

THE LINE-UPS

WEALDSTONE
ROYAL BLUE/AMBER

v

EASTBOURNE
ALL RED

- G Harvey Isted
- Michee Efele
- William Edjenguélé
- Billy Clifford
- Connor Stevens
- Jerome Okimo ©
- Michael Phillips
- Jack Jebb
- Ross Lafayette
- Danny Green
- Dennon Lewis
- Connor Smith
- Jacob Mendy Mendy
- Dejon Noel-Williams
- Fumnaya Shomotun
- Herschel Watt
- Afolabi Coker
- Ashley Charles
- G Jonathan North
- G Lewis Everett

- G Tom Hadler
- Tobi Adebayo-Rowling
- Kristian Campbell
- Kane Wills
- Kiran Khinda-John
- Manny Adebowale
- Greg Luer
- Mike West
- Nicky Wheeler
- Charlie Walker
- James Ferry
- Dean Cox
- Ayman Gharbaoui
- Sergio Torres
- Ian Gayle
- G Scott Chalmer-Stevens

REFEREE Phillip Staynings **ASSISTANTS** Jonathan Bolland & Thomas Holden **OBSERVER** Douglas Douglas

MATCH SPONSOR Emin Alibey and family

NEXT HOME GAMES

v **WELLING UNITED** (Vanarama National League South) Saturday December 21, KO 3pm

v **ST ALBANS CITY** (Vanarama National League South) Saturday December 28, KO 3pm

v **SLOUGH TOWN** (Vanarama National League South) Wednesday January 1, 2020 KO 1pm

Main club sponsor:



BEARING THE BRUNT
Stones' Michael Phillips was a magnificent stand-in centre-back at Bath City on Saturday, coming out on top in his physical tussle with the abrasive Ryan Brunt (right)

PICTURE: courtesy of @yuffie_c_itv



OFFICIAL AWARD-WINNING MATCHDAY PROGRAMME £3



@wealdstonefc
@wealdstonefootballclub

WEALDSTONE v EASTBOURNE BORO

Vanarama National League South,
Tuesday 10 December 2019, 7.45pm



Main club sponsor:
gpflewis



Written in Stone

Welcome to Grosvenor Vale this evening for our National League South meeting with Eastbourne Borough.

Also for the second time in a little over a month we extend a very warm welcome to our visitors, their management team, officials, players and supporters. We hope you enjoy your brief stay with us and that you manage to see some football on this occasion.

Many of you will be aware that our scheduled game against Eastbourne on the 9th of November was postponed due to a power supply issue that resulted in no

floodlighting or power in the stadium. Following this disappointment UK Power were on site for 12 hours on Sunday and a further 12 hours on Monday. The problem was a blown power cable under the pavement outside one of the houses about 50 yards from our entrance where water had found it's way in to the cable. Power was finally restored and the floodlights up and running at 6-45pm on Monday evening. In total 7 holes were dug in the pavements and the problem was finally found between hole 6 & 7 mid afternoon on Monday.

Please enjoy your evening

Mark

STONES ON THE ROAD BATH CITY 0 - 0 WEALDSTONE

Saturday 7th December 2019
Nicole Cho-Yee Reports.

The highly anticipated clash of the heavyweights ended in a goalless draw between the Stones and the Romans, as the visitors claimed a well-deserved point and clean sheet away from home.

Dean Brennan made one change to the starting line-up which defeated Concord Rangers last week, with midfielder Billy Clifford replacing defensive stalwart Connor Stevens, who was unavailable due to suspension.

The Stones were close to taking the lead in sublime style in the 4th minute, when Jack Jebb's corner to the far post found Michael Phillips, who headed down to William Edjenguele; he then attempted a fantastic acrobatic bicycle kick, which looped just over the crossbar.

The opening period of the match was fairly tight and even, with neither side able to gain ascendancy; nor dominate possession or proceedings.

The Romans first real threat on goal came in the 29th minute, as Noah Chilvers surged through to the edge of the box and fired a fierce shot, which narrowly blazed over the crossbar.

As half-time approached, the Stones began to generate a few more cohesive and fluid passages of play, with Jebb playing a delightful defence-splitting through ball to

Dennon Lewis in the 39th minute, but Ryan Clarke was quick off of his line to gather for the Romans.

On the stroke of half-time, Wealdstone were close to seizing the lead, as Jacob Mendy latched onto a loose ball and drove a low effort on target, prompting Clarke to make an awkward save.

After a goalless first half, the Stones resumed the second half in a determined fashion, with Michee Efete bursting down the right wing to whip in a teasing cross, which rebounded off of the crossbar, in the 50th minute.

Five minutes later, Wealdstone were again close to assuming the lead, as Phillips released Mendy down the right wing, where he cut inside and struck a shot which rolled agonisingly past the far post.

As the second half progressed, the match began to become more open and stretched, with end-to-end action, as both sides pressed for a coveted goal to break the deadlock.

In the 75th minute, the Romans were close to taking the lead as Adam Mann struck a brilliant first-time volley, which dipped just over the crossbar.

Another quick counter attack by the hosts in stoppage time saw Chilvers cut side and fire from the left-hand side of the box, but his effort flew past the far post.

The match finished in a stalemate, with both teams cancelling each other out, as defence prevailed.



