

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

A is for Alphabet...Yes, the legendary Wealdstone alphabet back for a third edition!!

It was many years ago now that Terry Hissey (from the Supporters Club) would, with some regularity, ask me if I was going to do another alphabet for the programme. He was a keen fan, myself less so having been down that route twice already.

Nonetheless, our award-winning programme is always open to contributions to keeps things fresh, so for a couple of years now I've been wondering whether it was time again to let the creative juices attempt to flow. Alas time has always been the enemy, not least because I seem to spend an inordinate amount of time sorting and editing photos these days.

And so it was that Tim messaged me back in June: "Sir Ronald of Raffle, would you consider writing a reprise of your Stones Alphabet for next season? We have lost Steve Ducker's column."

Two things sprang to mind: Firstly, I considered Steve's column to be very un-Stones oriented, so this was good news surely. Thanks Steve for the contribution though, I'm sure it was a labour of love and anyone who makes the effort is OK by me.

Just maybe I might now have a little more time on my hands due to my new found three-day working week.

So here we are. Spoiler alert: there may be the odd repetition from versions 1 and 2, but hopefully readers that have been around awhile will have as lousy a memory as me so it won't matter one jot. For new readers, I hope it might provide some entertainment, even if some (most) of the content relates to events of many decades ago.

And so we begin. A is for **AVANTI WEST COAST**, the train carrier that will be taking you on some away trips this season if you

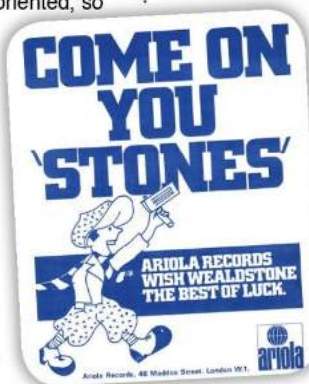
Jon Taffel's weird and wonderful world (just wait for the Ws) kicks off, not unreasonably, with the letter A...

can no longer afford petrol or can't squeeze on to the Supporters' coach. First up will be Oldham, followed shortly afterwards by Altrincham. That is, if their workers are not on strike, and to that end we have our own insider train manager 'Megaphone' Mike Vincent who will take full personal responsibility for any issues that may arise.

If my summer experience is anything to go by then prepare for a rocky ride, trips to Edgbaston for cricket and Workington for Rugby League were trickier than planned - on both occasions return trains were cancelled. So, good luck everyone, and remember to be as kind to Megaphone (and his fellow staff) as he is to match day officials. Remember they're just doing their job.

ARIOLA RECORDS have a lot to answer for. Robin Blanchflower (I think it was)

arrived onto Wealdstone's Board of Directors in the late 70's and Ariola records was his company (so we were led to believe, although Companies House records might suggest otherwise). Anyway, their big hit record was



Only another 25 letters to go! With any luck there won't be enough home games to force the ignominy of X and Z on you, dear reader

Alphabet

A

'Love is in the Air' by John Paul Young (not to be confused with our own commercial supremo John Young).

Every home match thereafter, Love is in the Air would be broadcast from the Lower Mead tannoy box, sometimes both before the match and at half time. Such a football song. Chic Adams had taken over from Bill Emerson on tannoy duties at that time and it was he who spun the decks, occasionally interrupting Love in the Air to spin the other 45 from the Ariola collection, none of which were hits and therefore thankfully don't serve as painful earworms to this day.

You may not know that Love is in the Air was written by George Young, not related to John, and also not the same George Young who served on the Stones' General Services Committee for years. Our George was memorable in his own right for his Sunday lunchtime raffles in the Lower Mead social club.

If you went to our FA Cup 3rd round tie at QPR in January 1978, you would have been treated to the Ariola flyer (pictured left) inside every match programme. It featured a ridiculous cartoon representing no football fan I've ever come across.

Where would we be without **ARCHIVES?** I'm desperately in need of an updated player and season statistics booklet to supplement and/or consolidate the various pieces of literature produced over the years by the late great Roy Couch, Pete Worby and Roger Slater amongst others.

Something that can be referred to as required when some trivial event crops up that needs instant checking to satisfy curiosity. A good recent example was when Altrincham announced the signing of **ALEX Samizadeh**, with Wealdstone in 2018 listed among his former clubs. Now this was a name that didn't immediately stir any memories for me, but thankfully the flurry of twitter activity on the subject that followed revealed that he was a part of one of the Stones' more underwhelm-

ing triple signings in recent times, along with Pawel Kowalkowski and Ogo Obi. Alex and Pawel both featured in one of the most miserable days of the Wilkinson era, the Matt Ball defeat at Biggleswade. Enough said. All three would not go on to have distinguished Wealdstone careers, although that they have made it into this article is an achievement in itself.

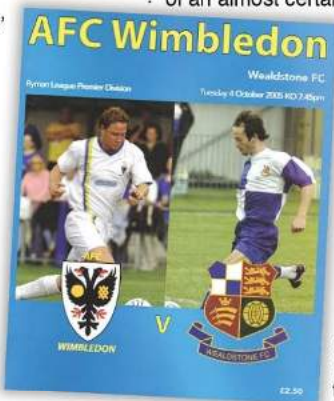
ARTIFICIAL pitches, who likes them? Not me for sure, there's something very special about grass and I really don't think I'd enjoy watching the Stones play on these abominations every week. What can beat the spectacle of players covered in mud and sliding through puddles, not that we get much of that these days with current day pitches. I don't recall which match but I certainly have a memory of an almost certain goal being scored at Lower

Mead only for the ball to stick in the mud enabling the beaten keeper to recover and save. (It was George Urquart who rounded the Arsenal goalkeeper in the famous FA Challenge Cup game at Lower Mead in the autumn of 1971 - sad Ed).

Unfortunately the artificial pitch is something we are having to get used to more and more, and even our pre-season friendlies were blighted by playing on 3 such surfaces. The Hendon groundsman was especially precious about his new carpet, and truth be known he really wasn't happy about the footballers going

on it at all. It certainly wasn't good news Dorking and Maidstone getting promoted, and many hoped that Wood and Bromley would have managed at least one of the promotion slots between them. Whilst one can understand the commercial benefits, the artificial pitch is certainly a Room 101 entry for me.

AFC, or Association Football Club. An abbreviation synonymous with phoenix clubs, those who failed, folded and reformed, or some other such story. Gladly we've never gone down that route despite facing many challenges over the years. It wasn't always the way, and the first 'AFC' club may in actual fact have been AFC Bournemouth back in 1971, the intention being to appear 1st in alphabeti-



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Stones Alphabet contd...

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cal lists of football club.

It does seem rather a bizarre reason to change a name but anything to do with the alphabet is fine by me. One of the most famous AFC's is of course **AFC WIMBLEDON**, a club that has absolutely nothing to do with the Wimbledon club that we had some stirring battles with back in the 70's. Rather than fight for their club, fans of Wimbledon decided to do their own thing after the idea of a trip to Milton Keynes proved unpopular.

What really annoys me about this is that the consortium that was looking to take a football team to Milton Keynes approached a number of clubs. One of those was Barnet, now surely that would have been a better choice?

Another non-favourite amongst Stones fans in the 'AFC' category would certainly be **AFC HORNCHURCH**, a boom-and-bust club that play in a horrible ground and inflicted some horrible results on us during our time at their level. Farnborough also qualify for this horror category by association, although they re-formed without the AFC tag.

AVELEY – a good reason to enjoy being in the National League.

John **ARNOLD** signed for the club at the beginning of the 1976-77 season. The first sight of him for Stones fans was in the Harrow Observer pictured at pre-season training with a triallist who we later found out was Alan Fursden. See newspaper cutting above.

Quite how these two would have got on with the modern day strength and conditioning coach



Hold back there ladies... No, this isn't contenders for a mid-70s Love Island but Stones stars John Arnold (left) and the xylophone-chested Alan Fursden. Damn, should have saved that for the Xs which may well be thin on the ground. A bit like Furze in fact.

I have no idea. Anyway, John Arnold certainly looked more a dustman than a footballer, but it has to be said he was a very skilful winger, and like so many of his type back then he shunned the shin pads in favour of the rolled-down-socks look.

On his debut in a friendly against Torquay he was described thus in the Harrow Observer, 'skilful bundle of energy, looked an asset on either flank and in the middle.' A few months later both Arnold and Fursden were sent off on the famous Lennie Prince FA Cup defeat at Reading, with manager Geoff Coleman commenting afterwards that

he would be dangerous'. My friend Tim seems to think Arnold had such a big hooter he could cross the ball with his nose. I remain unconvinced.

We didn't really see much more of John Arnold: he only started 14 competitive matches scoring 2 goals in that FA Cup run, but I enjoyed watching him that season.

On the subject of Arnold, in my student days in Nottingham I ground-hopped to see **ARNOLD FC**, then managed by the late Ivan Hollett. Anyone remember his screaming goal for Poole Town in our 3-2 win one Sunday there in 1974 during the fuel crisis?

And.... that's your lot for this week, we'll be back next time.

I wonder what **B** for **B****T** might include?

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

So here we go again with the letter B.. and I'm happy to repeat myself here as **BATH** City was always one of my favourite awaydays, sadly no longer in the calendar due to our higher status. Better still, last time this was included it was also listed under **BOGEY** teams, and we have gladly laid that to rest.

Joe Turner started the change in fortunes with the only goal on my birthday at Bath's Twerton Park in 2014, a ground where we'd only won once in our previous 17 league visits. Our home record hadn't been much better. Since then we've had the upper hand and some of those matches will last in our memories for years to come.

Firstly the wonderful 3-1 win at Twerton Park in the 2019 play-offs, to me the greatest day of the Bobby Wilkinson era. An unlikely set of results on the final day of the regular season saw us scrape into the final play off place, something few of us expected when we went behind against Hemel. But we turned it around and aided and abetted by defeats for Dartford & Billericay who both started the day above us, we were off to Bath the following Wednesday evening.

We had a fantastic turn out from our supporters and made a terrific noise despite being segregated on the uncovered terrace behind the goal. The team put in a mighty performance to match, and our 3-1 win was richly deserved. David Pratt's stoppage time goal that wrapped things up I still see in slow motion, still expecting him to miss. But miss he

Oh to B a Stones fan... Ronnie Raffle's stroll through the alphabet focuses on the Baths and Brennans of this surreal football world

didn't, that was his Wealdstone moment. Bobby and myself clashed, not great fans of each other, but the congratulatory handshake I gave him in the bar afterwards was warm and genuine. If you have a spare moment, go and take a look at the match highlights again, I guarantee they will give you the shivers.

(Unfortunately Jon's warm handshake is not among the highlights, disappointingly - Ed)

Secondly, Bath were also on the wrong end of one of Dean **BRENNAN'S** finest days as Stones manager. Bath came to the Vale in January 2020, 2nd in the league behind us. On the back of a drab 0-0 draw at Twerton a month earlier, this match could not have been in starker contrast. This was Brennanball at its best as we simply battered them 7-0. Again, look up the video highlights if you have the time, simply superb.

On Bath, B is also for Ryan **BRUNT**, sent off in the play-off match for a horrible challenge on Jonathan North that turned out



Above: Dave Pratt milks the applause from the 600 travelling fans as Stones won an extraordinary play-off eliminator at Bath in May 2019. It was the former Bath striker's last game for the Stones

Alphabet

B

to be a major factor in us losing the semi-final at Woking the following weekend. In the 7-0 video, listen out for the Ryan Brunt comment as Danny Green takes the corner for our 3rd goal (Warning: Not for children).

B is for **BOLLOCKS**, defined as a slang term for nonsense. A lot of this is spoken both at football and also on social media about football. To be fair, one person's bollocks is another person's common sense, so who really has the right to complain? One possible origin of the modern meaning is that clergymen were notorious for talking nonsense during their sermons, I can relate to this in the context of Hampton & Richmond's famous chaplain's corner, in their programme. No offence meant here, as I say one person's nonsense is another's common sense. Extending this to the verb, the term **BOLLOCKING** usually refers to a severe reprimand, so perhaps less likely to be bollocks but ordinarily warranted.

Interestingly there is a strong correlation between talking bollocks and Beer consumption, although some people talk bollocks regardless.

B is of course also for **BARNET**, a football club based in Harrow, Middlesex. Barnet play in a sanitised soulless home called the Hive and are managed by former Wealdstone manager Dean **BRENNAN**. Since we

returned to the National League, we have played them 4 times, winning 3 and drawing 1. According to the popular song, Barnet get **BATTERED** everywhere they go.

Disappointingly, some of our players have chosen to play with Dean again at Barnet, especially former skipper Jerome Okimo. He really does look rubbish dressed up as a bee. I like bees, but not those bees. Amongst lots of things to dislike about Barnet is the lack of decent **BEER** anywhere near the Hive. Without question, it is the worst of all grounds in the league by a country mile based on this key criterion.

On the subject of Dean **BRENNAN**, (left) we will of course be grateful for the promotion that he led us to. Apart from the Bath win, the match at Havant the previous week in early 2020 will live long in the memory as the one that made us believe we would go up. And the start we had after promotion - behind closed doors sadly but great to watch - as we put one over the likes of Chesterfield and Wrexham in autumn 2020.

Once other teams sussed us out and things weren't going so well, one got the impression that DB sought to blame everyone else. I'm not sure he ever really got us. Today we're in a better place with Stuart and the team at the helm, and DB's definitely not in a better place. Enough said.

Whilst the Stones were playing a pre-season friendly against Charlton, I was very envious of National League newcomers Dorking Wanderers, as

they were playing away at **BARRY** Town United. We need something like this, maybe we need to have a chat and arrange something with our ex-player Sean Cronin currently plying his trade with Llanelli Town AFC. Some of our supporters will be lucky enough to have seen Wealdstone play at Barry Town, we played there on a Thursday in April 1972 in our Southern League Division 1 North days. Sadly this was a couple of years before I was regularly travelling away with the Stones, but I'd love to hear some memories of those who were there. Correct me if I'm wrong, but this was probably our first match in

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January 12, 2020: Billy Clifford and Moses Emmanuel celebrate the start of Bath's obliteration at the Vale



Alphabet continued

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in South Wales. I don't believe I've missed a match there since, including **BRIDGEND** Town in May 1979 – now that was a horrible evening. We lost 3-1 to the league's bottom side in torrential rain, Paul Brannigan scoring our consolation goal, whatever happened to 'Branners'?

B is for **BALL**. My brother had a football when I was young, one of those brown leather things with laces that absorbed water meaning it became like a medicine ball when there was the slightest hint of rain or dew around. Horrible thing, and the only alternative we had back then was a ridiculously light ball that wouldn't go in a straight line.

Usually they'd have the names of all the Division 1 sides on them. I've still got one of these to this day, a relic of the Wealdstone championship winning 73-74 season signed by the team. These balls (top of the trio pictured right) were kicked into the crowd before the final match and I was a very lucky recipient. The names are very faded but it's one of my prized possessions.

George Duck, still a regular at the Vale has his signature in the Spurs section. Compare this with the other two signed footballs (pictured above right) I have which I am happy to give to anyone who might be vaguely interested. One perhaps I should keep as it contains such legendary signatures as Gordon & Leo, but the other I really can't tell who you most of the names are, with the exception of Lee Chappell and Graeme Montgomery. Maybe a competition based on identifying some of the obscure ones might be an option?

B is for **BOSTON** United, a club which again caught the public eye during the pandemic as it



emerged that Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, the Government's Deputy Chief Medical Officer was a season ticket holder. I wonder if he was at Wembley in 1985, apparently Wealdstone did something there that Boston couldn't do.

Maybe in the not too distant future we'll get the chance to go there again if they can achieve promotion, albeit in their new ground. We drove past both old and new on the way to Grimsby last season, what a tragedy that York Street is no longer their home, the finest proper non-league ground I ever visited.

And finally this week B is for **BT Sport**, the provider of both live National League matches usually featuring the 'name' clubs, as well as highlights shows that irritatingly aren't broadcast every week. This coverage is a significant upside of being in this league, and long may it continue. Having just watched the show from the opening weekend's fixtures, it would have been nice for the experts to have mentioned our win rather than just showing the goals, but that is par for the course.

