross for Swain with five minutes left of the first half.

Swain has been rather out of luck in recent matches but there's nothing like two goals

Cormack who gave Swain a chance for his hat-trick but the centre forward failed.

Sliding tackles, deliberate or otherwise, were now the order of the day as the ground continued to cut up badly. Lindsay again found McCormack who moved in and lobbed for Swain but Colin Bradford pulled off a great save.

Offside

It was Swain-McCormack again on 63 minutes as the Wealdstone forward line began to flag and then a header out of defence by Montague found Charlie Townsend to no avail. A good run by Slade ended in the mud before Bolton netted for Torpoint but the vigilant, Mr. Knight disallowed it for offside, ironic since the home side had been relying on the offside trap throughout.

Wealdstone, with Bremer now dropping back, put up the shutters but it was as well that Williams was running the shop. He was now in



Torpoint's Defiance Field in 2016. The distinctive sloping pitch is now used by Torpoint Rugby Club

Apologies for the rather strange laying-out of the Torpoint match report, above: You'll have to read the lower part of the report on the next page I'm afraid!

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Ploughed

Ploughing through the mud, Dave Swain and McCormack linked with Hughie Lindsay on the edge of the Torpoint goal and the centre forward forced the ball home to set Wealdstone on the victory trail.

That this was no walkover was proved just three minutes later when Dave Underhay came storming through but fired wide. Left winger Dave Ewings was popping up all over the place and one of his runs had left back Mike Yeo up in support but Andy Williams, giving a foretaste of the saves to come that made him a very useful man of the match was more than able to cope.

Wealdstone were beginning to get a grip on the midfield play with Denny Montague and Tony Slade both doing the work beyond the call of duty and Tony McGuinness also bottling up the centre.

Penalty

It was foul luck on McGuinness though to be the cause of Torpoint leveling on 25 minutes. The greasy hail and pitch did seem to justify a hand-ball decision but Mr. Knight had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and Barrie Stephens' low hard shot whistled (inasmuch as anything could be said to whistle under the circumstances) into the corner. The

before Lindsay, Bremer and Slade were back buzzing across the mud of the home penalty area. Bremer was finding life quite interesting even though any effort at a long pass was prone to skid madly off the pitch and he laid on the third goal with a nice cross for Swain with five minutes left of the first half.

Swain has been rather out of luck in recent matches but there's nothing like two goals in the Amateur Cup to warm the cockles. And now before Torpoint could settle, the Wealdstone attack added the knockout blow. Slade, again fitting in well with Bremer, made ground and McCormack met the ball well just inside the area to slam in his first Cup goal for Wealdstone.

A renewed deluge greeted half-time and all had the same thought — surely we don't have to do this again — when Mr. Knight restarted the match.

But the second half bore little resemblance to the first, the effort of trying to run through what looked like mashed Cornish pasties having sapped almost everybody's energy. McCormack and Swain again looked the most dangerous pair in the opening minutes but the defences were now getting a tight grip.

Peter Roberts got away from the attentions of Montague to head against the bar and just a minute later schoolmaster Underhay took advantage of a McGuinness error to pull one back for Torpoint for 2-4.

John Bolton showed menace in a midfield move but Montague was doing an effective policing job and cleared away for Lindsay to put Wealdstone back on the attack. He was downed by Viv Folley and of course took the free-kick himself. Sensibly discarding his rocket effort — the ball was now so heavy that even Henry Cooper could not hit it any real distance — he passed straight to Mc-

found Charlie Townsend to avail. A good run by Slade ended in the mud before Bolton netted for Torpoint but the vigilant, Mr. Knight disallowed it for offside, ironic since the home side had been relying on the offside trap throughout.

Wealdstone, with Bremer now dropping back, put up the shutters but it was as well that Williams was running the shop. He was now in unbeatable form and Dave Babb turned away sadly shaking his head as his shot was clawed down at the last moment. On 82 minutes Williams saved twice in the 60 seconds and Torpoint began to lose heart. There was a flurry of alarm with five minutes left when McCormack slipped and got up feeling his leg — had that hamstring gone again? but it was only cramp and the final minutes slipped away with two exhausted teams just fit to drop.