FOR ALL FIXTURE NEWS
WWW.WEALDSTONEFC.COM

HOME

WELLING UNITED

Vanarama National League South

Saturday 21st December, 3pm

St ALBANS CITY

Vanarama National League South

Saturday 28th December, 3pm

SLOUGH TOWN

Vanarama National League South

Wednesday 1st January, 1pm

CHELMSFORD CITY

Vanarama National League South

Saturday 11th January, 3pm

AWAY

SLOUGH TOWN

Vanarama National League South

Thursday 26th December, 1pm

OXFORD CITY

Vanarama National League South

Saturday 4th January, 3pm

BILLERICAY TOWN

Vanarama National League South

Tuesday 7th January, 7.45pm

HAVANT & W'LOOVILLE

Vanarama National League South

Saturday 18th January, 3PM

Vanarama National League South - Table @ 7th December

#	Team	Pt	HW	HD	HL	AW	AD	AL	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
1.	Wealdstone	17	7	0	1	6	1	2	13	1	3	39	20	19	40
2.	Weymouth	18	7	1	1	2	6	1	9	7	2	34	18	16	34
3.	Slough Town	18	6	3	1	4	1	3	10	4	4	30	18	12	34
4.	Havant & Waterlooville	16	4	3	2	5	2	0	9	5	2	36	18	18	32
5.	Bath City	19	6	3	1	3	2	4	9	5	5	31	18	13	32
6.	Dorking Wanderers	19	6	2	2	2	4	3	8	6	5	30	29	1	30
7.	Hemel Hempstead Town	16	5	1	2	4	1	3	9	2	5	24	21	3	29
8.	Braintree Town	19	4	1	4	4	1	5	8	2	9	31	40	-9	26
9.	Hampton & Richmond Borough	19	4	1	4	4	0	6	8	1	10	28	32	-4	25
10.	Maidstone United	17	3	3	1	3	3	4	6	6	5	26	20	6	24
11.	Billericay Town	16	4	3	0	2	3	4	6	6	4	23	23	0	24
12.	Oxford City	18	3	2	4	3	3	3	6	5	7	27	29	-2	23
13.	Chelmsford City	19	3	5	2	2	2	5	5	7	7	31	34	-3	22
14.	Eastbourne Borough	18	3	2	4	2	5	2	5	7	6	17	25	-8	22
15.	Concord Rangers	19	4	2	4	2	1	6	6	3	10	26	32	-6	21
16.	Dartford	18	1	5	2	4	1	5	5	6	7	26	34	-8	21
17.	Welling United	19	4	2	4	1	3	5	5	5	9	20	24	-4	20
18.	Chippenham Town	17	3	3	2	1	4	4	4	7	6	16	19	-3	19
19.	Dulwich Hamlet	18	2	2	5	2	4	3	4	6	8	22	25	-3	18
20.	Hungerford Town	19	2	2	5	3	0	7	5	2	12	21	33	-12	17
21.	Tonbridge Angels	19	4	2	4	0	2	7	4	4	11	24	34	-10	16
22.	St. Albans City	18	1	3	6	2	2	4	3	5	10	18	34	-16	14



Written in Stone

Welcome to Grosvenor Vale this afternoon for our National League South meeting with Eastbourne Borough.

We extend a very warm welcome to our visitors their management team, officials, players and supporters. We hope you enjoy your brief stay with us.

Thanks also to Emin Alibey and family for sponsoring today's Game.

Further thanks to our ball donors the ever

generous Ray Corner and Peter Carter. We hope you all enjoy your day of hospitality.

We continue to look for sponsors to ensure we remain competitive on the pitch. Full details of all our sponsorship packages, which can be customised to your individual requirements, can be found in the pages of this very programme.

Enjoy the game

Mark

HELP REQUIRED

We are looking for a volunteer to join our amazing matchday hospitality team.

Operating in the roll of sponsor and guest liaison this position is a fantastic way to become involved in the club and help develop our important relations with our matchday sponsors and guests of the Board of Directors.

If you would like more details or to discuss the position

please E-mail club President Paul Rumens at paulrumens59@gmail.com



MATCH SPONSORS EMIN ALIBEY & FAMILY

I am delighted to support Wealdstone FC as today's Match Sponsor with my family and friends!

Born in North London, so of course I became a massive Arsenal fan, after moving to Harrow as a child I started watching Wealdstone at Lower Mead with my mates and over the years I have followed the Club, trying to get over to Grosvenor Vale for as many games as possible.

My career started in Advertising sales for the Informer Newspaper group, before moving onto launch All Sport Weekly which covered The Stones. I then became Business Development Manager at Watford FC, before spending 13 great years as a Senior Corporate Account Manager at Arsenal. I left them in August 2018 to set up my own Sports Consultancy business based in Rickmansworth and working with a number of clients including Watford and Go Sport Travel.

Wealdstone is a very Special Football Club with the most amazing supporters who always travel to away matches in such large numbers. We find ourselves in a great league position after 15 games and so much credit must go to Dean, Stuart, the team and to Rory and the Board.

Please let's continue to move forward together and may I encourage all our amazing fans to really support the Team and Club in as many ways as possible and please let's all try and bring along one or two new supporters (family & friends) to a few matches to help increase our home crowds!

Emin

BALL DONORS RAY CORNER & PETER CARTER



WEALDSTONE

FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 2019/2020

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WEALDSTONEFC@BTINTERNET.COM • WWW.WEALDSTONE-FC.COM • COMPANY NO. 3953962

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Peter Worby, Mark Barton,
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Sports Therapist
Abigail Maunders
Goalkeeping Coach
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Kit Manager Tony Waugh

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

**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**

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 Bulls 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.

Wealdstone FC Board of Directors

From the Gaffer

Reflecting on the month of October I feel that we have done really well to win both league games, Chelmsford City away and Tonbridge Angels at home especially after our defeat at home to Havant & Waterlooville. Most pleasing for me is the response from the Havant defeat which has seen us take 7 points from the 9 available.