To date our own fixtures and therefore supporter travel plans haven't been disrupted significantly by **BROADCAST** schedules, we aren't fashionable or successful enough (yet) to warrant more than the bare minimum of coverage

apparently. Once again this season a home fixture has been chosen, so next week when Woking roll into the Vale it will be on the Sunday rather than the Saturday. I can cope with that. I suspect we won't see the cameras again this season.

Next week we return with the letter C, so **CU** then!



Above: Boston United's iconic former ground, York Street. Big stadiums are de rigeur in the National League of course, but when we first visited in 1979 this big non-League ground blew our socks off

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

C is for Coach....not the form of transport to away matches, we did that one before back in the 2003-4 first incarnation of this feature. No, this time it is the football **COACH**, those that work with the manager with the aim of improving the players and the team to perform better. I am struggling to remember when the term became a thing to be honest. When I started watching the Stones all I remember on the bench was a Manager, perhaps an Assistant Manager and then a Trainer, who was actually the magic sponge man in case of injury. Even the 1966 World Cup winning squad picture only had a Manager and Assistant in Alf Ramsey and Harold Shepherdson.

Nowadays we have specialist **COACHES** of all kinds, specific to positions such as a goalkeeping coach. This set me off on a journey, seeing if I could establish when we first employed a coach under that title. It was not a very long journey to be fair, I will leave that for someone with more time to waste than me. However, a rummage through some old programmes showed that sometime during the 1981-82 season, Allen Batsford (Manager) and Brian Hall (Assistant Manager) were joined by Alan Ackrell (Staff Coach). A rummage further back in time also shows that in the late 60s and early 70s we didn't have a Manager or Assistant Manager, we had a Coach and Assistant Coach. At some time during the 1970-71 season, Alan Humphries changed from being Coach to Manager. So basically, this particular 'C' is going absolutely nowhere and has been a complete waste of yours and my time! For all that, the current set up we have at the club seems to be working quite well regardless of titles.

C is also for one of the greatest culinary delights known to humankind, the **CHEESE 'N' ONION ROLL**. For those unlucky enough to have listened to my recent debut on Stonescast (the unofficial podcast for all things Wealdstone FC run by Wealdstone fans), you may have heard me mumbling about one of my activities working in the Sup-

Our 2022 alphabet is now up to full steam but somehow trapped in the 1970s... let's 'C' if Jon can update it by at least a decade

porters' Club tea-hut at Lower Mead back in the late 70's, and that was assisting making rolls under the watchful eyes of Tom & Julie Verrall. We made cheese rolls, ham rolls, combinations thereof and of course cheese and onion rolls, soft or crusty. These were made with the pinpoint precision of a Danny Green freekick",

each slice of ham or cheese had to be cut to the correct size so as to maximise the number of rolls produced given the raw materials available. We were more generous with the onions, these being far cheaper of course. Back then, this was for the most part the only food available at Lower Mead other than **CRISPS** and **CONFECTIONERY**, so a perfect precursor to the customary trip to the Dominion Fish Bar after the match had finished.

Nowadays it is generally harder to get cheese and onion rolls as the newer catering



Above: the humble cheese and onion roll looms large in Jon's Lower Mead memories. As I recall, the Verralls (of tea hut fame) had famously onion breath. An unfortunate by-product.

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outlets tend to focus on healthier options such as burgers and chips, but these are sometimes available in the bar or smaller outlets.

One thing is for sure, a cheese and onion roll is a perfect accompaniment for **CANAL**

WATER, a term applied by some of those with absolutely no sense of taste whatsoever to the kind of beverage typically enjoyed by **CAMRA** members amongst others. Yes, this refers to proper ale that actually tastes of something rather than looking and tasting like a glass of bubbles and human waste. Many years ago, cloudy non-opaque beer could very often be associated with beer that was indeed off, usually combined with a vinegary smell, so for sure the appearance could well resemble something you would normally view from the towpath. Not today though, as some of the best beers are cloudy or hazy by design, brewers removing the use of finings from the brew process (finings are produced from fish bladders) for which the sole purpose is to make a drink look clear - absolutely nothing to do with taste, which in actual fact can be adversely affected by this addition. Anyway, something to ponder next time you drink **CARLING**.



I think we'll cut out the middle man this week and just start with ten players

C LICHES must have been invented for football. Those well used and repeated sayings that add nothing to any insight into or analysis of our game. Many managers and pundits might struggle without them of course, but I do

think a fine system should be in place and imposed upon them, maybe to benefit a charitable cause. So, let us get rid of 'a game of two halves,' 'we're taking it one game at a time' and 'at the end of the day' please.

On this subject, we today have the BT Sport team with us, so when you get home and watch the replay later, play 'count the cliché' both with the pundits before and afterwards, as well as during the **COMMENTARY** - this

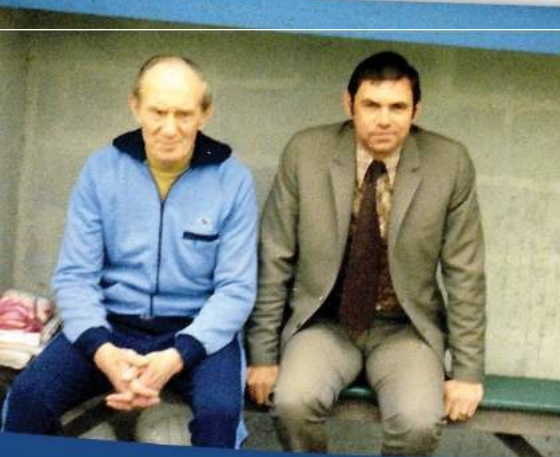
should be fun if they haven't read this beforehand. With the **CAMERAS** here, it would be wrong not to be looking forward to seeing Aaron McLean's Clothing - surely the best dressed man at the Vale since Steve King? Stuart Maynard may have something to say about that though with his little beige number against Yeovil last week. Check it out in the picture above.

Where to next then? A quick foray back into the 70s again, and this time our former manager Geoff **COLEMAN**. Geoff joined the Stones in April 1976

from league rivals Nuneaton Borough. Eddie Presland (pictured below left in the cosy dug-outs at Lower Mead... with a Coach indeed!) had been sacked the previous week in the car park at Hillingdon Borough after a poor run had left us 20th out of 22 clubs, with only Stourbridge and the dreadful Cambridge City below us. Apart from bringing a more negative defence-oriented approach to the club, he also brought a fine sheepskin coat, immensely popular in those days. According to the Harry O, leading scorer George Duck handed in a transfer request to the club before he even met the Brummie Coleman, so upset he was by the sacking of his friend Eddie.

As it was, Coleman's Stones went down to Weymouth on Wednesday April 7th having not won away since April 3rd the previous sea-

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Alphabet continued...

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son (let that sink in) and promptly returned home with all the points. John Morton, another regular at the Vale these days may (or not) remember this well. As the Harry O reported, 'Stones looked in dire trouble when Morton who first damaged his right hand on Dyson's head punching clear, fell dazed to the ground after trying to cut out a cross.' Morton continued but was replaced in goal at half time by Willie Watson, with winger Adriaan Eglite coming on as sub in a rather unfamiliar left back position. For those that travelled and witnessed the 2-0 win this was an infamous 'I was there' night.

Geoff COLEMAN also presided over another infamous 'I was there' night – the 'massive night of soccer hate' when six players were sent off at Wimbledon later that month. Numbers that make our red cards against Gateshead and Yeovil seem rather tame. Stones somehow avoided relegation that season despite finishing in the bottom four by virtue of Dunstable's financial demise. Coleman's stay was short-lived, sacked in February 1977 with the Stones again languishing in the nether regions of the league. His successor was Alan Fogarty - his assistant at both Nuneaton and Wealdstone - under whom the Stones made the 3rd round of the FA Cup for the 1st and only time in their history the following season.

I don't often include current players in this column; however, I feel an exception needs to be made. We are taking CAPTAINS here, so step up Jack COOK to the Wealdstone Alphabet. I am sure that there are many CARDS fans here today that wish Cookie were still with them, but their loss is our gain, and he has been truly outstanding since arriving at the Vale in the summer of 2021. An absolute warrior, outstanding competitor, scorer of key goals and the ability (sometimes) to run in

the correct direction of the photographer when he does.

I must confess that I was a little concerned during the summer. Cookie featured on an excellent podcast with Stuart and Matty saying all the right things about us. But time moved on and there was no news about him signing on for the new season. I wasn't the only one to be mighty relieved when the news broke that he was staying.... all I ask now is not to put us through this particular wringer again next summer.

On the subject of today's visitors, the first time I saw the CARDS play (if my programme collection is a fair guide) would have been in February 1970. In that programme Woking's colours were listed as 'Cardinal and White,' so when did Cardinal get dropped and standard red adopted? Answers on a postcard please. Whilst I remember little of that match, it would be remiss of me not to mention my first ever trip to Kingsfield in September 1975 – that

I do remember well, probably one of the greatest comebacks from a Wealdstone side I have ever seen. Just the small matter of turning around a 3-1 deficit in an FA Cup replay with 10 minutes to go. We won 5-3 after extra time, definitely worth risking bunking off school early to catch the coach there.

(Readers will be thrilled to learn that this game features in the 'Rewind' pages of this very programme -Ed)

And so that brings us to the end of this week's literary adventure, please let me know if you have any D's you would like me to include next time around, but not Derek Dougan.

* I lied about the Danny Green bit



Get my best side, get my best side

Above: Cookie heads the glorious late winner against Bromley and then sets off to locate our resident photographer Sir Ronald of Raffle

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

Ronnie Raffle's dee-lightful stroll through the Wealdstone A-Z turns up memories of Deano and Dorchester

Greetings alphabet fans, it's part 4 of this season's adventures and today it's the turn of the mighty D. If you were expecting to see the greatest D of the lot, all-time top Stones scorer George **DUCK**, you'll be mightily disappointed as we 'did' George in the 2003-4 edition.

Today we start with something a little more recent, and that has to be Peter **DEAN**. He might not have scaled the great heights that George did, he was giving away several inches to start with, but he will always be remembered for one of the great goals since Wealdstone moved to the Vale.

This was season 2013-14, our Isthmian Premier winning season. We had already clinched the title on a famous night at Margate a few weeks earlier, but this was our final league match of the season against Canvey Island on 26th April 2014. All of the league blazers were in attendance, Alan Turvey et al, it was the day we

were to be presented with our Trophy. With the game entering the final stages and still goalless, Gordon Bartlett brought on Deano to replace Luke Pigden. "If Deano scores, we're on the pitch" was the chant from the terraces. Hillsy is claiming the credit for 'inventing' this, others may dispute the claim. Margate hero Charlie Penny finally broke the deadlock with 10 minutes to go, but the icing on the cake was to follow as Deano fired in

from a rebound on what was his final Stones appearance. The fans did indeed go on the pitch, the celebrations were massive, and I was fortunate enough to capture one of my all-time favourite Stones images (pictured below). It was truly one of the great days at the Vale, the player presentations and celebrations going on long into the evening. Thank you Deano!

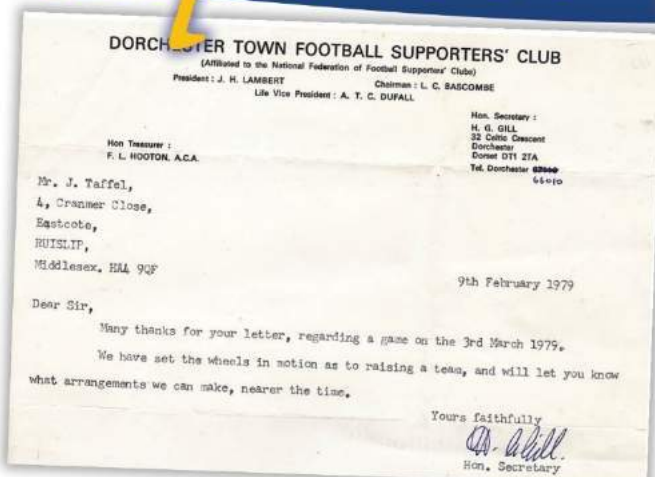
Moving swiftly backwards, D is also for **DORCHESTER** Town. I had never been to Dorchester until 1979, and it was at that time we had been arranging matches against opposing teams' supporters with our newly formed Supporters team. And so it was that I wrote to the Dorchester supporters' club (pictured opposite) proposing a match before our game on 3rd March 1979. Now that match is probably most famous for the Wealdstone debut of a certain



Above: If he hadn't already taken his place there, Peter Dean enters Wealdstone folklore with his last-act-of-the-season strike against Canvey Island. Just look at those faces!

Alphabet

D



Stuart Pearce who must have wondered what he had let himself in for as we were thrashed 5-1, a **DRUBBING**, totally **DIRE**.

Before that, the Supporters match went ahead in the morning as planned finishing in a 6-6 draw. So far so good then, and a skittles match and a few beverages followed with mission accomplished making friends with the locals. However, fuelled perhaps by the evil alcohol as well as a significant degree of ineptness in the Stones performance, there were some 'arguments' between a few of the travelling supporters and Wealdstone officials. This was blown out of all proportion on the pages of The Harrow Observer, a rather unpleasant show of dirty washing in public. The Supporters' Club blamed a splinter group that had booked a coach in their name, this was all a complete nonsense as I had arranged everything in the Supporters' Football Club's name. I was rather conflicted as I was also on the Supporters' Club com-



mittee at the time. Thankfully it all blew over, Stuart Pearce's career improved just a bit after that fateful day and the Supporters' Football team also went from strength to strength.

D is also for **DINNERS**. There have been plenty of these over the years, held to raise much needed funds for the club as well as to celebrate achievements and anniversaries. I've been to plenty, and for some reason I seem to have retained various souvenirs from them over the years, ordinarily in the form of some kind of menu or programme of events. A few things have caught my eye with regards to these, not least the attempt to make the menu seem posher than the

food ever really was. It's as if the organisers were trying somehow to impress what was ultimately a football crowd that would have been content with a pie and chips and a reduced price ticket.

Amongst my favourites is the 1975 75th Anniversary Dinner menu, featuring that classic dessert 'Profit Rolls' with Chocolate Sauce. The Supporters' Club 21st anniversary Dinner & Dance held in February 1979 featured pretty much a full Xmas dinner - turkey chipolata sausage, stuffing, sprouts and roast potatoes. Presumably leftovers? I'm not sure how many guests would still have been dancing to the music of Cheetah until midnight, then again there was thankfully no fixture the following day. An early example of Jolly being injured maybe?

D is also for **DARK ARTS**, not a reference to a former Oxford City full back but something that I could have held off on until **S** later in the season (11 letters ending in 'y'). The term covers a multitude of sins falling under the category of dirty tricks or gamesmanship ranging from timewasting to simulation, trying to gain unfair advantage in whatever way possible. These techniques have been around for years, but for sure the Stones were perhaps more than naive in this area when we regained our premier non-league status. It's a little sad that we have had to adopt the 'if you can't beat them, join them' attitude, but that's the way it seems to have become. There's nothing more irritating than watching opposition players getting away with murder

CONTINUED OVERPAGE

THE WONDERFUL WEALDSTONE ALPHABET CONTINUED

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

with weak officials, and it's been quite something this season to see some of the home fans getting so irritated with us on our own away travels. It really shouldn't have to be this way.

Steve **DELL** doesn't rank highly on my all-time list of memorable Stones. Steve joined us from Hayes in 1998 before moving on to Northwood in 1999 having clocked up an impressive 22 starts and 6 substitute appearances with zero goals.

Nonetheless he makes the alphabet by virtue of my possessing a Steve Dell Junior Stones playing card. These were produced for Junior Stones to collect back in the late 1990's, with the reverse side of the card listing some interesting facts about the player in question. From these I can reveal that Steve, now 43 if my maths is correct, had the imaginative nickname of Delle. A postman who enjoyed golf, snooker, pasta and chicken, Delle's ambition was to 'play pro.' I don't think that this ever happened, but maybe he was more fortunate in getting to meet Denise Van Outen, the famous person he would 'most like to meet.' Sadly, when I recently rediscovered my Steve Dell card, I was disappointed to find out that it wasn't autographed so probably not as valuable as it could have been. I think that today's Junior Stones would welcome a Player Cards 2022-23 version.