Out of the lot Williams was indisputably on his best form since joining Wealdstone. McGuinness, those two bits of hard luck apart, had a fine game against Bolton and the reliable Montague was taking no nonsense from anyone.

Wembley again? Could well be. This is a tough, typical Cup side capable of taking enormous pains to improve their game and not afraid to criticise each other.

Torpoint Athletic: C. Bradford, J. James, M. Yeo, V. Folley, J. Scudgen, B. Bolton, D. Underhay, D. Ewings, Wealdstone: A. Williams, D. Pettit, D. Leonard, C. Townsend, I. McGuinness, J. Slade, B. Bremer, J. McCormack, D. Swain, D. Montague, H. Lindsay, Subs: J. Hutchingson.



The F.A. Amateur Cup, instituted in 1893-94 and won by Wealdstone for the only time in 1965-66. Enfield are the current holders. Of the 32 first round games due to be played on Saturday only four could be completed. The postponed games will be played on Saturday, when Wealdstone visit Tooting and Mitcham United in an Isthmian League game

UNFAIR

Rather a lot of barracking of one linesman, Mr. D. Dodd from Tavistock, on the grounds that he wasn't keeping up with the play. Bit unfair, I thought. Apart from the fact that rain doesn't distinguish between players and officials, he had carved a miniature Suez Canal along the line after twenty minutes and how he kept his feet at times was little short of miraculous.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

This afternoon, we are honoured to receive Wealdstone, one of the country's leading amateur clubs, and members of the elite Isthmian League. They are currently third in the table with two games in hand.

As can be seen from their line-up, they include two Internationals and several County players, and County Caps are not easily won in the London area.

We welcome them to Torpoint and hope they enjoy their brief visit to the Westcountry.

We have always hoped for a 'plus' draw, so this afternoon, supporters will have the chance of seeing the best in amateur soccer.

Our visitors won the Amateur Cup as recently as 1966, when they defeated Hendon at Wembley, and last year were narrowly beaten by losing finalists, Shalkeopdale.

A tremendous task faces our lads today, but they are confident that with your support, they can give their illustrious opponents a good run. It is safe to say that this is the best team Torpoint has ever had. Team spirit has never been better and if they go down today, it will not have been for want of trying. Don't let it be said it was through lack of support.

Spare a thought for regular right winger, Roger Thompson, who has been seriously ill and must be bitterly disappointed at missing today's game. Happily young Roger is on the road to recovery. We wish him well and hope he will soon be back in harness.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity today's game, especially the trades people. In our geographical position the Amateur Cup is something of a gamble, and without your help, could be financially disastrous, as our usual ' Gates' rarely cover Referees' expenses.

We ask all new spectators not to forget us after today's game, but to come along again. The lads have, after all, proved over the years that they are the best amateur team in the West.