We had a decent cup run to help raise some much needed coppers for the pot and personally I learned so much from both Maidenhead games. Yes we were very unlucky not to win the first game, but in the 2nd game we learned that the detail and preparation Maidenhead brought into the replay was the difference for their victory. They had different set pieces and played with a different formation, with two runners from midfield and they trained Monday and Tuesday morning. We gave a good account of ourselves and refereeing decisions didn't appear to go our way. In the cup you always need that slight bit of luck.

Last week we travelled to Dorking Wanderers and our supporters were amazing. You guys sang loud and proud and I know our players appreciate your positive support. On the pitch it was a very entertaining game, Dorking are a good footballing side with a very ambitious owner. Before the game we would have been happy with a point with the amount of injuries and suspensions we had, but from the position we found ourselves in at halftime we should have killed off the game. We new the next goal was incredibly important and we had two glorious opportunities to get it before Dorking got a goal back. All in all I felt a draw was a fair result for both teams and we will respect the point and move onto the next game.

Today we host Eastbourne Borough

and they have had a change of manager in recent weeks, there's no doubt that their players will be right up for the game today. We have to continue to take it one game at a time, we have to make sure we keep setting the tone with our work ethic and earn the right to play our attack minded football.

There are no easy games in our division and our players know what is expected of them. Get right behind the lads again today, we want to make the vale our hostile fortress.

Together we are Wealdstone

Dean



www.wealdstone-fc.com



IN MEMORIAM

TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE REPRESENTATIVES OF WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN TWO WORLD WARS.

1914 - 1918



PERCIVAL ANDREWS

DoB 28.04.1889 in Hendon, Middlesex. Died on 4th May 1918, aged 29 in 30 General Hospital, Calais, France.

CHARLES JOHN FRANCIS BELLCHAMBERS

DoB 16.09.1882 in Hendon, Middlesex. Died as a result of his wounds received at the Battle of Poelcapelle, on 11th October 1917, aged 35

CHARLES HENRY BIRD

DoB -.1894. Died of wounds received in the final advance with his unit in Picardy, at the battle of Mons between 17th October and 11th November 1918.

HENRY (HARRY) JAMES BOWELL

DoB -.04.1878. Killed in action on 27th September 1915.

RUSSELL WILLIAM BRADBERRY

DoB -.10.1884. Died of fever in Rouen Hospital on 3rd December 1917 aged Died 03/12/1917 Age 33.

WILLIAM HENRY COZENS

DoB -09.1877 in Fulham, London. Killed in Action on 21st March 1918 aged 41 in the Battle of St Quentin

FREDERICK FARMBOROUGH

DoB - - c1881. Killed in action 12th October 1916 in an attack on Baghdad.

GEORGE RICHARD (DICKY) GOODEGE

(Incorrectly recorded by the club originally as Goodage R) DoB -.1888. Killed in Action on 22nd November 1915 aged 27

WALTER LANGSTON HOWMAN

DoB -.04.1885. Killed in Action on 19th August 1916 while serving with the 1st Middlesex in the region of High Wood on The Somme

FRANK TINGAY MARTIN

DoB --.12.1888 in Harrow. Killed in Action on 30th July 1915 at Hooge, near Ypres, Belgium.

JAMES J ROBERTSON

(Incorrectly recorded by the club as Robertson G). DoB unknown. Died of wounds received aged 30, on 16th August 1918 at Vignacourt.

1939 - 1945



KENNETH GEORGE EDWIN BALDWIN

DoB -.01.1920. Killed in Action on 28th March 1945, during Operation Plunder, Rhine crossings

ROBERT WILLIAM BIDEWELL

DoB--.09.1919 in Watford, Herts. Killed in Action aged 25 on 25th September 1944 in Holland

CHARLES EDWARD BUNCE

DoB --.---.1913 in St Albans, Herts. died as a Prisoner of War of the Japanese on 25th June 1943.

WILLIAM AINSLEY BURTON.

A civilian killed as a result of enemy action.

WILLIAM WILFRED PARR

DoB --.---.1916. Killed in Action on 8/03/1942 aged 26.

ERNEST WILLIAM WALKER

DoB --.---.1920. Killed at Sea 3rd August 1944 when HMS Quorn was sunk by a human torpedo

THOMAS WILLIAM WINTERBOTTOM

DoB --.---.1924 (incorrectly recorded by the club as Winterbotham, W.) Killed in action on 28th March 1944.

LEST WE FORGET

As many of you will know, over recent seasons a great deal of research has been completed to identify and detail as much as possible about those representatives of Wealdstone FC that lost their lives in the two world wars. This culminated in an insert in the programme for the Remembrance weekend match in 2017 and last season, as part of the 100 Years Ceremony when the new Wealdstone FC War Memorial was unveiled in the clubhouse.

It had been intended that this would see the end of the research and in future years the club would revert to a simple memorial list, to pay our respects, however a couple of contacts have been made in the last year that I think are worthy of sharing as an update.

After the game last year, I was in the clubhouse watching people looking at the Memorial Panel when I was approached by none other than Charlie Townsend and his wife, Margaret. They spoke about one name on the memorial, that of Fred Farmborough, the former player (albeit with only one first team appearance among a handful of reserve appearances around 1900) who had been 'found' and added to the new memorial, having not appeared on the original. It turned out that Fred was in fact a relative (if I remember correctly Grandfather) to Charlie and in their own family research, they had recently found his name on the Wealdstone War Memorial tower in the town. What they hadn't been aware of through the family was his appearance for the club! Indeed, another Farmborough that had also played for the club a little later is another of Charlie's relatives!