I'm not sure we'll ever see the likes of it again, a double winner dropping down to play non-league football. Terry **DYSON** (right, with Jimmy Greaves and the European Cup-Winners Cup in 1961) played for Spurs for a decade from 1955 to 1965 and was a regular member of the 1960-61 side that won the old Division 1 and FA Cup double, scoring in the final at Wembley. He also has a hat-trick against Arsenal to his name that made him rather popular in North London, a feat that has not been repeated. So how lucky were we to acquire his services in early 1972,



STEVE DELL

JUNIOR STONES PLAYER CARDS No.11

Full Name: Steve Dell
Date Of Birth: 6.2.79
Height & Weight: 5'11" / 12st.
Nickname: Delle
Position: Right Wing Back
Occupation: Postman
Previous Clubs: Hayes
Appearances/Goals: (to end of 97/98): -/-
Favourite Food: Pasta & Chicken
Favourite Country Visited: Spain
Hobbies: Golf, Snooker
What Famous person would you most like to meet? Denise Van Outen
Ambition: To play pro

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may once have considered themselves **DYED IN THE WOOL** fans of other clubs, but the switch to following Wealdstone has destroyed that description. There are many of course that choose to follow Wealdstone alongside another club, but I'm grateful that this is not something I do, it can be stressful enough watching just one. So, if you're a recent Stones convert, we welcome you of course, but perhaps a qualifying period may be necessary before you can wear the Dyed in the Wool t-shirt and badge.

*If you've read this far, you may be wondering how **DRIVEL** hasn't made the cut? Next week it's **E time**, as always I'm open to suggestions with regards any items to include that may be of interest, so let me know.*

Above: If he hadn't already taken his place there, Peter Dean enters Wealdstone folklore with his last-act-of-the-season strike against Canvey Island. Just look at those faces!

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

From Queen Elizabeth to Enfield FC... some Es are much easier to swallow

It's Season III Part IV of this fascinating series and we're with the Es...

It would be wrong of me not to begin with **ELIZABETH**, our former Queen. Someone who for most of us has been in situ for all of our lives, part of the very fabric of our nation. What a lady, the country will never see the like of her again. Thanks ma'am.

E is also for **EASTCOTE**, which for those of you not in the know is split into two postal areas – Eastcote, Pinner and Eastcote, Huislip. I was born and bred in the latter, the one thing that I never expected to happen was for my football club to end up on my doorstep!

Growing up in that area, the nearest clubs to my home were at the Vale and Earlsmead, but like many other Eastcotees (newly invented word), Lower Mead was the only local attraction of any appeal.

Being in the London Borough of Hillingdon, maybe Hillingdon Borough should have held some appeal, but the Leas was not only a horrible place but also horrible to get to. I do recall



ENFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB

The Stadium, Southbury Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 1YQ
Telephone: (0181) 292 0665, Facsimile: (0181) 292 0669, Newline: 0930 555 845



July 19, 1999

Dear Mr Taffel

I am replying to your letter of 15th July. I do so not only as Secretary of this Club and as a member of the League Management Committee but also as a keen supporter of our game, to which I happily give many hours of my free time.

I accompanied Alan Turvey when he came to speak to you on the evening of the League AGM and felt that you and the vast majority of the other Wealdstone supporters present conducted yourselves admirably.

You may recall that a few years ago this club faced a similar disappointment when we were denied promotion to the Conference after winning our league championship by 14 points. Despite lengthy, expensive and ill-advised litigation we lost the day and still remain in the Ryman League. It is of little comfort that the rule preventing our progress has now been swept away.

Our problem then, like yours now, was that the Board of Directors had not put our house in order so that we would be in a position to gain promotion. The rules are not secret and you are right to be disappointed with those who let your Club down by not meeting the necessary ground grading by the due date. There was certainly a lot of anger aimed at the Chairman of Enfield Football Club when we failed to gain promotion on a "technicality".

There are many rules and regulations governing our game. The Football Association, the County Associations and the Leagues set these. Not all of them are universally popular but they are fairly applied and generally work for the good of the game.

As an example of this you may have heard that Barrow F C have been relegated from the Conference because of the breach of a rule and must now face life in the Unibond League.

I admire your tenacity in trying to right what you perceive as a wrong for the possible benefit of clubs in the future. The setting of a deadline of May 31st, as you suggest, would certainly give clubs more time to bring their facilities up to the required standard, but what if an aspiring club failed to meet that date but were ready by say June 7th. Would you argue for a further extension of the date to assist them?

In these circumstances one also has to consider the club moving in the opposite direction who would have to wait to hear their fate. Valuable time could be lost in areas such as player contracts and sponsorship, goodness knows the close season is short enough as things stand!

Also consider that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to apply a different deadline to clubs applying for election to our league. A date as late as you suggest might have an impact on those lower leagues when it came to voting on a constitution at their AGM.

We are not prepared to divulge how we voted at the AGM.

As a club we would consider carefully any proposal to extend the date by which a ground must achieve the required grading.

Yours sincerely

Roger Reed
Secretary

Above: The letter Jon received from Enfield secretary Roger Reed. It didn't help

Alphabet



one lad at my primary school who started following them and was one of their bully boys when we visited them in the 70's, but he was the exception. Today we still have many Eastcotees watching us who have been with us since pre-Vale days, but plenty of new ones too, will we ever see an Eastcote Stones flag?

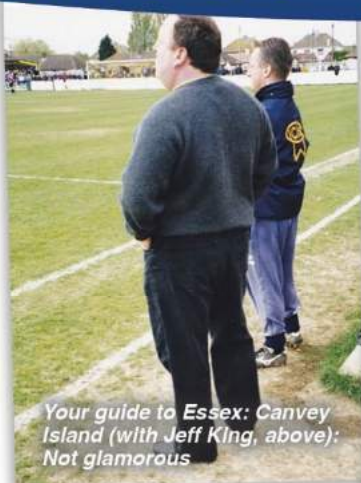
E is also for **ENFIELD**, and I'm not going to dwell on this one as we've been there before. However, when sorting out some stuff recently I came across some letters, and one of these is certainly worth re-producing (left).

When we were denied promotion all those years ago (in 1999), I wrote to all the other clubs canvassing their support at the league AGM to give us the promotion that we felt we deserved, due to a misunderstanding over the deadline to have extended cover over the seats at the White Lion Ground in Edgware (where we were then ground-sharing). Many clubs simply ignored me, but fair play to those that did take the time and effort to respond, some even hand-written.

In Enfield's letter, their secretary Roger Reed stated that they would not divulge how they voted at the AGM, but it is not difficult to conclude how they did from the rest of the contents.

Interestingly he comments that the 'vast majority' of the Wealdstone supporters present at the AGM protest conducted themselves admirably, so hands up if you didn't fall into this category and what did you do?

E is also for one of my not so favourite counties, **ESSEX**. My personal dislike originally



Your guide to Essex: Canvey Island (with Jeff King, above): Not glamorous



Roots Hall (especially when we win there): Glamorous

stemmed from an awful childhood holiday not far from Clacton-on-sea. So bad was our chalet and weather that we came home early, my only compensation being that my mum bought me a budgie in Colchester (pictured below) to try and cheer me up. It wasn't the best compensation to be honest: I already had two budgies and Bertie turned out to be a rubbish budgie with no character whatsoever.

Moving on, as a staunch Middlesex cricket fan, **ESSEX** (along with Surrey obviously) were much disliked local rivals, but Essex in particular had a well-earned reputation for doctoring pitches to suit their team. And don't even start me on Derek Pringle. On to the football then, and my early experiences of watching Weald-

stone against Essex teams was good, Chelmsford City were a big club in a great ground at New Writtle Street. It was much later that we started visiting places/clubs that we didn't really enjoy and certainly don't miss now, Aveley, East



The cherubic-looking Jon and budgie Bertie (far right). He was 24

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OVERPAGE**

Alphabet continued

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Thurrock and Concord Rangers to name just a few. The only real enjoyment of visiting Canvey Island was that we could combine it with a visit to the lovely Leigh-on-Sea and also Southend to make the whole day more palatable. So it is with great pleasure that our league fixtures in Essex now include Southend United rather than Concord Rangers, we are in a happier place.

E is also for Andrew **ELEFThERIOU** (pictured above) - a player who, after I sponsored last season never played again, permanently injured, I have no idea whether this is still the case as I can't find any record of him elsewhere. So that was money well spent then....

And E is for **EGLITE**. Some of the Wealdstone newcomers may wonder why it is that my match photos are published under the banner '**Eglite Photos**.' Well, the reason is twofold. Firstly, my circle of drinking and travel chums have occasionally been branded 'Elite' by virtue of our choice of drinking establishments that tend be rather less than mainstream.

Elite is not the term I'd use, it's all a matter of taste in more than one sense of the word. However, Eglite is a composite, embracing the Elite tag whilst paying homage to our 1970's player

Adriaan Eglite. Eglite's Wealdstone career was not a long one, but most of us remember him quite fondly, a very distinctive player once allegedly on the books of Ajax. Having seen him play, it was more likely that he used Ajax in his bathroom. (This is clearly scurrilous, as Eglite was verified as a former Ajax Youth team player alongside John Cruyff in a previous programme. You'd think he never reads it! -Ed)

There was brief temptation last season to substitute Eglite with **EGLITO** when Medy joined us, but the temptation was brief.

E is for **ENTERTAINMENT**, this is why we come to football isn't it? Or is it a 'results business' - we're back to C for cliches? Well, it's a balance, if no-one was ever entertained then crowds would plummet. There were certainly times last season where there were some rumblings amongst our fanbase bemoaning the sideways sideways backwards passing that seemed to be getting us nowhere in the early part of the season. There was clearly more to our team than that though, and our final league position certainly endorsed the process that Stuart and his team had put in place.

Has this season been **ENTERTAINING** so far? Well of course it has, because Entertainment is

about **ENJOYMENT**, and to come out of games such as Gateshead and Yeovil with the points that we did with our backs firmly against the wall, well what's not to enjoy? **EXCITING** perhaps not, but with the quality of opposition in this league we're not going to be able to play the kind of **EXPANSIVE**, **EXCITING** football that some may crave for. It's all about **EXPECTATION**, and the vast majority of us are realistic in that regard.

So that's it for this week, **ENJOY** the match!

REWIND SPECIAL BY TIM PARKS

Well, would you believe it? There we were, wondering idly if our ex-player Eglite truly was a star alongside Johan Cruyff... and he was!

LEGEND EGLITE

AMATEUR SOCCER EXTRA

Double Dutch

BY COLIN GRANT

AMATEUR SOCCER EXTRA

The article in last season's Stockport home programme that produced the evidence: Eglite DID play for Ajax, and in the same team as the mercurial Cruyff

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones

For F's sake! From Firth giving forth to FA Cup fever, with a couple of little full-backs thrown in for luck



Here we go again then, series 3 episode 6 of the alphabet, and today it's the turn of F....

When writing these articles I tend to dip in and out rather than doing it all in one go, so as this intro is being written shortly after our defeat to Southend, it seems only appropriate to begin with Anna **FIRTH** MP.

Now I'm not the greatest fan of politicians generally, and we should not be surprised when they say or do stupid things. Nonetheless, the Southend West excelled herself when interviewed after our win at Roots Hall last season. No surprise that the called us Wealdstn, as she proclaimed that no doubt that "Southend United played best and had the most control." Her finishing remark that "I won't be going near Wealdstn anytime soon" was a more accurate (if unnecessary) statement ...and from our perspective very welcome. I look forward to hearing her assessment of the current arrangements between her 'beloved' club and HMRC. For the record, Anna Firth MP is a supporter of the recent Truss/Kwarteng mini-budget.

F is also for **FANS**, much lauded by our management team, "outstand-

ing, always behind us" amongst other things regularly being trotted out in post-match interviews.

And for the most part I'd concur... but it does bring us on to **FICKLE** – an adjective that describes changing feelings frequently. We've clearly had an excellent start to the season, but prior to the Aldershot game we had been on a winless run of five games. A goal down at half time, it's fair to say that from my pitch-side position I heard a lot of what I'd consider to be over the top 'advice' for

some of our players. Now I understand how much emotion is vested in supporting a football team, but once again I think much of this was borne out of some kind of expectation that we should be beating 'teams like Aldershot' given our respective league positions.

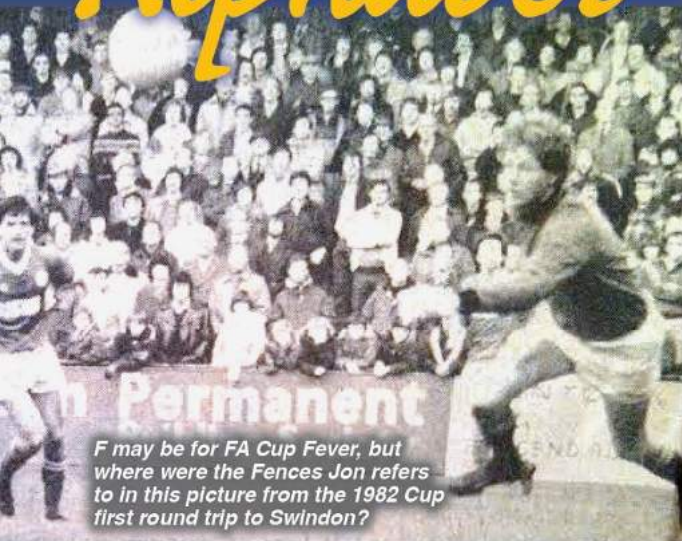
To what extent our players hear, listen to, or are affected by such 'advice' I simply don't know. That we turned things around with an excellent performance that should have yielded a win by a greater margin is further testament to the way that the players carry out their work on the advice given from the bench rather than the **FANS**. Fine margins... had things not



Above: Anna Firth at Southend, confirming what we already know about Conservative MPs

Alphabet

F



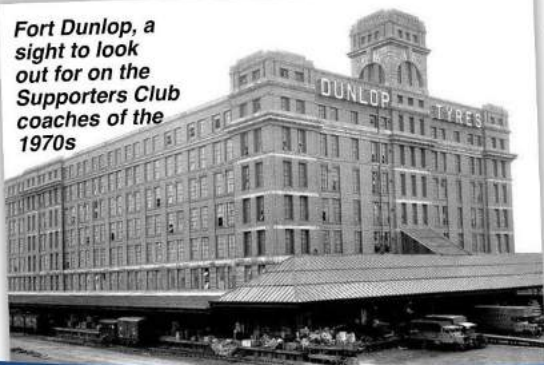
F may be for FA Cup Fever, but where were the Fences Jon refers to in this picture from the 1982 Cup first round trip to Swindon?

turned out that way then I suspect the end of match reception might have been less pleasant from some.

F is for **FORT DUNLOP**, and some of you may not have a clue as to what I am talking about or its relevance to football. Certainly this would be the case for any fans of Isthmian football who suffer nosebleeds when venturing north... however Fort Dunlop is one of the great sites visible from the M6 if travelling by car or coach to northern away games.

It's fair to say that many of us have learned more about geography looking through windows of cars and coaches on our way to football than we ever did in a school classroom. For for me, the 1974-75 season was an eye opener, my first season as an away traveller, always on the Supporters' Club coach. Looking back on the fixtures that season, it is highly likely that my first glimpse of Fort Dunlop would have been en route

Fort Dunlop, a sight to look out for on the Supporters Club coaches of the 1970s



to Stourbridge: there was no M42 back then and the M40 only went as far as Oxford. Failing that it would have been away at Telford a few months later. There are many other less attractive industrial locations on that particular stretch of the elevated motorway through Birmingham, but this building is the standout one.

Built in 1917, Fort Dunlop was the original Dunlop tyre factory and office, and was once the world's largest factory – it is a Grade A listed building. The last part of the factory closed in 2014 and has since been redeveloped for housing offices, retail outlets and a hotel. Listed as it is, it still doesn't look the same, the Travelodge signage rather detracts from its

beauty - not dissimilar to the Tesco signage on the art-deco Hoover Building on the A40.