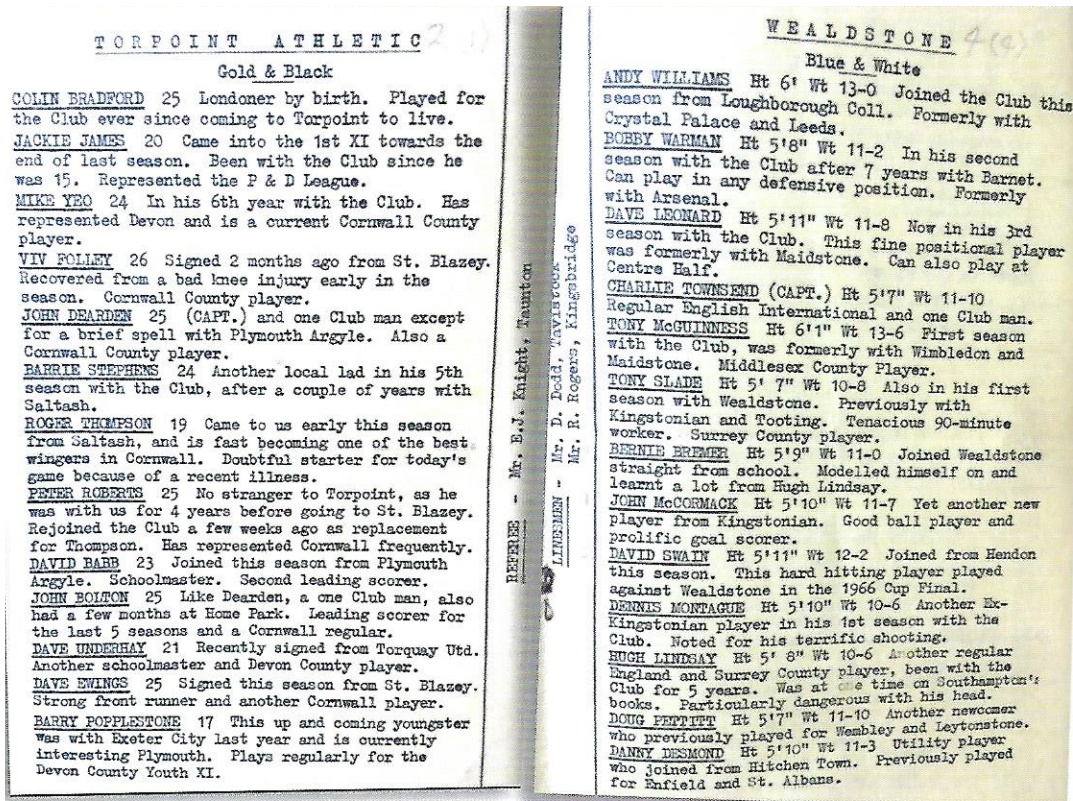
- FORGETTING NAMES:**
 January 20th - Helston (Home) Cornwall Senior Cup
 February 1st - Devon v Cornwall (Home Park, Plymouth)
 February 10th - St. Blazey (Home) Cornwall Charity Cup

SNAP!

The official party, 40 strong, was full of praise for British Rail who did them proud on the trip, arriving in Plymouth just 15 minutes late going down and clocking right on the dot on the return journey on Sunday morning.

But one of the things they couldn't have arranged knowingly popped up as centre forward Dave Swain was midway through his dinner on the Friday evening. The dining car waiter, after one careful question, served the vegetables and then revealed that he used to play centre forward too... for Torpoint!

Right: Torpoint's match programme is rather gushing about the visit from The Stones. And so was the weather! Left and above right: The Harry O had a few unusual diary-style pieces about the game



Above: A bit of a first in all my programme-collecting days. The Torpoint prog didn't have the usual 1-11 team listing, with substitutes, but instead had pen pictures of every player with the names of the officials listed down the middle as shown. Ground-breaking in 1968!

Torpoint Athletic, 2016

This is Torpoint's current Mill Lane ground, just half a mile from Defiance Field where the 1968 game took place. In those days, Athletic were South Western League champions - hence their invite to the prestigious Amateur Cup. These days they play in the SW Peninsular League, three steps below the National League. This shot was taken when they beat Clevedon Town 1-0 in the FA Vase two months ago



Rewind apologies.. at least someone's reading it!

THE 'Rewind' feature in the programme for the Ebbsfleet United game included a couple of mistakes - obviously deliberate ones, just to keep our readers on their toes. We believed the fan, waving at the front of the first supporters coach heading to Torpoint for the Amateur Cup game in 1968 was long-time fan Ray Corner but in fact it was equally long-time fan MICK PULLEN (ringed in yellow on the right) who was sitting next to his dad. Mick is, of course, instantly recognisable 49 years on although he now wears his hair grey and stylishly long.

Also, another veteran fan JOHN JEFFRESON points out that it was not a puncture that delayed the arrival of coach No.1 that day but a rogue tyre that bounced off a lorry into the coach's path just outside Exeter. Oh, and apparently it was very wet. JJ remembered that even more clearly.