Along similar lines, I received an email from Colin Ward who had picked up on a piece in the local paper when I said it would be good to find any living relatives of those that had fallen. He got in touch as Henry James Bowell (known as Harry and often recorded with the surname Bowells also) was one of those named. He had married in 1910 to Ellen May Corke, who was Colin's mother's aunt! He was able to provide a number of details about Henry including his work at David Allens print works which later became part of Her Majesties Stationary Office. What I was able to tell him was that Henry had also played for Allens Athletic who were often opponents of Wealdstone FC

in the early 1900's, prior to joining the club. Indeed, the family had no idea that he had played for either side!

A little later an email appeared forwarded I think by Fingers from a lady that had been in touch with the club. Steph Dimmock had found the Wealdstone history on the website and found the remembrance details from 1917 when the booklet was produced, and in particular having interest in Percival Andrews. Steph's grandmother was Percival's niece, though she knew very little about him as she was born in 1935, many years after he had been killed. I was happy to send them copies of press cuttings and his Obituary from the Harrow Observer and also a picture of his gravestone from the Les Baraques Military Cemetery in Sangatte, France. These, along with the other details added to the family knowledge of their ancestor. They were also able to correct a century old error in that the Harry O had named Percival's brother as Thomas when in fact it was Herbert! Our records have also been updated!

More recently, in fact a month or so ago, Sateesh Khanna copied me in on an email from Vikki Griffin. The gist of the mail was that Vikki had been told by her mum that "Uncle Walter used to play for Wealdstone before World War One but he was killed in the war". Happy to help once again, I was able to provide the two articles in which Uncle Walter had featured on the preceding Remembrance matches, and I also filled in what we know about Walter Langston Howman and his playing career (81 known appearances and 16 goals despite being profoundly deaf) and I was also able to send some further details and press cuttings about him and his brother who was also wounded in the war. Their sister, 'Nanny Louie' is Vikki's Great Grandmother, and Grandma who remembers Walter's brother Harold is now 93!

ROGER SLATER

**They shall grow not old, as we
that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the
years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and
in the morning
We will remember them.**



BY SUDHIR RAWAL



WEALDSTONE v EASTBOURNE BOROUGH
ELMSLIE ENDER

The Elmslie Ender



Back after his extended break EE catches up....

It has been a while. Sunday morning hangovers or weekends away have meant that the keyboard hasn't been bashed much of late, but EE is back for another instalment. There are a few games to catch up on since I last wrote. I suspect Maidenhead was covered in the Tonbridge prog, but another 4Q departure had the same cruel storyline as the last few have. We tend to get relatively easy draws until the 4Q and then get drawn against a Conference National side. Dagenham were top of the National; and as for Sutton some still haven't recovered from with us being a penalty kick away from the 1st round proper in injury time only to lose in the same added time!

Maidenhead were there for the taking in the first game at York Road. We dominated but the lack of being clinical in both boxes lead to the over 400 Stones fans settling for a draw. Monday's draw dangled the carrot but as you see more often than not, the lower ranked side's best opportunity is the first game and we were comprehensively beaten in the replay. Whilst Maidenhead aren't a live game, they have been selected to host MotD and extended highlights as well, so

time to keep away from TV this weekend. Wasn't Maidenhead the perfect example of how segregation can cause more problems than it solves? There has been no history of problems between both sets of supporters, quite the opposite in fact. Yet, in the second half of the first game, with both sets of supporters next to each other, the bravado and stupidity that fences bring was for all to show. No segregation, our fans would have been at the other end of the ground.

I'll ignore the Mickey Mouse county game, but against Tonbridge we got the show back on the road with a win, but a performance that, for those that were there, appeared to be our worst of the season. Well that's what the forum said. A sign of a good team is not to play well and still win, I suppose.

Last week we travelled to newly promoted Dorking Wanderers and their shinny new, county funded football ground. Stones were down to the bare bones and I suspect most of us would have taken a draw at the start of the game, with four starters missing and the bench looking a little threadbare. A win would have been a statement of intent to others that despite the missing players, we could still turnover a side that had a strong home

record. Until halftime, the win was certainly on and Dejon looking quite mustard in front of goal giving us a two goal lead! The crucial moments came just after half time when we probably had three good chances to finish the game off, but having not taken any of them, Dorking came much more into the game.

I would argue that there was a foul all day on Watts just before their first goal, but from there on in, it was almost all Wanderers and we could have easily lost the game but for some fine keeping from the Ox. Dorking's pristine new ground is a rather strange experience. It felt more like being at a rugby match rather than a football ground with it being obvious that a number of their supporters were new to football. Some stayed at the wrong end even. It was all rather muted to be honest especially when they scored apart from the music being played and the scoreboard flashing away. The whole experience a little too antiseptic and the ground clearly needs work on it to improve the supporter experience but the welcome was warm and the brouhaha about their stewarding had clearly been worked on, as they were pretty much hands off throughout the game. And Dorking is a lovely town.

This article is named, much like the fazine was before, after the great Elmslie End at Lower Mead. It's wooden terracing and high corrugated iron backing and

overhanging roof made it an iconic place to watch football from. Atmospheric and foreboding to opponents; it's yellow and blue sign hanging from the centre of the stand was responsible for many a banged head when a goal was scored. On the Last Day it was taken off its hinges and paraded around the pitch whilst the game was still going on! Anyway, the sign was housed and then

'The old and the new, bonded together to represent how far we have come'

taken around our various groundsharing arrangements until it was destroyed during a mysterious fire at the White Lion Ground. Probably the most iconic symbol of Lower Mead lost forever. We have now seen the old Supporters' Club shop sign, the actual original sign, restored to the Club Shop after nearly thirty years and there is a project to recreate the old EE sign and restore it to a part of the Vale. The old and the new, bonded together, to represent how far we have come since the dark days of losing Lower Mead, ground sharing around

southwest Hertfordshire and Middlesex. liquidators sell it off, probably to property developers, to pay off creditors. Without a stadium, a home, as we all well know, a football club is listless and a wandering soul deprived of the love of its family/community. For the moment we can sympathise with the Bury fans. We have been pretty close to the fate that has befallen them in the past.