F is for **FULL BACK**, a crucial position in the ever-changing world of positions and **FORMATIONS**. In my Sunday morning playing days, the full back position was often filled by those of limited ability. The original supporters' team in the 70s/90s contained a number of these, Duncan Towell and Dave Heath to name but two, but I also had my fair share of run-outs there too. Nonetheless, I must mention a couple of legendary Wealdstone full backs who shot to fame with an outstanding performance way back in April 1994. This was our first groundshare season at

Yeading and an awful one it was. We went to play Canterbury City on a Wednesday night in April with just 3 league wins all season and none on the road, and to rub salt into the wound we had been dumped out of both the FA Cup and FA Trophy by some team from South

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The Stones Alphabet contd

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Harrow. Against all expectations (apart from a few who like to remain optimistic come what may) we were rewarded with a 2-1 win in front of 42 spectators.

Let that sink in for one moment, 42 spectators – a reflection on both where Canterbury and ourselves were at that time. Our full backs that night were Tony Anglin and Peter Augustine, described in Mick Fishman & Peter Worby's book as 'identikit full backs who came and went with neither of them being quite up to the task.' Well up to the task they certainly were that night, and the chant ringing out of the stand housing the Stones element amongst the 47 present was 'Hello, hello, little full backs' – and I can honestly say that their smiles were up there with the biggest I've ever seen. We finished one from bottom that season but were reprieved by the resignations of both Canterbury and Dunstable Town. If ever you need to pinch yourselves as to how bad things were then and how good things are today, just think "little full backs".

F is for **FEVER**, Cup Fever to be precise. I write this post Aldershot but before the FA Cup draw due to be made at 3.15 pm on Monday... what-ever happened to the noon event? Our club is desperate for some proper Cup Fever, something that we have been deprived of for way too long.

In recent years, our Cup exploits have been more like a nasty little rash than a Fever, hope and expectations dashed by bad luck and ineptitude in equal measure whichever way you choose to look at it. We haven't been blessed with the best of draws in recent years (nor this year-Ed), but even when we have then we've pressed the self-destruct button on too many occasions. So this is the year, let's get

ourselves into the 1st Round proper for the first time since 2015. Dagenham, Hayes, Maidenhead, Sutton, Burgess Hill and Dagenham again over the last six seasons will all bring back memories you'd prefer not to be reminded of.

Even when we did qualify the year before, our performance in the 2-6 defeat to Colchester was underwhelming. Any **FEVER** that existed pre-game was quickly cured. For the majority of my Stones watching career, appearances in the 1st Round have been rather underwhelming, rarely have I felt that we were about to cause a shock, so that is why our win away at Hereford United 45 years ago remains a fond and strong one. Today's opponents Borehamwood had a fabulous dose of Cup **FEVER** last season and for once I was very jealous of them!

Talking of underwhelming 1st Round appearances, Swindon Town away in 1982 was made even more depressing by having to stand behind a ghastly thick metal **FENCE**. This was very much a thing at the time supposedly to deal with problem fans (thank you Ken Bates), but this simply served to diminish the watching experience. The humble Fence also made an appearance in the legendary Sticks and Stones song 'Scum' courtesy of a fan who 'left his mighty footprint on a **FENCE** in Essex land.' In more recent years, our elevation to the National League has given us new **FENCE** challenges, and sadly our rather quaint and homely wooden fences at the Vale have had to be replaced as not fit for purpose.

And **FINALLY** this week, a quick plug as F is for **FUND-RAISING**, so crucial to our club as we try to support the club in the National League. Sponsors are key but we all know we have to do what we can to help, so if you don't already support the initiatives that we have in place such as the 50-50 matchday draw and the monthly Teamdraw, don't be shy if you can afford to contribute.

TEAM CHECK	
CANTERBURY CITY	VEALSTONE
Joe RADFORD 1	Andy HOFFING
Berry GETHIN 2	Tony HULLIS
Paul GILDER 3	Joan CHENIS
Darryl GRIFFITHS 4	Floyd DENNIS
Phil BAGLEY 5	Wesley JARROK
Bill BOFFEY 6	Gerry LEMOND
Neville SMITH 7	Derek DUBOY
Steve YALBOT 8	Andy HEDGE
Lee CALHOUN 9	Vic SCHWARTZ
Julian HOPKES 10	Rud BRATHWAITE
Neville SCOLE 11	Paul WEBB
Paul WEAVER 12	Chris GIBSON
Richard KING 14	Peter AUGUSTINE
Colours: Green & White	Colours: Blue & White
Match Officials	
Referee: H.S. YERBY (Aldershot)	-
Referee: H.A. FISHER (Crawley)	-Ed Train
Linesmen: C. VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS (Crawley)-yellow train	

BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE										
Southern Division										
(Up to and including Saturday, 9th April)										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts.	GD		
Subsby Town	36	24	6	6	98	39	78	+49		
GraveSEND & Northfleet	35	22	11	2	72	19	77	+53		
Baldock Town	37	23	7	7	68	34	76	+36		
Witley Town	35	22	7	6	56	31	73	+25		
Salisbury City	32	22	10	38	34	48	+46			
Ashford Town	35	18	12	5	76	31	71	+45		
Havant Town	34	20	4	10	84	36	64	+50		
Margate	34	18	8	8	61	40	62	+21		
Weymouth	36	16	7	13	59	55	55	+4		
Braintree Town	37	15	7	15	68	71	52	+3		
Tonbridge	33	16	3	14	49	52	51	+3		
Buckingham Town	34	13	9	12	59	55	48	+4		
Fareham Town	35	12	10	38	34	48	+4			
Poole Town	36	11	6	19	47	71	39	-24		
Fisher '93	35	8	9	18	46	66	33	-20		
CANTERBURY CITY	37	8	7	22	33	69	31	-36		
Burnham	37	7	9	21	45	86	30	-41		
Erith & Belvedere	33	7	5	21	31	50	26	-19		
Dunstable	34	6	6	22	39	77	24	-38		
Maidstone	34	3	6	25	35	85	19	-50		
Bury Town	37	3	5	29	34	107	14	-73		

Above: Pages from the Canterbury City programme that night in 1994 when just 42 people turned up to watch the then-not-so-mighty Stones

Alphabet



GRAYS ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB (1982) LTD
The Recreation Ground, Bridge Road,
Grays, Essex, RM17 6BZ
Telephone: Grays Thurrock (01375) 377753 (Club/Bar/Ball court)
391649 (Office/General)
394788 (Commercial Dept./Gene

Please Reply To: 8 Pargeters Hyam
Hockley
Essex SS5 4EA

Tel. No. Date: 13 August 1999

Dear Mr. Taffel

Thank you for your letter of 15 July sent to our Secretary, Jeff Saxton. I apologise for the long delay in replying. I assure you it was not due to a lack of interest - more to do with "close season" holidays!

Dealing with your specific questions first, I would answer as follows:-

- i) We were one of the eight Clubs who voted for you. The Board of Directors at Grays discussed the issue before the AGM and our Chairman was entirely happy to support our unanimous view that Wealdstone should be given the promotion their performance on the field had justified.
- ii) Definitely not.
- iii) Yes, definitely.
- iv) Yes.
- v) See comment below.
- vi) No.

With regard to v) above, you may recall we had a little local difficulty last season in connection with the height of our goalposts. Our appeal against the Management Committee decision to fine us £500 and replay the match was ruled out of order because we had not stated our grounds of appeal within a deadline set by the F.A. under one of their rules! The fact that the Ryman League rules make no reference to the overriding F.A. rule is yet another example of our League making life as difficult as possible for member Clubs to seek redress.

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I hope you can now appreciate that we share your concern and will do what we can to assist. Ultimately, the best way forward is for like-minded people to put their names forward to serve on the Management Committee. Unfortunately, the time commitment involved in managing our Clubs, invariably on a voluntary basis, precludes many people from seeking election. In the meantime, using whatever appeal processes are available and attempting to amend rules where appropriate, is probably the most pragmatic approach.

Finally, a Grays supporter has mentioned to me that there is a reference on a Wealdstone Internet site to a suggestion that your supporters will be boycotting Clubhouse teasers etc., of all Ryman League Clubs this season as a continuing protest against the League's decision. This is obviously a matter for them, but I hope our support for you might influence them when you visit us on 28 August. We always look forward to some socialising with our visitors.

All the best for the coming season.

Yours in Sport

G. Jarvis
Director

expect from the driver in such situations, having already liaised with both his office and the recovery service. Nonetheless there are always some who feel the need to vent their spleen and offer their expert insight to the driver regardless. So whilst most of the coach occupants were outwardly laid back (or asleep) about the situation, G stands for **GRUMPY GRAHAM**. I'm sure that the driver appreciated Grumpy Graham's nuggets of wisdom as much as the rest of us did. In fairness, Grumpy Graham did apologise, and his frustration was borne out of needing to be at a hospital appointment at 9 a.m. and genuine concern for not making it in time. Me? I was at my desk at 8.15 a.m. as usual.

In the letter 'E' we featured a letter from Enfield FC, which was in relation to our failed promotion in 1999 due to not achieving the required ground grade. Enfield made it quite clear that they did not support us at the League AGM, so in the interest of balance, G is now for **GRAYS** Athletic. Now they are not a club I have a great affinity with - probably stemming from another of our great FA Cup 4th qualifying round disasters way back in our 1984-85 double winning season.

Grays were one of the eight clubs that did support us in our promotion bid, but from the

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Grays director G. Jarvis replies to Jon's letter back in 1999. One of the eight 'good guys'

Stones Alphabet contd...

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letter, one can glean that this was most probably borne from their own dispute with the footballing blazers that season. You may recall that we went to Grays at the start of the 1998-99 season and were beaten 3-0. However, the **GOALPOSTS** were found to be shorter than the legal requirement and the game had to be replayed the following March. We picked up a point that seemed unlikely eight months beforehand. Looking back at the letter, I feel a bit guilty as this is the first time that I have publicly disclosed their support for us, so their request for us not to boycott their tea bar fell on deaf ears.

G is also for **GATESHEAD**, featured in a previous edition but this season's trip up north is worthy of a mention in its own right. By distance, this is our longest National League awayday, although by time taken, Alty wins. What a trip it was too, many of our supporters taking the opportunity to make a weekend of it.

To be honest a weekend isn't long enough to explore all the wonderful drinking (and sight-seeing) options the area has to offer, but a splendid time was of course enhanced by us picking up three points to extend our unbeaten run to seven against the Heed. That result unexpectedly put us top of the league briefly, wasn't that fun whilst it lasted?

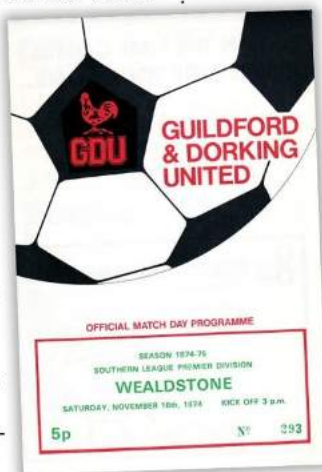
On the subject of away trips, how good was **GRIMSBY** last year? I for one was very sad that they were promoted. I would have far preferred one of the clubs with plastic pitches to have gone up such as Bromley, or better still somewhere like Borehamwood which is the least favourite away-day of every Stones supporter I know. Grimsby really is a great weekend away destination – yes really – with some friendly people everywhere we went and some excellent ale to boot. We may not have got the result we wanted, nonetheless if we never play them again then we will always have the memory of the cracking home win over them when they were top of the league earlier in the season.

If you haven't gathered by now, whilst football is a very important part of my life then beer also features quite heavily and has literally shaped the person that I am today. I am a beer snob, quality is key and I'd rather drink water than drink crap beer. This then brings me on nicely to Greene King, once upon a time a small regional brewer that could be trusted. However that was many, many decades ago. Now it is a corporate giant that has swallowed up and closed numerous regional breweries as well as pubs, whilst producing sub-standard beer on an industrial scale. No thanks, there are numerous breweries today that have values that they once may have held.

Our recent trip to Dorking reminded me that back in the 70s we visited the same ground but a vastly different club in **GUILDFORD** & Dorking United. Guildford City were a reasonably successful Southern League club, winning the title on two occasions, but one that experienced many periods of financial difficulty and turbulence. I first came across Guildford City in 1972 when I saw them defeated 4-2 by Watford in the FA Cup 1st round at Vicarage Road. They were well supported that day, but by that time they had already sold their City centre ground and the club was on its knees. They merged with Dorking in 1974 and our visit there in November that

year resulted in a 2-1 win in front of 658 spectators, a crowd boosted by 200 travelling Stones according to our programme the following week. This also reported that our goals from Jim Godfrey and George Duck were 'real gems', with the day 'only marred by the unfortunate sending off of Bill Byrne'. I'm not so sure a well-aimed right hook can be described as unfortunate even if in retaliation. The Guildford & Dorking United line-up that day included Geoff Chapple, I wonder what happened to him? The club collapsed and folded the following season. We were not to return to a somewhat improved Meadowbank (apart from the ghastly pitch) and a quite different club in Dorking Wanderers until 2019.

So that's Game over for today, back next time for **HORRIBLE H!**



Pictured above: The striking cover of the G & DUFC programme. A bit special in mid-70s terms. Why are current-day programmes so predictable and dull?

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



If it's the Letter H this sad week it's gotta be a tale of Hereford 1977 and the more famous of the Two Ronnies



Welcome to Series 3 Episode 8 of the Alphabet. I'm a little disappointed to be honest, as I do ordinarily try and produce original content. So, whilst I shouldn't be surprised that I'd already covered **HEREFORD** United and Martin **HIRST**, I have decided that on this occasion originality should fly out of the window.

HEREFORD hit the news again recently with the passing of a Ronnie more famous than me, Ronnie Radford (for those who are unaware, our Alphabet columnist and club snapper Mr Taffel is also otherwise known as Ronnie Raffle -Ed).

Radford scored the goal that set Hereford on their way to a major FA Cup upset against 1st Division Newcastle in 1972, a win that also propelled his team into the Football League.

Having earned themselves a reputation as giant killers, Hereford's first taste of losing as a Football League club against a non-league club was against the mighty Stones in the 1977-78 season. This was one of the most famous nights in Wealdstone history, a 1st round replay win under the lights at Edgar Street that will live long in the memory of all those lucky enough to have been there. Having held them to a goalless draw at home, Hereford were firm favourites to complete the job on their own patch.

But this was our night, a rare night of FA Cup enjoyment in the competition proper. Everyone knows the newspaper headlines from the following day as schoolteacher Pat Ferry's brace of goals was described as Ferry Ferry Good. The late great Bobby Moss headed our other goal on what the Hereford



manager John Sillett described as the worst night of his life. My seated ticket for the match (pictured above) cost me £1.50. Why I wasn't standing I really don't know. Maybe I just felt that I wanted a better view of what turned out to be such a historic event, given that changing ends at half time wasn't an option in a 'big' ground.

We went on to reach the 3rd round that season for the first and only time in our history, something that really needs to change. Watching other

His for 'Harry, Harry.....' The Wilkinson era wasn't my favourite, we clashed for sure. Nonetheless, his final few games with us will certainly live long in the memory amongst great games of recent times. Less great was one of his signings, a certain Harry Goodger.

No disrespect to Harry as you knew what you got with him, he was a plumber from Whitstable, a large chap with ability not really

up to the level required. However he gave everything, and when we were in a winning position, he was the go-to player to come on as a sub and take the ball into the corner to waste time. The chants of 'Harry, Harry....' would ring around the ground as he came on to the pitch, gathered the ball and ran to the corner. The chant remains valid today every time we want a player to run to the corner to waste time.

I do tend to focus on away trips in this column, so it is with sadness that our only ever trip to **HARTLEPOOL** came during the Behind Closed Doors season. Our fans were deprived of a trip to another great part of the country, and even though I was fortunate enough to be there on camera duty, it wasn't the same without the Stones family around me. More importantly the pubs were still in lockdown, so arguably there was no excuse for my pictures to be blurred. Despite the best efforts of Josh Umerah, I do hope they stay in the bottom two this season, and give us a grand day out next season. I really need to do the pubs there!

H is also for the **HUDDLE**, the perfectly formed circle that the players and management team form at the end of each match. This is where the manager usually delivers a motivational message to the team, regardless of whether it has been a successful day or not. Our former manager Dean Brennan introduced an interesting variation on this theme, when he brought his team to the Vale last season. This consisted of a non-perfectly formed circle that lost its sense of direction in heading back to the changing rooms.

H is also for **HELEN**, a chance to remember a much loved and missed supporter, Danny Helen. It is many years ago that we lost Danny but mention

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Press cuttings corner

Pep: I was talking about OTHER Harry



CITY BOSS MEANT GOODGER, NOT KANE

By VAL GROSVENOR
PEP GUARDIOLA took a lot of flak this week for his statement that Tottenham were 'The Harry Kane team', suggesting that Spurs were simply a one-man operation. Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino was particularly outraged by the comment. But yesterday Guardiola explained to The Mirror that his comment was in reaction to the news that Harry Goodger had signed for Wealdstone. "What I actually said was in response to a query about John Stones' injury"

explained Guardiola. "I was asked in the Press Conference 'What about Stones?' and naturally my first thought was about their big signing from Whitstable. "Frankly I was annoyed that we hadn't managed to get that transfer over the line before the end of the summer deadline - imagine Goodger, Agiero, Jesus and de Bruyne! "What I actually said was 'They will be the Harry Team' but that was taken out of context for some reason. Why bring Kane into it? Pochettino got it all wrong".

Above: The Daily Mail gets a good balance in its report of the Stones cup shock in 1977. And right, Harry Goodger was ripe for a spoof story in the Stones programme five years ago as he helped bludgeon our way to the Trophy semi-finals

Stones Alphabet contd....

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of his name always brings a smile. He served on the Supporters Club committee for many years and is remembered for his soft Irish accent and slow delivery of words. At every club AGM without fail he'd interject with something along the lines of 'Mr Chairman, on behalf of the floor, I'd just like to say how grateful and thankful we are for all the hard work you've done for the club'. He'd pass on his thoughts to officials and opposition players too, particularly when it came to timewasting. He was also often seen at Lord's with his fellow Wealdstone chums cheering on Middlesex. Danny is just one of so many Wealdstone faces that we lost too soon, but none of them are forgotten.

His also for **HAVANT**, and harking back briefly to the Dean Brennan years, our 4-2 win there in the promotion season of 2019-20 (see picture below) was another awayday to last long in the memory. Although we were ahead in the league at that time, this was the win that made Stones supporters believe that we really did have a great chance of winning the league and getting back to the top table of non-league football. The 7-0 demolition of Bath City the week after certainly cemented that view.

Whether or not we would have gone on to win the league in 'regulation' manner we'll never know, but up we went on 'points per game' with Havant finishing 2nd. We were three points ahead with a game in hand, just nine matches to play and a superior goal difference. It was in the bag. I hope to repeat this paragraph under W for Waterlooville.

It's illogical I know, but why do I have such a dislike of **HAMPTON** & Richmond Borough FC? Their ground is one that I really hate going to, not helped by the fact that our record against them is poor. They're not a club with an edge of any sort but maybe it's a reflection on the area in which they are based that their supporters manage to come across as rather smug, even in tweets that posted by anyone else would be considered normal. The Beavers also had a club chaplain,



Gone but never forgotten: Danny Helen (centre) is pictured with the similarly lamented, late and lovely Mim Goodman. On the right is the rarely missed (for decibel reasons) Mike Megaphone Vincent :)

I'm unsure whether this is still the case. Now I don't have anything against chaplains per se, but again I found myself rather irritated reading articles about football only for them to turn into articles about Jesus, not really my bag. In addition, I never trust a club that changes its name. They were merely Hampton FC, until 1999 when they made the change designed to draw wider support from around the Borough. It met with some success to be fair, particularly after Alan Devonshire joined them as manager.

I recently read that despite the current financial mess the country is in, houses with gardens near **HORNCHURCH** FC are increasing in price. This is due to the value of second hand footballs that are now in plentiful supply with the arrival of Danny Green on free kick duties. Seriously though, Hornchurch is another one of those places that no right-minded Wealdstone supporter would ever want to go to again. Our last visit there was for another one of our famous FA Cup disasters, a 6-1 hiding in 2013. It appears that since leaving us, Danny has decided to make a

habit of going to horrible places to ply his trade, having first left us to go to Concord Rangers. I predict Hampton next.

So that's your lot for today, and I never even got to trot out more Martin Hirst nonsense! Maybe under T for Tanning shops....



Above: It's Danny Green scoring at Havant! The perfect win double (for some of us anyway)

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



All the indications are here for yet another irresistible episode of the irritating, often quite irascible but always inspirational Wealdstone alphabet



No buses for 50 minutes! The indicator from hell at York's Stonebow bus stop a few weeks ago. But it didn't spoil a great afternoon



Left: It's February 1974 and Ilford (wearing red) take on Dulwich Hamlet at Lynn Road in the quarter final stage of the Amateur Cup. Ilford had already put out Kingstonian, Brockenhurst and Highgate Utd and are defending the Ley Street end. Left: that ten years later. Above: the cavernous main stand at Lynn Road, now long gone

Good afternoon all, and welcome to another Incredible edition of the alphabet. Today it's the turn of the letter I, and I've been racking my brains trying to think of original content not already covered in seasons 1 & 2. I've pretty much given up as we haven't played many teams or had players beginning with I. So, whilst some headlines may be repeated, I write afresh with hopefully a different slant.

On the back of our visit to York last month, I must start with INDICATOR signs. In the case of the Indicator sign for the No 9 bus at Stonebow, then this wins an award for the most useless Indicator sign of the year. Many Stones fans would have read the information on York's website and decided this would be the best option to travel to their new out of town ground. 'The most frequent First Park and Ride service 9 departs every 10 minutes from York City Centre'.

Now, I had planned to get the ground a bit early as club photographer to capture some of the home fans' wrath following the sacking of John Askey... but an extra pint scuppered that. Nonetheless, having arrived at said Stonebow bus stop at around 1.50 pm I thought I'd be OK.

I'd just missed one bus and although it was full

and a few people didn't get on, I was near the front of the queue and didn't envisage a problem. After all, there were plenty of home fans joining the queue too. The Indicator was still showing regular buses, but perhaps the alarm bells should have rung, as the ones due 'now' simply dropped off the board one by one.

Lots of twitchy fans were hastily trying to arrange non-existent taxis to compound their woes, some simply gave up and returned to the ale. I eventually decided to walk the two and a half miles at about 2.50 p.m. I was resigned to missing most if not all of the 1st half, and laden with my camera equipment this was not in the plan.

However, a rare moment of INSPIRATION and I bowled into a hand car wash to see if one of the workers was free to provide a lift in return for £20. Bingo, 5 minutes later he had downed his rags and was transporting myself and the Lloyd brothers to the match. I have no idea of his name, but to him a huge 'thank you' - he even refused to take any money (if you're reading this Mark & John then you can apply to me for the refund of your £10 contribution). So, I arrived in the ground half an hour late after what seemed to be a leisure centre tour, but it could have been

worse. To those who gave up, the moral of this tale is don't!

Anyway, back to the point of this: Thanks again to York City Council or whoever is responsible for the Indicator sign. The Indicator sign used by the 4th official showing four minutes of added time was much better received.

Of all the clubs swallowed up by the Dagenham and Redbridge monster, the one ground that I never visited was the old ILFORD club's home in Lynn Road. Ilford were hugely successful and notched up 4 FA Amateur Cup wins, as well as losing in a few finals - the last of which was the very last Amateur Cup final in 1974. Stones played Ilford 23 times mostly in the 1960's, with our last match at Lynn Road in April 1971 as our amateur years came to an end. The crowd of 250, was a far cry from their record of 17,000 (see pictures above). The ground also hosted a couple of matches during the 1948 Olympics, including France beating India 2-1 with a late goal. Interestingly, matches were also played in that tournament at Walthamstow and Dulwich - both great non-league grounds of the day, alongside the larger Football League grounds and Wembley.

A familiar tale for Ilford: it all went wrong when they sold their ground for redevelopment. There

wasn't enough money left for their planned new ground and they ended up ground sharing and then merging with Leytonstone in 1979.

Leytonstone & Ilford then merged with Walthamstow Avenue before changing their name to Redbridge Forest in 1989 and the famous Ilford name was lost. A new Ilford FC was formed in 1987, their website club history would suggest they are the same club as that founded in 1881, but we know the truth...

INJURIES can make or break a team as we found out during our poor run of form leading into November. There is no doubt about it, any run of games with such little return including the inevitable F A Cup defeat was bound to attract the attention of some knockers.

In our case, missing such influential players such as Max, Ashley and Nathan was never going to be easy to absorb with our relatively small squad. Nonetheless we still should have done better regardless. We have had our fair share of regular sicknotes over the years which just adds more pressure to a club on a tight budget. The very unlucky Connor Stevens and Rhys Browne are just two that spring to mind, typically more unavailable than available - so much as I loved them both when playing it was very frustrating

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when they weren't. None falls into this category more for me personally than Andrew Eleftheriou who never played again after I sponsored him. Lesson learned so I've sponsored Rachel this year, but even she keeps disappearing to go to weddings, and we always lose when she does!

Moving on, and another honourable mention for Bob ILES, featured again despite having appeared in the 2004 version of this alphabet - this by virtue of him making a reappearance at our infamous FA Cup tie at Brockenhurst in 2015.

Iles was of course our keeper in our 1984-85 double winning side, but he graced us that day with his presence for one of those rarest of things, a Wealdstone FA Cup win. He wasn't the only ex-Stone there that day, Johnny 'H' Henderson from our 1973-74 Southern League Championship winning team was also chatting away to fans.

In truth I remember more about talking to those two than I do the actual match, which was extremely high on the scale of the very best boozy Stones awaydays. Two lovely guys. Iles was not my No 1 Stones keeper in fifty-something years as a supporter, that accolade has to go to Ray Goddard, but Iles was not far behind. Bob, you must come to another cup tie some time.

Something that caught my eye this week (written two weeks ago) was the detail released about the new National League streaming deal. The revenue distribution model adopted appears to be very odd, but we should be re-assured by the fact that it was recommended to the National League Board by an 'Independent Revenue Committee' that included a representative from



Above: Bob Iles (left) and John Henderson, now in their 60s, take in the FA Cup game at Brockenhurst. Below left: the pair in action for Stones



the Football Supporters Association.

In theory, Independence is a good thing, but like in so many situations, what does this mean in reality? Who are these people, who appointed them, what are their backgrounds, what do they know about football, what was their remit, and do they have any club affiliations? A bit of transparency wouldn't go amiss here. Given the criticism levelled at the method used to allocate lottery grants to the National League during COVID (highlighted again in the recent 'Gate Money' documentary), one would have thought that some lessons might have been learned by those in authority.

It all seems rather rushed, so as a supporter I want to know more about the committee, more about whether the recommendations were accepted in full or in part and why? And how do I put myself forward for this committee?

Enough of this nonsense, early programme deadlines for the New Year means I have to start on J forthwith. Hope you've all had a great Xmas!

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



Jubilation! It's the letter J and our head alphabeteer revisits Jolly, Jonah... and those wonderful stickman cartoons

So here we are, our first **JANUARY** home game of the season. It looks to be a busy one that is sure to test our trusty ground staff, with home league matches scheduled against Eastleigh, Chesterfield, Oldham and Gateshead. On top of this, potentially a couple of cup ties too, with Brentford due to visit in the Middlesex Senior Cup and hopefully an FA Trophy tie.

The latter is of course subject to the unlikely double of a) us winning at Chelmsford and b) being drawn at home. By the time you read this you will know the answers - the perils of having to write an article just after the Bromley game because the printer is selfishly taking a holiday and setting silly deadlines!

Since our return to the National League, we have only won one League match in **JANUARY**, and that was against rock-bottom basket-case Dover, and they could count themselves unlucky that day.

JANUARY is often a month for postponements with waterlogged or frozen pitches in abundance. On occasion we have incurred the wrath, dare I say even ridicule from some opposition fans daring to suggest that our postponements are in some way concocted to allow injured players to recover. Hence the coining of the much-used phrase, '**JOLLY'S** injured.' For the uninitiated newbies, Richard Jolly is revered for his time at Wealdstone, a shining goalscoring light when sometimes it seemed that no-one else was capable. So when Jolls was injured, then naturally it could benefit us were we to adopt this underhand tactic. The phrase has lasted post-Jolls, and remains in common use every time we announce a postponement.

False postponements are nothing new, and most famously for Stones this was used against

us by Wycombe in **JANUARY** 1983. Their pitch was remarkably waterlogged despite no rain all week in Buckinghamshire - a story which later became a tale of sprinklers being left on by mistake. It later transpired that their towering centre back Anton Vircavs was unavailable for the FA Trophy tie that Saturday - and it was a Brucie Bonus for Wanderers when our own skipper Paul Bowgett was away on business for the Tuesday night rearranged date. Of course Mr Vircavs scored one of the goals in our 2-1 defeat.

Christmas has now passed, nonetheless the popular **JINGLE** Bells song can be heard throughout the year, '**Oh what fun it is to see Wealdstone win away!**' This is a good thing - as I write this pre the festive fixtures, the majority of our league wins have come away from the Vale. Whilst I want the win ratio at home to increase, there's something very special about wins on the road. This season we've recorded great wins at Oldham, York, Gateshead, Altrincham and Aldershot, so with the exception of the latter this would suggest the extra time together pre-match is



It's Richard Jolly, our impish sharp-shooter of a decade ago

beneficial. Maybe an additional chance to discuss tactics and plans? Our next away league match is at Halifax, another club famous for postponements. It's another weekend for me and a great place to visit, bring the points home boys - **JINGLE** Bells!

Given that we now have VAR to rule on things (thankfully not in the National League), how trusting were we as kids when we played with **JUMPERS** for goalposts? I don't recall the arguments we see on the telly these days, we just got on with it. Depending how many jumpers were piled on the ground it could be difficult to establish whether a goal was scored or not, and who cared if perhaps the ball had in any event crossed a non-existent line during the build up? The lack of proper goalposts when playing at an early age may account for the number of dreadful off target free kicks we witness week in week out these days. With Jumpers for goalposts, Greenie was on target every time!

Stones have only ever played 2 teams beginning with the letter J, a **JERSEY** FA XI at home in 1991, and a rather more interesting looking friendly away to **JS AUDUN-LE-TICHE** in June 1960. I had to look further into this, the history website lists the fixture as 'Auden-le-Tiche' but if Google maps is to be believed then it should read Audun-le-Tiche. Indeed, Mick Fishman and Pete Worby's book talks about this match



Brian Jones

BRIAN JONES

JUNIOR STONES PLAYER CARDS No.5

Full Name: Brian Jones
Date Of Birth: 21.7.75
Height & Weight: 6' / 3st. (he says)
Nickname: Jonah
Position: Midfield/Forward
Occupation: Turf Accountant
Previous Clubs: Bedfont, Harrow, Yeading
Appearances/Goals (to end of 97/98): 46/20
Favourite Food/Drink: Chips / Milk
Favourite Country Visited: Ibiza
Hobbies: Golf
What Famous person would you most like to meet? Paul Rumens - to ask for more money!
Ambition: Winning honours with Wealdstone

as part of a six-club tournament held in and around the Luxembourg /French border area along with Hounslow and Hendon. We played three matches in three days over the Whitsun weekend with just a 12-man squad, also playing US Jarry and Selection Du Bassin De Brie. I'm not sure why this isn't an annual event, sign me up for the next one please, I suspect a few others might be up for this too....

I don't know about everyone else, but for the first time in many years I was a tad concerned as to what the final score might end up being when Notts County visited the Vale this season. Most in attendance thought that the visitors were outstanding, and when they hit their 5th just after the break and a 6th on 55 minutes, I was fearful of the dreaded ten. Thankfully six it remained, no such luck for Cowdenbeath when I went to watch them eight years ago. Where does this fit into the letter J I hear you ask? Well this was my first visit to Tynecastle to see the **JAM** Tarts of Hearts.