Sud



Fan in the Stand

Let's be honest, the two years that I covered the Stones at Watford were not great.. but I'll never forget them

Today's FiS is not just any Stones follower. Andrew French was the young and fresh-faced Watford Observer reporter (right) tasked with covering Wealdstone during the club's ill-fated (and ruinously expensive) groundshare with Watford FC for two years between 1991 and 1993. We still look back fondly on his efforts to give the Stones comparable column inches with the Hornets. Andy is here today with his teenage sons, with the club in a much healthier position....

Was it really more than 28 years ago that I started two very memorable seasons (not always for the best reasons) of covering Wealdstone for the Watford Observer?!

I've got married, had two sons and am on my fifth job since then! But from 1991 onwards, Wealdstone (or Weald-stun as TV reporters seem to think, don't get me started...) has been one of 'my teams'. A



The Stones line-up at Vicarage Road Brian Hall and Dennis Byatt in the

team whose results I look for. I follow the Twitter feeds. And I regale my two teenage sons, who are at today's game with me, with stories from those two seasons.

Let's be honest, it wasn't a great couple of years no matter how you look at it. And for those loyal Stones fans who had seen Lower Mead disappear, watching their team anywhere else was never going to be suitable. The fact they ended up ground sharing with Watford at a Vicarage Road stadium - which was sort of half developed and half still in the early 1900s - was a pretty soulless experience.

But what I learned very quickly was that Wealdstone and their fans are unlike most other clubs I have encountered, both at professional and non-league level. I'm sure everyone says that about every club, but I genuinely believe it. I was amazed when I went to the first few away games in the 1991/92 season and saw how many Stones fans travelled - and how much noise they

made! Also, it was a friendly place, somewhere I was welcomed very quickly.

I remember dealing with the likes of Hughie Marshall, Peter Braxton, the lovely Couch brothers, Graham Smith and, of course, Brian Hall. I really liked Brian, and I respected what he had achieved with the Stones in the years before I covered the club. I always explain to my sons that had it happened a few years later, Wealdstone would have been in the football league and lauded as double winners thanks to Brian's achievements.

in 1991 with boss back row

So it was a shame to watch that 91/92 season because it was apparent from way out that Brian was not going to come close to achieving those heady days.

It was a very mixed squad - for every Neil Cordice there was a David Gipp - and although Brian shuffled the pack, the team was on a downwards trajectory. We started pretty well to be fair, and I remember a really comprehensive 6-2 win at Corby quite early on with Mark Hopson starring.

I recall thinking we looked very mid-table, able to turn it on and beat most teams but also equally capable of putting in an absolute stinker. There was an away defeat at Dover towards the end of September where I think we didn't register a goal attempt and after losing 3-0 Brian met the players at the door of the dressing room in an absolute rage, telling them to get their clothes and get straight on the bus.

Yet, despite the inconsistency, I never



Proud Dad: Andrew with his boys Liam (left) and Aidan

thought relegation was an issue. Until the New Year. We only won two league games in the first three months of 1992, and the death spiral started. We failed to score in six of the last 12 league games, and suddenly that first season at Vicarage Road was going to be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

I used to speak to Brian at least once a week on the phone, as well as after every game, and I could tell how much it hurt him. I also used to travel on the team bus to some away games, and to say some of the players didn't share his depth of passion for the cause would be a fair assessment.

Behind the scenes things were unravelling as well. I'd met Alan Clifton at a game at Lower Mead before the move to Vicarage Road, and as a 20-year-old cub reporter I found him a bit intimidating. He was always very pleasant to me, but I felt there was a side to his character I didn't want to discover.

However, he moved on and I remember David Pollock becoming chairman. I got on well with David, a very approachable man who helped me understand

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ANDREW FRENCH CONTINUED

some of the machinations of what was happening away from the pitch. I do remember thinking he had a much posher voice than most non-league officials I'd encountered as well!

Before the start of the 1992/93 season, Brian departed and Dennis Byatt stepped into the manager's chair. Of course, Dennis is a legend of that double-winning side, but I only knew him as a coach and then manager. He was a top bloke. More light-hearted than Brian but no less passionate and also a bit more open and forthcoming.

Having had a season where I'd done a lot of travelling on the team bus (*not a place to be after a bad away defeat with Brian Hall in a right mood but a couple of players laughing when he was delivering a ranting review of the game in the gangway between the seats*), I began to travel to away games with fans I'd got to know. As I said before, I really liked Wealdstone's fans. Proper football people. I'm very bad with names these days but the likes of Pete Worby, Roger Slater, Sudhir Rawal and Layne Paterson jump straight to my mind. I'm pretty sure Worby led me astray as I don't think most journalists headed for the pub nearest to the away ground that served good real ale, and then loaded up before dashing into the stadium as close to kick-off as possible....

I may be wrong, but was there also a guy called Forest? He always carried a plastic bag with contents unknown, and was greeted from the terraces with a chorus of

'Oh, he's here again, the man with a forest up his nose' to the tune of Kate Bush's The Man With a Child in his eyes....

We started the season by being thumped at home by Margate (am I right in thinking their supporters are the absolute antithesis of Stones fans?!), but after that we looked pretty decent.