Fellow Stone Megaphone Mick dragged me away for an Edinburgh weekend, choosing to miss the Stones trip to the overpriced Stale Buns, or put another way Hearts over Herts. Hearts had

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Above: Brian 'Jonah' Jones is the subject of the Junior Stones football card. Better than Panini!

Stones Alphabet contd...

J

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fallen on tough times and had been relegated to the Scottish Championship, Cowdenbeath playing at a fairly elevated level by their standards. In three mad 1st half minutes Genero Zeefuik scored a hat-trick whilst the visitors had a man sent off. It wasn't much of a spectacle to honest as Hearts romped to a 10-0 win, condemning Cowdenbeath to their joint heaviest defeat in history.

J is also for **JULES RIMET** and as I'm writing this the day after England's defeat in the World Cup, the Jules Rimet Trophy remains the only major one that England have secured in my lifetime. I arrived home from Bromley too late for the start - thanks to Bromley for a) not agreeing to a change in kick off time and b) not bothering to check the goal nets properly causing the kick off to be delayed.

Nonetheless, whilst I have enjoyed watching the World Cup and I want to see England win, I just don't have the same emotional investment watching the global stars compared to watching the Stones. I can't even tell you who they all play for anymore - I'm completely out of touch with the top level and I'm happy with that. Has the current World Cup trophy even got a name? Fair to say that I can name more **JOCK LAW** trophy winners than Jules Rimet winners.

My mood for the week ahead will never be set by an England result. Disappointed we lost, yes, but more so that we took

WEAULDSTONE STONES v **TEALMING THE DING** Tuesday 8th February 2000 Isthmian League Division 1

With a few home games coming up, our programme editor thoughtfully produced a smaller than usual programme, good news for Gordon...

8 mins: "at least I don't have to write about my worst ever managerial run..."

11 mins: "come on lads, pride, passion, and our first win in 11 games will be ours!" "not sure I fancy it myself, it's bit cold and wet..."

40 mins: "I'm good at these!" "Sways steps up, maybe it will be our night!!" "a corner, Rutherford's shirt is pulled, PENALTY!!!"

48 mins: "With the wind, our first half performance was good, but we would perhaps rue the missed chances, the best..." "Bobby Bazooka should have scored"

50 mins: "Into the 2nd half, and the game turned suddenly, and decisively..." "Carl Holmes is stretchered off on 48mins"

55 mins: "The half time message was no different..." "come on lads, pride, passion, and our first win in 11 games will be ours!" "hang on, it's cold, wet, and now we're against the wind!!"

60 mins: "It's a tough choice for Gordon..." "moan" "Is it Prutton, the perpetually injured Birchy, or the recovering-from-flu Jonah??"

65 mins: "After the game, Gordon is all too aware that he has to write the programme notes for Saturday..." "12 without a win, what is going wrong lads?" "told you it was cold, wet and windy"

Final score: **Stones 1 Ding 3**

Time for one of those clear the air sessions, where everyone can have their say...

Not my fault, I'm just so good... I never touched him ref!! If you'd said Prutton was coming on, I wouldn't have got injured!! The rain hasn't affected my hair has it?

Imber Sterling Dicker Macka Tubury Bezhardt Benno Swaysland Rutherford Birchy Jonah Prutton Lamb Dicker Macka Prutton's useless boss Prutton changed the game alright Andy Andy Prutton If he gets the ball He does f... all Andy Andy Prutton That Prutton is so bald without an 1 I'm available for Saturday boss!

Roll on Saturday.....

LEATHERHEAD TANNERS v **WEAULDSTONE STONES** Tuesday 22nd February 2000 Ryman League Division 1

Two long months with no league win, a defeat at Fetcham Grove would confirm our worst relegation fears.....

8 mins: "And just so long as our finishing is off target, those fears seemed destined to continue..." "whinges"

50 mins: "But we needn't worry, we can always rely on one of our 15 goal a season midfielders to come up trumps!!!" "It's looking good for the Stones, bad for the Tanners..." "complain"

55 mins: "A Birchy corner, Sways misses it, and it comes out to Paul McKay, chest, volley - 1-0 Stones!!!" "Another Jonah run, but they just won't go in..."

60 mins: "But who cares if the forwards can't score when you've got 15 goal a season man in midfield!" "Excuse enough for the rest of the team to miss again of course..."

62 mins: "searing pace!!" "It's Macka again!! 2-0 Stones!!" "to the goalkeeper"

80 mins: "Macka (again involved)"

And so, an overdue and very welcome victory.....

"Well played lads, why haven't we done that for 2 months?" "Prutton!" "Of course we couldn't have done it without 15 goals a season midfielder man..." "Well done Macka, only 13 to go." "That's one less than any other midfielder"

Final Score: **Tanners 0 Stones 2**

Left and above: A couple of Jon's famous stickman cartoons which are now (amazingly) 22 years old. Whatever happened to Mr Prutton?

the lead three times at Bromley and didn't hold out for the win.

J is also for **JEALOUSY**. In the home programme with 'Wood, I touched on the fact that I was **JEALOUS** of their cup exploits, and of course we went there the following week and were duly dumped out of the competition again. They have since progressed a further couple of rounds and are now in the 3rd round yet again, banking the money that comes with it. Whilst we welcome Eastleigh's players officials and supporters to the Vale today, I'd rather we were in Wood's shoes away at Accrington Stanley. Maybe not a glamour tie, but one that still pockets them a sizeable sum win or lose.

Finally this week, a quick mention for Brian '**JONAH**' Jones. We've done Jonah before, but he is another player for whom I have a player card in my collection so meriting a re-entry (see previous page). Apart from being an amazing talent and joy to watch at times, he was always one to express his emotions, sometimes getting a little carried away in the process. This made him very easy to portray in my matchday stickman drawings on Jack's Wealdstone website (left) - this became a popular part of Stones post-match analysis back in the late nineties (in my house anyway). No live streams or video replays back then, so this was the closest you could get to seeing what actually happened if you weren't there. I think that I only upset a few players with these, there was no social media back then to call me out on the in-depth analyses. **That's your Up the Stones!**

BY JON TAFFEL

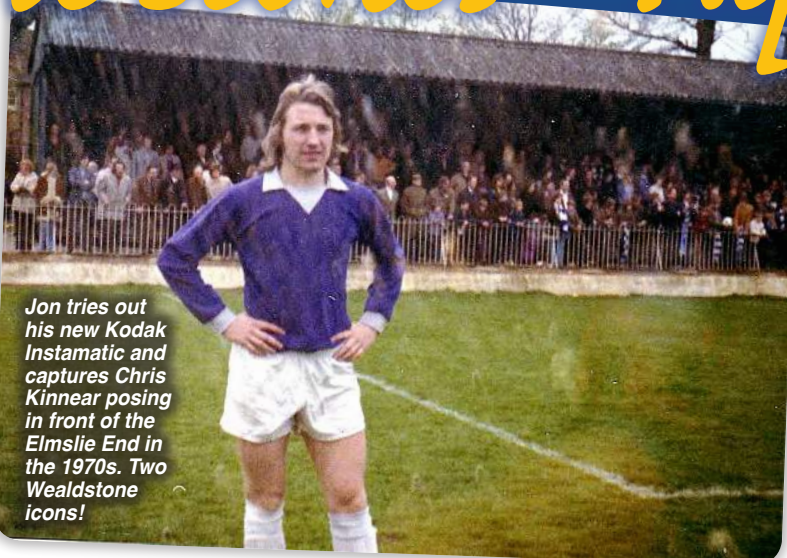


The Stones Alphabet

K

Okay, it's really kicking off as Jon gets stuck into kebabs, kits andKretzschmar!

I'm writing this the day after our win over Eastleigh, so the first K to come into my mind is Max **KRETZSCHMAR** having scored our 2nd goal from the spot in a fantastic win. The signing of Kretzschmar in the summer was seen as a bit of a coup for us, a regular high performer in the Woking side and undoubtedly a thorn in our sides when both there and at Hampton. Most notable was of course our play off match at the Kingfield at the end of the 2018-19 season, where Woking turned round a 2-0 deficit to snatch a 3-2 win at the death. From our very



Jon tries out his new Kodak Instamatic and captures Chris Kinnear posing in front of the Elmslie End in the 1970s. Two Wealdstone icons!

own club match report, **"Everything positive for Woking in the second half was courtesy of Kretzschmar,"** he delivered the corner for Woking's first and then it was he himself who scored the late equaliser.

We've probably yet to see the best from Max due to injuries and illness limiting his appearances, however I've really enjoyed watching him in a Stones shirt. Some of the flicks and assists have been top drawer, and his experience in drawing fouls is as joyous for us to see as it must be irritating for the opposition – not dissimilar from what Ross Lafayette used to do so well. Even off the pitch however he can be seen and heard motivating his teammates, kicking every ball as he does.

More importantly given my love of all things alphabet related, Kretzschmar contains an impressive tally of six successive consonants! I can't immediately think of any Stone that comes remotely close to this. It's way more impressive than Eleftheriou with his six vowels last season, they weren't even in succession. A lesser-known K and lesser-known Stone of six vowel alphabetical interest is Arvydas **KACINKEVICIUS**. I have abso-

lutely no recollection of this player, but the record books show that he made 1 'other' appearance in 2011, having joined us from Lithuanian side FK Alytis Alytus. The Isthmian League was a step too far for Kacinkevicius, he left us and joined Kentish Town which is a good thing as I really wouldn't have wanted to caption his photos too often.

Growing up as good Jewish lad, I was brought up only to eat **KOSHER** meat, this in essence meant that I only ever ate meat at home or at relatives' houses. I didn't really feel I was missing out despite the rave reviews for

the ham rolls served up at the Lower Mead tea hut, I had to stick with the cheese and onion variety - not all bad news. This all changed however on a freezing cold February evening in 1975 when I found myself at Craven Cottage for an FA Cup 4th round 2nd replay between Fulham and Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest. I was so cold and hungry I felt that I had no option but to part with my money and invest in a hamburger. These were things of mystery to me, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. Suffice to say I didn't enjoy the experience one bit, I suspect that there was very little meat content in whatever it was I was served with, it was certainly not a patch on what is served at the Vale nowadays. For the record, the match ended 1-1, 2nd Division Fulham with Bobby Moore in their line-up incredibly won the 3rd replay (they'd already won after two replays in

the 3rd round) on their road to reaching the final.

This leads on nicely to one of the great experiences known to man, the late-night **KEBAB**. Having ditched my Kosher principles, my first introduction to the Kebab was at the sadly departed Stavros establishment in North Harrow courtesy of fellow fan Duncan Towell. Much in the way that my first ever curry at the Bina in Northwood High Street shaped my life (and body) in years to come, this was a very good experience. North Harrow was a car ride away, so as an Eastcote lad Manor Kebabs would quickly become a regular haunt and it remains there serving delicious healthy food to this day. Stones fans can often be seen eating Kebabs when they are not even hungry for reasons unknown.

Every shot a winner on **KODAK** film' proclaimed the advert in our programme in our Lower Mead days. Kodak was a major employer in Harrow and most people knew someone who worked there. For my part I had a summer job in their South Ruislip office in the summer of 1979. Conveniently working nights so I didn't miss football, this was one of my more lucrative roles, not least because I was only there six weeks but received a pay increase backdated eight months. My boss told me to keep it quiet, it took me a further eight months in my first proper job to earn as much again! Two of us had a summer job in the computer department that year, the other is currently serving a life

sentence for murder in the US!

More importantly, my Kodak Pocket Instamatic was my very first camera. Received as a Bar Mitzvah present I believe in December 1973, this enabled me to take my very first snaps at Lower Mead during that great 1973-74 promotion season. Being 'K' week I've chosen Chris Kinnear in front of our beloved Elmslie Stand, a shocking photo taken directly into the sun!

The **KIT** we wear is often a bone of contention amongst some supporters, and colour choice has certainly caused consternation from time to

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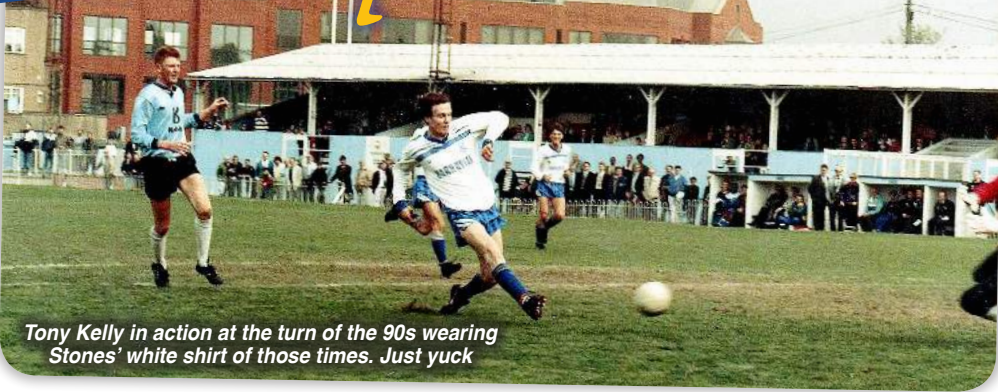
Max Kretzschmar gets upset when kitman Brett makes fun of the number of consonants in his name



**EVERY SHOT A WINNER
on Kodak FILM**

The Kodak ad in the Stones programme. See what they did there?

Stones Alphabet contd...



Tony Kelly in action at the turn of the 90s wearing Stones' white shirt of those times. Just yuck

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

time. I started watching the Stones in the late 60's, so playing in blue shirts and white shorts is fine by me. The blue and white quarters I enjoyed too, it was the drastic changes that annoyed me. Firstly, Morrirt arrived and decided that we should ditch white and play in blue and yellow stripes - and worse was our change strip of the abominable all red. Then in our final throes at Lower Mead we adopted the white shirt. We might as well have called ourselves Enfield.

So we're back with blue and white, the only problem that most of the older spectators have is in finding a shirt that fits. I've lost count of the number of replica shirts that I have purchased and never worn, thinking that one day I might grow into them. On top of that, I hope that the Kelme pink never finds it's way onto the shirt itself. I'm on notice from the missus that if I'm seen wearing that colour then I'm on borrowed time.

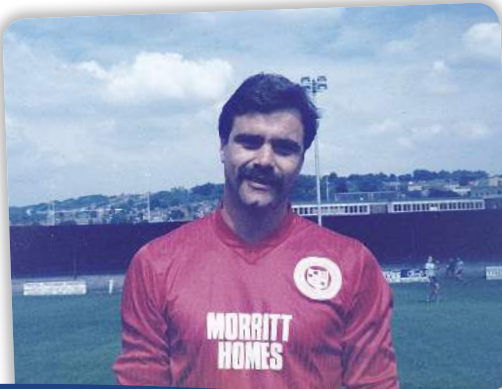
The **KITMAN'S** role is to ensure that all things player equipment wise is spick and span, so we've struck gold with the new man in the role this season. Filling the

boots of Tony was never going to be easy but Brett has proved a popular choice all around. His military background (when did they ditch the height requirement?) ensures that nothing goes unchecked and he has added post-match dancing and water collection to this key role.

Finally today, K is for **KICK OFF**, and on the back of the matches against Chelmsford and Eastleigh I'd like to remind the team that the match starts at the same time for both teams, and not a minute later for us. Thankfully the early setback against Eastleigh didn't cost us, but the Trophy defeat definitely hurts - we had a great chance to win this competition. Undoubtedly the goal at Chelmsford should have been ruled out offside - clearly the linesman (I refuse to call them referees' assistants) had also forgotten to switch on.

KICKING OFF is also a term that can apply when players or supporters lose control of a situation, nowadays we see more handbags than full scale kicking off as we may have witnessed in the 70s in games against Wimbledon for example.

Enjoy the game, and hopefully when I write 'L' it will not be about a Loss.



Stones' skipper Paul Bowgett wears red at Wycombe. Is this is the most unpleasant picture we've ever published?

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



This week, our man with the Wealdstone dictionary looks at Liverpool, Losing, League Ladders and the Lease...

L is for **LOSING**. I hate Losing, so writing this as I am just after our defeat to Gateshead, I'm not in the best of moods. That's the thing about being a football fan, what happens in that ninety minutes can shape the mood of a whole day, weekend or week.

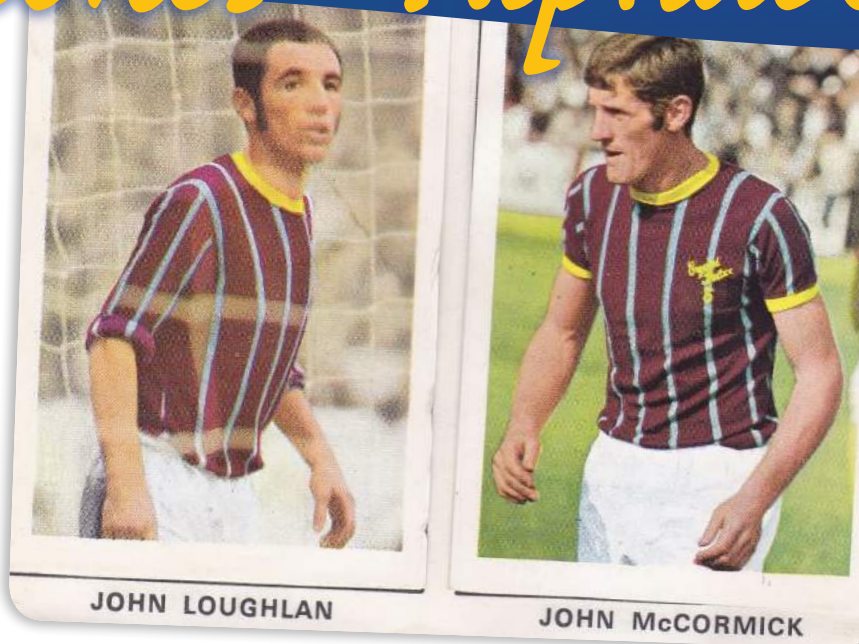
A win against Gateshead and we'd have been sitting in a play-off spot against all odds, and I was mug enough to take a sneaky look at the league table just before the Heed scored their equaliser. Twenty minutes later and our winning

position had become a defeat, and whilst disappointing it cannot be argued that on the balance of play the visitors didn't deserve it.

Two post-match pints were enough for me, that's what a Loss does. With

a win, I'd still be guzzling my ale rather than writing this, so there is a benefit not just to my health, but also in that I'm more likely to meet the Dagers programme deadline. And that's before I even start to sort the match photos out.

L is also for **LIMBS**, a term used to describe an exceptional moment amongst fans when something outstanding occurs, most likely when as a result of a special goal or moment. Arms and legs go absolutely everywhere with a complete loss of control, and we've had a few of those moments this season. Sadly participation in Limbs moments are a thing of the past for me now I'm stuck behind the Lens, the best I can do is try and capture others in the act. Top contenders for Limbs moments this season have to be following our goals at Oldham and York, particularly Captain Cook's stoppage time winner in the latter.



JOHN LOUGHLAN

JOHN McCORMICK

cross paths with the Stones.

L is for **LEAGUE LADDERS**, popularised by Shoot magazine in the 70's. These appeared every summer at the commencement of the new season and involved a pull-out card with slits for all English & Scottish League Divisions, and another sheet of card with tabs for each team that popped out and enabled the owner to move teams up and down the ladders each week. These multicoloured items were must-haves for any self-respecting lad back then, but were far from ideal if like me you supported a Southern League team. The answer was simply to turn the multicoloured tabs around and write the names of non-league teams on the beige reverse. Did anyone else other than me do the same? So good were these Ladders that a version was reproduced on Jack's Wealdstone website back in the nineties and these were very popular (in my house at least!)

L is for **LEASE**, probably one of the most relevant L's at this time in the determination of where our club's future lies. Incredibly it is over thirty years since we left our Lower Mead home, a period which has seen some massive ups and downs. Undoubtedly with the resources at our disposal we are riding on the crest of a wave at the moment. We all love the Vale, but our future here is reliant on our current **LANDLORDS** and **LEASE**.

Understandably developments in this area can't always be made public, but if the club is to continue its remarkable progression then we're all hoping for some good news on this front. Rory's programme notes for the Gateshead match certainly gives us cause for optimism here. L is also for a different kind of **LEESE**, referring to an unsuccessful experiment involving Andy Leese trying to share Gordon Bartlett's job.

Last week saw Stuart and Matt complete 100 matches in charge of the Stones, and one of the keys to our success has been use of the **LOAN MARKET**. Last season it was no coincidence that an upturn in our fortunes coincided with the recruitment of some key loan signings to supplement our squad. In George Wickens and Connor McAvoy from Fulham we were already doing OK, but the signings of Charles Clayden and Aaron Henry from Charlton Athletic took things to another level. This season we currently

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L is for **LONGSHOT**, and a late and unlikely contender for inclusion this week is John **LOUGHLAN**. Younger readers may ask who on earth is John Loughlan? I must admit I had forgotten all about him until I was browsing through my 1970-71 Soccer Stars Gala Collection the other day – the equivalent of the modern day Panini sticker albums. Panini was already in existence but back then I don't recall them being on the UK market. Anyway, John Loughlan appeared on the Crystal Palace page next to former Stone John McCormick (pictured above). I was very struck with his haircut and sideburns... in later seasons the Soccer Stars Collections included pictures of players 'in action'. I wish there had been a version with pictures of players in civvies, I'm sure John would have been wearing a tonic suit.

Various images from my Soccer Stars collection may well feature in future editions, my particular favourites being the publisher's amateurish attempts at image editing - no sophisticated photoshop tools back then. Back to Scotsman Loughlan, after his football league career was over he did play non-league for Wimbledon and Kettering as well as managing Corby so he did

SEASON 2001-2002 Ryman League Division 1		
Position	Team	
1		
2		
3		
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14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		

AVLESBURY	SLOUGH
THE DUCKS	THE REBELS
BARLING	STAINES
THE BUCKS	THE LILYWHITES
BISHOP'S ST	THAME UTD
BLADES	UNITED
BOGNOR	TOOTING
THE ROCKS	TERRORS
BROMLEY	UNBRIDGE
LETT	THE REEF
CASBALTON	WALTON & H
WHINGERS	THE SWANS
DUL WICH	WEALDSTONE
RAMBIT	STONES
FORD UTD	WHYTELEAF
MOTINGEN	THE LEAF
HARLOW T	WINDSOR
BLAWES	ROYALIST
NORTHWOOD	WORTHING
THE WOODS	THE REBELS
OXFORD C	YEADING
THE CITY	THE DRIF

Above: Jack's Wealdstone Website back in the 2000s and its terrific alternative League Ladders (see opposite page)

The Alphabet contd

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

have Charlie Barker also from Charlton as well as Miguel Freckleton from Sheffield United and Brooklyn Ilunga from MK Dons.

This is not a completely new thing, we have had some cracking loanees in days gone by. Britt Assombalonga and Theo Robinson immediately spring to mind. This new crop are experiencing a high standard of football that will only enhance their professional development whilst also helping us to compete in a predominantly full time league. It's a win-win: Keep the conveyor belt rolling!

With Dagenham as our visitors today, I was really hoping that this week would be 'M' not 'L' as it would be an opportunity to shoe-horn LINCOLN Manderson into the article. Now I could do this anyway simply by using Lincoln, instead I will do so by bringing in my favourite position of **LEFT BACK**. Left back is synonymous with the No 3 shirt worn by many Stones over the years, but none less so than Stuart Pearce. Fast forward then to 1985 and the Stones were in a two-legged FA Trophy semi-final against Enfield. Sandwiched between these two matches was a Capital League match at Victoria Road, so to avoid injuries Brian Hall asked the Supporters' team to provide players to 'bolster' the side. Yours truly was lucky enough to don the No 3 shirt that night, my proudest football moment where despite losing 3-2 I had

the aforementioned Mr Manderson in my pocket for the evening. He may still be there. Anyway, if you've read this far, if Daggers fans has any press cuttings from the evening I'd love to see them!

is also, of course, for **LIVERPOOL**, it was just over nineteen years ago that our club's greatest-ever FA Youth Cup run (under the sadly and recently departed Francis Joseph) took us to Liverpool for an unforgettable evening. Whether on the Kop or in the Director's Box, it was a slightly surreal experience for our fans, never in my lifetime did I really think I'd see a Stones team at Anfield. I enjoyed seeing the scoreboard when it was Liverpool 0 Wealdstone 0... though sadly it wasn't to last.

So that's almost it for this week, other than to mention one of the biggest travesties of all time. This was February 1982, and almost 41 years ago today we faced Dagenham in the FA Trophy. The referee that day was a Mr **D LETTS** from Basingstoke (he doesn't deserve to be referred to with his first name) and he single-handedly gave the game to the Daggers on a plate. (see left) It still hurts to this day, I'll leave it there with no further comment.

Enjoy the game!

Liverpool (Red Shirts)		Wealdstone (Blue & White Stripes)	
1 David Roberts	1 Mitchell Swain		
2 Jordan Holmes	2 Lee Holland		
3 Danny Smith	3 Rodney Hicks		
4 Adam Hitcher	4 Eric Donald Gibb		
5 Robbie Threlfall	5 Todd Atison		
6 Dewing Guibrie (cl)	6 Carl Martin (c)		
7 Adam Hamill	7 Sam Sharples		
8 Jay Spearling	8 John Christie		
9 Karl Mann	9 Mohammed Ibrahim		
10 Donal Platt	10 Mark Thompson		
11 Paul Barrett	11 Alex Augustin		

Substitutes	Substitutes
12 Calum Woods	12 Ryan Moore
13 Sam Rakin	13 Michael Lavender
14 Phil Townley	14 Martin Martin
15 Jimmy Ryan	15 Brian Green
16 Charlie Barnett	16 Luis Garcia

Referee	Assistant Referees
Mr W D Smallwood	Mr D Strain & Mr T G Fox

Apror as Stones go out

REFERENCE David Letts, the man at the centre of Wealdstone's controversial exit from the FA Trophy at Lower Meadow on Saturday, revealed that he came "within a second or two" of shunning the club, writes **ROGER JONES**.

The second half was a shambles as Alan Beesley of Stone Park in the FA Trophy at Lower Meadow on Saturday, revealed that he came "within a second or two" of shunning the club, writes **ROGER JONES**.

The second half was a shambles as Alan Beesley of Stone Park in the FA Trophy at Lower Meadow on Saturday, revealed that he came "within a second or two" of shunning the club, writes **ROGER JONES**.

PROTESTS The protest, according to Mr Letts, was arranged by the club's supporters and was held in the grounds of the stadium. The protest was held in the grounds of the stadium.

LETTS Mr Letts, who was the referee for the match, was criticised for his decision to award a penalty to the home side.



Wednesday's injury: Day (Daggers) was only able to play as Dagenham's Brian Hall (Cl) took his revenge on...

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



Mmm.. a marvellous edition of the Alphabet as Jon delves into Mullin, Mim, Maynard, Met Police and micropubs!

There's only one place to start this week, and given my love of coincidences (contrived or otherwise) today M is for the **MINSTERMEN** of York. For Stones fans the addition of York to our fixture calendar for the first time this season was certainly a mouth-watering one, particularly the away fixture. Sadly York left their Bootham Crescent ground in 2021, one which was rather easier to get to than the current out-of-town version.

I was fortunate enough to visit York for a Rugby League match a few years ago and the match day experience then was somewhat easier than our nightmare trip there in November. An easy walk from the city centre to Bootham Crescent, who wants that when you can wait for non-existent buses and taxis? Our consolation for missing a large part of that match was of course Jack Cook's last gasp winner... but it still rankles.

As I write this before our trip to Wrexham, the Minstermen have again hit the news with their latest contribution to the **MANAGERIAL** Merry-go-round. There must be something in the air when their match v Wealdstone approaches, as

our trip in November was preceded by John Askey leaving the club, and today's news is that David Webb is also no more. It is a fact of life that in any division of 24 teams there will be a number of casualties during a season. Not every team can be successful and some teams will always fail. What the measure is for success or failure will depend on a number of factors unique to each club. Most people at Wealdstone whilst gladly accepting our current position would have taken avoiding relegation as a reasonable measure of success at the start of the season. Most people at Wrexham on the other hand will see anything other than pro-



Paul Mullin is an M who just couldn't get the better of Jack Cook when the teams met at the Vale. Though he managed to head the opener at Wrexham last Saturday...

motion as a failure, I really hope they fail! So far this season we have seen Scunthorpe, Oldham, York, Yeovil, Aldershot and Maidstone contributing to the Merry-go-round, a mere 25% and that's with the season less than two thirds complete. Some of the casualties may have moved on by that mysterious term 'Mutual Consent' which usually means absolutely nothing of the sort.

One of the league's **MANAGERS** still very much in situ is our very own Stuart **MAYNARD**. Now I'm not one of those 'I told you so' people, but I was very much behind Maynard's appointment two years ago when many were sceptical. Under his astute stewardship we've seen a steady improvement in our fortunes against all the odds. I know I shouldn't do, but I'll happily quote a couple of forum

posts after his first game in charge at Darlington: **"Maynard clearly a big part of the problem, NEXT!!!!!"**

"No desire, no shape, no pattern of play. I have no doubt Rory will be fuming and SM has done himself no favours at all."

"That's SM's credibility finished."

"Rory needs to get his finger out and appoint a new manager ASAP because as things stand it will just be one disaster after another."

I'm not defending the performance at Darlington by the way, it was an absolute shocker, but the above merely demonstrates some of the kneejerk nonsense that is all too easy to write by both those that should know better and those that don't.

M is also for one of our much loved and much missed supporters, **MIM** Goodman. A stalwart of the Supporters Club committee and the familiar face and voice of 'Golden Goals' on entering the ground, Mim was simply one of the loveliest people anyone could ever hope to meet. None of us can reasonably hope to be liked by everyone all of the time, but I honestly can't imagine anyone not liking Mim. Passionate about the Stones, Mim would be there home and away, giving lifts if she could to fellow Stones whether young or old. Always encouraging the team, always discouraging bad language on the terraces she was a great example to us all. Never shy to start singing when others were quiet, her 'Give me a W' renditions always brought a smile to one's face. Unfortunately Mim's untimely passing meant that she was unable to see the Stones reclaim their position at non-league's top table, and COVID restrictions put paid to her being given the send-off that she so thoroughly deserved. We miss you Mim.

M is also or one of the best things to have happened in my lifetime, and that is the advent of the **MICROPUB**. Lager drinkers can move on to the next section, but for those that prefer a varied offering of traditional cask ale over mass produced fizzy piss, then these

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A reminder of **MET POLICE**... an M that also stands for Mickey Mouse. What is the point of this taxpayer-funded club? Here, Sean Cronin is pictured missing a penalty against the Met at Imber Court a dozen years ago, another reason to feel angry



A face in the crowd at Margate as we won promotion in 2014.. it's the wonderful Mim Goodman

Stones Alphabet contd



FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

establishments have been gamechangers when it comes to match day beer planning. The very first Micropub opened in 2005, and the Isle of Thanet quickly became the epicentre for the micropub explosion. **MARGATE** holds dear memories for Stones fans, and on the Tuesday night that we clinched the Ryman League Championship in 2014, the Harbour Arms was the perfect place to celebrate staying open well into the night. Since then they have been springing up nationwide and is a trend that I embrace – in Ruislip we are fortunate to have the outstanding Hop & Vine. That's not to say that I don't have time for the traditional pub (York is one of the best examples of an away trip with so many fantastic pubs such as the Swan and the Golden Ball that I really enjoyed), but so many offer a bland unchanging and undrinkable option – the big brewers and pub chains have a lot to answer for.

M is for **MICKEY MOUSE**, a slang term for something not deserving to be taken seriously. This can be applied in many ways, some to individual acts or omissions, or perhaps to clubs in general. Supporters of some of the clubs in our league certainly seem to think that the Vale, our home, is somewhat Mickey Mouse. That claim may have had more gravitas before some of our ground im-

provements, but those very same supporters need to understand that they wouldn't need to experience said Mousedom had they not produced Mickey Mouse performances that got them relegated in the first place. For me the best example of a Mickey Mouse club is the **METROPOLITAN POLICE** football team. Currently playing in the Southern League, no-one supports them, they live off the taxpayer and are a completely pointless club. My hope is that we never have to play them ever again.