There was the affable Dermot Drummy – taken far too soon – in midfield and then up front we had probably my favourite player of my period covering the club: Dave Venables. I loved the way he approached games – lively, pacy, alert and willing to run. We also had Drax – Johnson Hippolyte – who was probably more agricultural in style than Venables but was effective nonetheless.

A seven-game unbeaten run in the league with Venables and Hippolyte spear-heading things had the Stones right in the mix. During that run there was also a night I recall very fondly: a 2-0 FA Cup replay win away at Wivenhoe. As I said, my memory isn't good anymore but I seem to remember us being a goal up through Drax but were really hanging on. Drax then scored again, and there were proper limbs in the away end (by now I'd started watching games with the fans, and my celebrations were halted when a flying arm whipped my glasses off and they broke on the floor).

That run in the FA Cup (the Stones version of the Only Way is Essex as we beat Tiptree, Witham and Wivenhoe) may also have turned the season negatively as I remember we were drawn at home to Dagenham and Redbridge of the Conference. They gave us a 6-1 whipping and I'm pretty sure we weren't the same after that.

Behind the scenes I'd now met Paul Rumens, another Wealdstone stalwart who I have stayed friends with, albeit from a distance, in the years since. He's

why I'm writing this and how I came to be here at the game today. If you're reading this, you don't need me to tell you what a character Paul is, or how much he loves the club. Suffice to say I thoroughly enjoyed working with Paul, and he became well known to a few of my Watford Observer colleagues too – most notably the late and great Simon Ricketts, who came to a couple of games that season and got a love for the club and non-league football generally.

We used to refer to Paul as 'Rocking Rumens' (I'm not sure he knew that) after several very wild nights out at Sterlings, a club he owned in Northampton, which then finished at his rather swish house. What happened in Sterlings stayed in Sterlings, enough said.

I'm pretty sure we were still well in the promotion hunt at the end of the year but, as in the previous season, the Stones came down with the Christmas decorations in January. Only five league defeats by December 31, but 12 more in the New Year.

April was particularly bad, no wins, 13 goals conceded and there was a 5-1 defeat at Fareham Town which sticks in my mind as being one of the worst afternoons during a two-year spell when there were quite a few games that were readily forgettable.

We finished mid-table and on reflection, we were exactly that – very mid-table.

It had become obvious that the groundshare was not going to be viable and by the end of the season we knew the Stones were on the move again. That meant I would no longer be writing match reports but I was determined to stay in touch.

I made one very brief but memorable appearance for the supporters team (I came on as sub and my first 'touch' was somewhere between the opposition full-back's knee and thigh. The referee booked me but didn't need to ask my name as he was still writing it down from when I came on).

I saw watch quite a few games at Yeading and got to know Fred Callaghan pretty well, but then I changed jobs, leaving the Watford Observer to become Graham Taylor's Head



The 1992-93 season kicked off with a 4-1 home defeat by Margate... another season to forget

of Communications at Watford. That meant travelling home and away with the players which, as you imagine, was a dream come true for a fan. I was on the pitch when we won the 1999 Championship Play-Off Final at Wembley, and then had the experience of behind a club official during Watford's first season in the Premier League. We finished bottom by some way but I'd not have swapped that season of personal experiences for anything. I stayed in touch with Graham Taylor right up until his untimely death, a wonderful man I counted as a friend. I spent three seasons doing a similar job at Charlton (but commuting from Hertfordshire to Kent each day nearly killed me, literally), and since then I've worked in the gambling industry and I'm now Head of PR and Communications for Butlin's (yes I get cheap holidays, no I don't get a Redcoat).

Today is my first Stones game in I don't know how long, and certainly the first for my two boys. I'm delighted, they're excited and I really hope we see a thumping win for Dean and the boys.

So if you're at today's game and you see a tall, dapper, hirsute chap, that won't be me – but keep an eye out for a baldy with a middle-aged spread and glasses which aren't broken whose two kids might be helping him out of the car, and feel free to say hello. Up the Stones.



One shining light for the sparse fans: David Venables, who went on to play for the England non-League team after signing for Stevenage

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH

WEALDSTONE v EASTBOURNE BOROUGH

Opposition in focus

Founded as Langney Football Club in 1965, the club initially joined the Eastbourne & District Football League. The team played on local recreation grounds before moving to Prince's Park, near the Eastbourne sea-front. By 1973/74 the club had scaled the Eastbourne & Hastings League, and was beginning to look for a future beyond parks football. "They'll never be more than a parks team!" was the infamous comment of one very senior official in Sussex football – but they proved him wrong....

In 1983 Langney Sports were elected as a founder member of Division 3 of the Sussex County League, and swiftly moved up through the divisions, rarely finishing outside the top four in Division One, and respected as a force to be reckoned with. Finally after some close-run campaigns, the 1999/00 season, under management duo Garry Wilson and Nick Greenwood, saw the Sports take the Sussex County League title, gaining promotion to the Dr. Martens League (Eastern Division) where after a season of consolidation at the higher level, the Club finished a creditable ninth in the table.

Meanwhile, on the field, the Sports were laying sound physical foundations too. From those itinerant early years on local parks pitches, the club had always had the vision of a more permanent home, and audaciously they had approached the local council with the improbable project of turning Priory Lane – then a mere expanse of empty marshland – into a proper stadium. The County League years saw those plans beginning to be realised. Then during 2000/01 the club received a £117,000 grant from the Football Foundation to go towards further development of Priory Lane. At the end of the season the Football Committee made one of the most

crucial decisions in the club's history: the change of name to Eastbourne Borough FC. Stalwarts had their reservations, but the new name reflected the club's status as ambassadors for the whole town, and not only the original Langney. But to loyal supporters, we are and always will be still The Sports! Season 2002 saw the club win the Sussex Senior Cup for the first time, beating the holders Lewes 2-1, and within two seasons there was further promotion to the Dr Martens Premier Division. Within another year Borough were elevated to the newly inaugurated Conference South.

2004/05 proved to be a most successful season as Eastbourne Borough reached the Play-O Final. Over 1,000 Borough supporters made the 500-mile round trip to Stoke City for the North v South Final against Altrincham, but it wasn't to be, losing 2-1 in an exciting encounter. The following campaign was disappointing, but the Club achieved another milestone reaching the 1st Round proper of the FA Cup for the first time, with the reward of a home tie against League Two club Oxford United. Cheered on by a record crowd of 3,770, and in front of the Match of the Day cameras, Borough dramatically forced a 1-1 draw with a twice-taken last-minute penalty. Story-book stuff! The replay, though, was lost 3-0 at the Kassam Stadium.

The 2006/07 season saw the squad adopt a change in direction with Garry Wilson placing an emphasis on "quality" not "quantity" and finished in 7th place, 4 points off a play-off berth. Buoyed by the previous league season the club started the 2007/2008 season in high spirits and it was to prove a most successful campaign with Eastbourne Borough beating Hampton & Richmond Borough 2-0 in the Play-O Final at Stevenage. The triumphant night had completed a remarkable rise from

recreation ground football to the pinnacle of non-League, the Conference Premier.

The 2008/2009 season was another step into the unknown for the club, with the opening Premier fixture a home game with Rushden & Diamonds. Any doubts re: competitiveness of the squad, infrastructure of the club, the approach to only segregate when deemed appropriate, or the support of the Eastbourne public were dispelled by the end of the day. Notable results during the season included a double over Forest Green Rovers, a home win over ex-league club York City, success over Wrexham and an incredible 4-0 win at Woking. The season proved to be most rewarding with an impressive mid-table finish, amongst the 'giants' of the non-league game.

2009/10 was a tough season after a bright start, AFC Wimbledon and eventual FA Trophy winners Barrow were defeated at Priory Lane. But a three and a half months drought for a league victory left the Sports needing victory over champions Oxford United in the final game of the campaign. With 6 minutes to go and the scores level at 0-0, and results going against them elsewhere, Borough appeared to be heading for the drop. Then a final minute penalty, coolly converted by Simon Weatherstone, sparked wild scenes and another season in the Premier was secured.

The Sports' third season at National Conference level finally proved too much for the side and the club suffered its first ever relegation. Back in Conference South the Sports had the honour of kicking off the first ever match at the Amex Stadium, against Brighton and Hove Albion in a held-over Sussex Senior Cup Final. The 9,500 attendance remains the biggest crowd that the club has played in front of. There was much optimism for the 2011/2012 season, but after a bright start the season became a struggle, and after only one league win in 12 outings the club parted company with Garry Wilson and Nick Greenwood. The decision for the club was difficult and painful. The decade (plus) of their tenure had seen unprecedented success but the decision was made, and Tommy Widdrington took the reins.

Tommy Widdrington was to oversee a new phase. He remained at the club for two

seasons until April 2017 – a phase of mid-table stability in the National South. Equally important, the club's infrastructure was strengthening, with conversion to a Community Interest Club, the opening of an Academy, and a splendid new 3G pitch installed at Priory Lane. We have spent half a century building – building teams, building facilities, building friendships – and our proudest achievement of 2017/18 was the National League award as Community Club of the Year. On the pitch, Tommy moved on and Jamie Howell was appointed manager ahead of the 2017/18 season. Jamie left the club in February 2019 on the back of a poor run of form after a good start to the 2018/19 season, and Mark McGhee was appointed as interim manager. Under the former Scotland Assistant Manager, the Sports secured their National League South status ahead of 2019/20.

The Sports enter the new season with a new figure at the helm, with former Havant & Waterlooville boss Lee Bradbury named the new manager at Priory Lane.



SPORTS FACTS

GROUND - Priory Lane

CAPACITY - 4,151 (600 seated)

MANAGER - John Bonar

2018/19 - National Lg South - 18th

Previously

H 1/12/18 **L** 0-3 **A** 23/02/19 **W** 3-0

WEALDSTONE'S RECORD v EASTBOURNE BOROUGH

P 10 W 1 D 3 L 6 F 10 A 22

WHO'S WHO?

TOM HADLER - GOALKEEPER

Hadler signed at Priory Lane in June 2019 after his release from Gillingham. Having come through the youth system at the EFL club, he signed his first professional contract in 2015. Having spent spells on loan at Folkestone Invicta, Tonbridge Angels, Gloucester City and Grays Athletic, he became the Gills' second choice goalkeeper in 2017/18. Tom made his senior debut in April 2018 against Blackpool, where he received praise from then-manager Steve Lovell despite the 3-0 defeat.

TOBI ADEBAYO-ROWLING - DEFENDER

Originally a product of the Borough youth Academy, having enjoyed a time with Brighton & Hove Albion, Tobi went on to seek his fortune in the Football League with Peterborough United before going on to make the move to the Irish League, with spells at Sligo Rovers and Cork City. He returned to England in the summer of 2018 having signed on at Bromley, before he made a loan move at Priory Lane permanent later that season.

MANNY ADEBOWALE - DEFENDER

The 6"5 central defender joins after his release from Dover Athletic. Manny enjoyed a spell on loan at Priory Lane last term, starting twice and coming on the bench on three occasions during his month on the south coast. Born and raised in Stratford, Manny came through the ranks at West Ham United before joining then-League One side Shrewsbury Town on a two-year scholarship in the summer of 2013. Upon his release from the Blades, he had spells with Hayes & Yeading United and Bishop's Cleeve.

KRISTIAN CAMPBELL - DEFENDER

Kris joined the Sports from Bromley in the summer of 2018 after a second spell with the Ravens. Athletic, pacey and eager to get forward, the left back has developed into a fan favourite with his committed approach. Has also enjoyed time with Dulwich Hamlet, Merstham and had a loan period at Bognor Regis Town.

DEAN COX - DEFENDER

Born in Haywards Heath, Cox progressed through the ranks at Brighton & Hove Albion

and made his debut as a 17-year old in August 2005. He joined the Sports on loan in 2005/06, playing 11 times without scoring. The playmaker would go on to play almost 150 games for the Seagulls over five years, before he left for Leyton Orient. Then in League One, he proved to be an integral part of Orient's side and scored in the 2013/14 Play-Off final where they lost to Rotherham United on penalties. After almost 300 games for the East London side, he left in the summer of 2016/17 and joined Crawley Town. After two years in West Sussex, Coxy made the switch to Priory Lane where he has made himself an important part of the team.

JAMES FERRY- MIDFIELD

Central mid elder Ferry began his youth career at Brentford, where he captained the Bees' U15 team to victory in the 2012 Milk Cup. He progressed through the youth system at Griffin Park before being rewarded with a professional contract in 2015. An ever-present in the U21 side, he found first team opportunities limited and joined Stevenage in the summer of 2017. After a handful of appearances, he spent time on loan with Nuneaton and Halifax Town before he joined Woking towards the end of 2018/19. After helping the Cards secure promotion to the National League, he joined the Sports in June 2019.

IAN GAYLE - DEFENDER

After coming through the academy at Dagenham & Redbridge, centre back Gayle made his senior debut for the Daggers in April 2014 having had spells on loan with St. Neots Town, Kingstonian, Whitehawk and St. Albans City. However, he was released by the Daggers after they suffered relegation from the Football League. Since then, he has enjoyed spells with Braintree Town, Welling United and Wealdstone before leaving Woking in the summer of Priory Lane.

KIRAN KHINDA-JOHN - DEFENDER

Central defender Kiran returns to Priory Lane for his second spell with the Sports after a year away. The former Crystal Palace academy product had spent four years with the Sports until leaving for pastures new last summer, when he had spells with Woking and Chelmsford City. Having shown great potential in his first spell at Priory Lane, he will be looking to impress once again under

Lee Bradbury.

GREG LUER- FORWARD

Luer joins the Sports after departing promoted Woking, where he scored nine goals as the Cards secured promotion to the National League last season. Greg may be a familiar name with some Borough fans, having played for the club's Under 18 side six years ago before he made the switch to Burgess Hill Town. It was from there that his career took off, as at the age of 20 he was snapped up by EFL Championship side Hull City in January 2015. He made his debut for the Tigers on the opening day of the 2015/16 season, before scoring his first goals in the League Cup that season against Accrington Stanley and Rochdale. However, with opportunities limited he went on loan to Scunthorpe United, Stevenage and then Maidstone United before he left Hull at the end of the 2017/18 season.

CHARLIE WALKER - FORWARD

Charlie signed for the Sports in the summer of 2018 from St. Albans City. Having progressed in the County League with Shoreham, Lancing and Whitehawk, it was his 43-goal season for Peacehaven & Telscombe that attracted the attention of Luton Town, who signed him in 2014. With opportunities limited with the EFL side, he joined Aldershot Town in 2015, where he finished the club's top scorer in his first season. However, he left in December 2016 in a bid for regular football. After scoring 16 goals in 18 months with fellow National League South side St. Albans, Charlie made the move to the South Coast where he has made himself a first team regular.

MIKE WEST - MIDFIELD

Westy joined the Sports in the summer of 2018 from Chelmsford City. Having come through the ranks at Ebbsfleet United, the playmaker went on to make over 100 appearances for the Kent side having made his debut in 2009. He left in the summer of 2012 for League One side Crewe Alexandra, before he returned to Fleet in 2014. Mike played the second half of the 2015/16 season

on loan with Whitehawk – a move he later made permanent. Scored one of 2018/19's most memorable goals against Dartford in a 6-0 win at Priory Lane.

NICK WHEELER - MIDFIELD

Nick is a winger who started his career in Charlton Athletic's youth set-up, where he spent seven years before taking a break from football. He joined Burgess Hill in 2010, before going on to play for Lewes and Tonbridge Angels. At the start of 2017/18 he signed for Dagenham & Redbridge having impressed during his two years at Tonbridge. In November 2017 he made the move to Billericay Town, before joining Woking last season where he helped the Cards win promotion to the National League.

KANE WILLS - MIDFIELD

Midfield engine Kane joined the Sports in August 2017 from Bostik Premier side Worthing. Having come through the youth system at Brighton & Hove Albion, he joined Ebbsfleet United in the summer of 2009. After just one season, he had a brief spell with the Sports in the summer of 2010 before joining Bognor Regis Town. Wills left the Rocks in 2015 to join Margate but returned to Sussex just one season later to join Worthing, where he was club captain up until his departure from Woodside Road.

SERGIO TORRES - MIDFIELD/ MANAGER

The original football journeyman, Sergio came from his native Argentina with basically a pair of boots and a pack of sandwiches, working his way through with sheer commitment as well as terrific talent. After earning a professional contract with Wycombe Wanderers, he has over 250 football league appearances to his name. He famously captained Crawley Town in their FA Cup run that ended at Old Trafford, and also captained Whitehawk's hugely successful side of a few seasons ago, where the Hawks twice made the play-offs in the National League South. Joined Borough in the summer of 2017 where he almost been an ever-present.