Finally this week, M is for **MULLIN**. Paul Mullin seems to be the darling of the press playing for 'underdogs' Wrexham this season on a reported salary of £4,500 a week. I've seen him on the television a few times now this season, most recently in the FA Cup replay at Sheffield United. I grant you he looks quite useful, but I've yet to see him perform in the flesh. That's because when he did come to the Vale in November, we kept him so quiet that that it was only when I got home that evening

to sort out my photos that I actually realised that he was on the pitch. I'm hoping that the return game at the Racecourse was also a quiet one for Mullin, if it wasn't then the hope is that the editor might cut this paragraph out!

Enjoy the Match!



Ah, the pleasures of Margate! Top and above : The splendid Harbour Arms... what better place to celebrate a long-anticipated promotion?

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet

N

N-n-n-n 1979 was the first season of the National League.. it's now uNrecognisable from those early days



Nis for the **National League**. It's fair to say that most Stones fans are enjoying life in the NL, the top table of Non-League football. Our return at the start of the 2020-21 season was a bit of a damp squib as COVID put paid to any degree of normality that season, a huge disappointment given that we hadn't played at that level since relegation in 1988.

I say most fans are enjoying it, I do still hear a few Numpties complaining which I find rather bizarre given the season we've had. We still don't go forward enough, we pass backwards and sideways too much apparently. Heaven help us if we do have a bad season, all I can really do is refer them to P for Process later in the series.

Back to the subject matter, the National League has been a fantastic one to be part of, the standard of football without doubt higher than that we left behind us in the 1980s. Stones

fans new and old have embraced it with open arms as we find ourselves competing against big name clubs in big grounds in front of sizeable crowds - the size we would not have believed possible when we were languishing in Isthmian Division 3. That would only be possible if we had genuine and realistic ambitions of progressing into the Football League. Now I for one was always happy to be competing at a decent Non-League level, did I ever want to see Wealdstone in the Football League?

The answer has historically been no, hesitant perhaps of travelling away and being segregated and banned from town centre pubs. I think that these perceived obstacles have been blown away with our experiences in the National League, neither has been a problem and the experience has been good wherever we go. Would this change if we somehow found a way to get promoted at some point in the future? Probably not and I am comfortable with progression up the ladder.

The National League is of



Netherfield keeper Fisher wards off a Lancaster City attack at Giant Axe during the Newlands Charity Cup game on Aug 7th, 1976. Photo Noel Houghton, Lancaster Guardian



Allrounder... referee Mr. J. Kensett shows he is also a dab hand at net repairing. He needn't have bothered as neither Wealdstone or Leamington managed to score

N is for **NETS** and we all love to see them billowing, just as long as it's a Wealdstone player sticking them in the onion bag. Our old ground, Lower Mead, had some quirky goalposts and nets that hung down just behind the keeper's back, causing defenders to often get tangled up when trying to clear balls off the line. Then with the advent of hooliganism the club was instructed to have close-mesh nets that frankly were a disaster for anyone wanting to stand behind the goal and watch the game. The incident (left) must have been from the goalless Stones v Leamington Southern League game in October 1977. Give the man a tent peg someone!

stretcher I'm sure, and might be interested in this snippet from the Easter 1976 issue, focussing on survival.

"At Altrincham, traditionally one of the most financially sound clubs in the region, the problem was more a crisis of confidence. After years of success the supporters were very dissatisfied with a mediocre season and let their opinions be known. Attendances dropped to around 500 which began to hit the club where it hurts most - in the pocket. Constant rumours of player unrest and no confidence in the manager led to Les Rigby's resignation after less than a year in the job. The management has also implemented economic cuts which means that cash for players and high wages will be less forthcoming."

The article on survival ended by stating that "even if the Football League were ever to sanction the formation of a National Football Alliance, at the present time it would be plain financial suicide for most clubs."

Three years later, the Alliance was formed regardless, and Netstretcher changed its coverage from North West to a general Non-League and Alliance Premier League review. With Alty's financial position improved, the November 1979 edition reported the signing of Barry Whitbread from Runcorn, the fee of £6,400 (not unsubstan-

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course still **Non-League**, something that we don't hold back on reminding some of the 'bigger' clubs that we come up against us. We were founder members of the original version, the Alliance Premier League in 1979.

Up until that point we weren't allowed North of Telford unless cup draws took us further afield, but for those of us interested in football further afield the excellent **Netstretcher** magazine was much valued. In its early form it was dedicated to North West Non-League soccer, principally the Northern Premier League and Cheshire League. I was flicking through some old copies and I could fill an entire article with some interesting snippets. The August 1976 edition for example reports the end of Fleetwood from the Northern Premier League and the world of Non-League soccer altogether. A Blackpool coach firm registered a legal petition claiming £587, it went to court and the magistrate wound up the club with no Fleetwood official present to defend the case. Their crowds were barely three figures at the time... look at football in Fleetwood now!

Older Alty fans reading this will remember **Net-**

Netstretcher magazine wasn't sophisticated but it was a bit of a first in the mid-1970s, with its bizarre pictures (above) from the furthest reaches of the game. What a back-drop!

Stones Alphabet contd...

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tial even back then).

N is also for **Null** and void. Wind back to season 2019-20 when COVID hit the world, and with Stones at the top of the National League South we faced the prospect of the season being declared N & V.

In an unprecedented situation, the administrators really had no idea what to do, and there was a real danger that our successful if incomplete season would go unrewarded.

Our last match was played on 14th March at Chippenham, and with nine matches to go we were three points ahead of Havant & Waterlooville with a game in hand and a superior goal difference. It would be three months before we would learn of our promotion on points per game.

Meanwhile our challengers were left with nothing.... no playoffs, nothing. We'd done the hard work, whether we'd have won the league we'll never know, but the history books say that we did.

The following season was arguably worse, for all intents and purposes with the shambolic funding then non-funding of clubs during COVID overseen by the National League meant that it may as well as have been **Null** and void for the teams not challenging for promotion.

There was no relegation so we were safe in that respect, but it was an awful time for Stuart and Matt to be cutting their managerial teeth. With players on furlough we took some horrible beatings, and with disillusioned fans having to watch via a streaming service, this is the season that **should** have been Null and voided.

A part from up **North**, N is also for **Jonathan North** our multiple player-of-the-year winner. A worthy further mention also for Northy (pictured above in his glorious golden top which matched his thatch) who was a recent winner of an on-line poll for the all-time favourite Stone of the Ruislip years.

A brilliant shot stopper, some said he was too small to be a success at National League level. We'll never know the answer to that as a certain Mr Brennan didn't fancy him. Fred Barwick was



dropped from our side to play Colchester in the FA Cup in 1983 for being 'too small', a terrible decision that meant we never saw Fred in a Wealdstone shirt again.

Back to Northy, he was incredibly brave too, coming back from a horrific injury at Canvey. He was brutally taken out with a boot in the face in our play-off win at Bath in 2019, and that ultimately cost us dearly in the semi-final at Woking. Looking back, that non-promotion was probably a blessing in disguise, we weren't ready for it then and are in a far better place today.

Finally this week, with the crowds we now experience and the feel good factor we have at the Vale, maybe it's a good time to reflect on one of our groundshares and our stay at **Northwood**. Local yes, compared with horrible Yeading, but I really didn't enjoy playing there. Apart from the stand at the clubhouse end it offered nothing, the graveyard at the other end said it all. On winter evenings the walk either through the park or up the driveway from Chestnut Avenue was pretty unpleasant and the unlit car park was a delight for car thieves as Andy Leese amongst others found out. It makes us realise how lucky we are now, if some of the clubs visiting the Vale think it's bad here then they really haven't seen anything!

Enjoy the match/es, let's hope it's not N for **Nii-Nii!**

BY JON TAFFEL



My life in Nottingham



No Wealdstone Alphabet this week ...instead our man behind the lens looks back at his student life, trips to Meadow Lane... and Ilkeston idiocy!



Love the 80s' pastel colours on the fashion ad adorning the Notts programme cover!



Forest's Ian Wallace faces up to Notts' keeper Raddy Avramovic during the epic game at Meadow Lane 40 years ago. The visitors were twice European champions but County won 3-2!

More of that later.

Many of my friends amongst the student population were less enamoured by the 'lure' of non-league football, they were more interested in what they saw as 'proper' football. Meadow Lane was certainly the venue of choice ahead of the City Ground, with County very much the city underdog having been promoted to the old Division 1 (now the Premier League) in the 1980-81 season. Their near neighbours Forest had been champions of Europe in 1979 and 1980.

And so it was that I ventured to Meadow Lane on 4th December 1982 for the County v Forest match. What a match it was too, with the legendary managers Jimmy Sirrell and Brian Clough on their respective benches. Both teams were in reasonably good form, with Forest 3rd in the league and County 13th. The ground was very different to the current all seater version, and I was stood on the

vast open terrace behind the goal in a crowd of 23,552 – nearly 7,000 more than for the previous match v Liverpool and over 3,500 more than the current day National League capacity. The atmosphere was electric, County were never behind and pulled off a fantastic 3-2 win - I recommend watching this match on

YouTube, all captured by the *Match of the Day* cameras.

Whereas Forest featured European winners in their line-up such as Gary Birtles and John Robertson, the County line-up featured the rather more 'agricultural' Brian Kilcline at the back and bruising striker Iain McCulloch. The latter scored the opener and was also sent off after they went 3-2 ahead, with Paul Hooks and Trevor Christie

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Good evening all, and welcome to this evening's non-alphabet column. For the uninitiated, I'm working my way from A to Z in each programme, and tonight it should have been the turn of 'G'. With the visit of Notts County I was trying to find a way to shoehorn them in, and to be honest I was struggling to the extent I have taken the easy option and instead decided to focus exclusively on the City of Nottingham, a place where I was a very content 'student' back in the 80's.

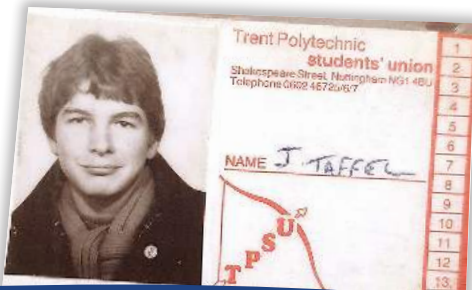
The nearest I can actually get to the letter G would be the **GULSHAN** restaurant on the Alfreton Road, an establishment where I passed many a happy hour before passing on the contents the following day. The first thing I noticed about the Gulshan was that according to the menu the Madras was hotter than the Vindaloo,

the complete opposite of what I was used to at the Shapla in Eastcote amongst other local establishments. The Gulshan featured twice in my record of four rubies in three days... we were hard up, us students.

Anyway, back to the beginning. It was in September 1982 that I arrived in Nottingham as a student at Trent Poly. Most of my friends had headed off to university three years earlier, but my football obsession meant I chose a job to earn enough money to feed my habit with the option to study part time. 3 years and several failed exams later, full time became an attractive option, and I had built up a nice credit limit on my Access card to enjoy myself without a financial care in the world.

The students on my course were largely from overseas with no football interest whatsoever, but amongst my fellow would-be accountants we had 'supporters' of West Ham, Stoke City, Chester, Mansfield, Cambridge Utd and one supporter of Notts County – are you reading this Tony Jackson? The revelation that I supported a non-league team – Wealdstone – seemed to cause some amusement... the standard 'Weald-who' response a tedious if predictable one.

My initial intention was to visit some non-league grounds in the area, but travelling to watch the Stones at every opportunity was a tough habit to break. Nonetheless, I did manage to take in some football at Arnold, Alfreton, Gainsborough, Worksop, Heanor, Matlock and famously Ilkeston.



An angelic-looking J.Taffel on his arrival at Nottingham Trent Polytechnic. I'm surprised he was served in the pubs

My life in Nottingham continued...



FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

scoring the others. It was quite simply a brilliant day. Looking back, it is incredible to see how so many were crammed into the 3-sided ground.

It was a different story for the Stones that day, taking on Frickley Athletic in front of 641 at our old Lower Mead home in the Alliance Premier League – now known of course as the National League. Playing for Wealdstone that day was a certain Stuart Pearce, himself Nottingham bound a few years later. I would have been there had my not very reliable student car not broken down en route to Runcorn the previous week (I got to that game with 10 mins to go just in time to see Runcorn's winner.

Back then, it seemed somewhat improbable that one day Wealdstone v Notts County would be a league fixture.

So onto the next memorable game of my student times - something I've written about before - and that is the infamous Ilkeston Town v Enfield FA Trophy 3rd round tie in February 1983. I had never witnessed anything quite like it before, a day of unpleasantness only matched by Wealdstone v Boreham Wood in the FA Cup at the White Lion Ground in 2004. Ilkeston fans had been involved in crowd trouble in the previous round at Barnet, one falling through the roof of the stand. This was a huge tie for Ilkeston against the holders, and though it hurts me to say it, one of the best non-league teams in the country.

I arrived in the town by car and was confronted by the sight of a small army of local youths regaled in green berets walking in the middle of the road. The small ground was ill-equipped to cope with the sizeable crowd of 2,080. When Ilkeston took a surprise 1st half lead, their fans surged down the grass bank behind one goal and broke the perimeter barrier. Order was restored and the game continued, with the home side holding their lead at half time.

Everything changed when Enfield equalised. Soon afterwards youths spilled onto the pitch resulting in the referee taking players off the field whilst the youths brawled with the outnumbered police. When play finally resumed, the E's rattled in a quickfire four goals to lead 5-1, but that was the end of the football. Another pitch invasion, more brawls and nets ripped down with youths hanging from the goalposts. The referee had no choice but

to abandon the match, and in a rare moment of common sense the FA awarded the tie to the E's. Whilst the game was in progress, it was a wholly unpleasant experience for E's fans as the locals were intimidating to say the least. Enfield went on to lose away to Harrow Boro by the same score line in the next round. Does anyone remember what happened in the semi-final that year? The clues are 'Telford Utd' and '5-1'.

I will mention one other game during my student days, and that was Stones' trip to Frickley, this was a Tuesday night in April 1984. Not necessarily an evening trip to relish for everyone, but for me this was a mere 50-mile hop from Nottingham, and what a night it was. Stones ran out 5-2 winners with Mark Graves notching 4 goals at the ground where the prolific Dylan Evans debuted for us a few seasons earlier.

To finish my Nottingham memories, it would be remiss of me not to mention the two main brewers in the city back then, Home and Shipstones. For a beer lover, Home Ales were simply undrinkable. 'Shippos' was certainly different, an acquired taste for sure but one we had to get accustomed to. My first pint of 'Shippos' saw my very first pint in Nottingham at the Clinton Arms on Shakespear Street. However, this was not possible until we'd paid our 50p entrance fee, requested with a gruff voice from the doorman. This fee covered the unexpected 'entertainment' that pretty much consisted of the overweight

landlord's wife doing a striptease; to say she was middle-aged and well built would be generous on both counts, but there you go – welcome to Nottingham lads!

So, warm greetings from us all at the Vale, Notts supporters – your club has a soft spot in my heart, and I look forward to returning to your city over Easter weekend - it will be nice to visit you in daylight for a change.

I'll be pitchside with my camera tonight so do say hello!



Innocents Enfield are caught up in frightening...

Ilkeston idiocy



Enfield's FA Trophy match at Ilkeston Town was abandoned in the 77th minute on Saturday. TIM PARKS reports.

ENFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB made national front-page news on Sunday for the first time in their 83-year history.

But, sadly, it wasn't for anything the club achieved on the field. They were merely innocent participants in a sporting "occasion" in the East Midlands that bore closer resemblance to guerrilla warfare than to a football match.

This FA Trophy third-round tie between Ilkeston Town and Enfield – potentially a classic, David and Goliath encounter – was ruined from the start by the antics of several hundred Midlands supporters whose only intention was to wreck the match.

Shelter

They certainly succeeded. Even before Birmingham's FIFA referee, Derek Civil, was forced to take shelter in the dressing rooms and abandon the match in the 77th minute, spectators, officials, and – one suspects – the players, were more concerned with the off-field activity than the game taking place on it.

The Gazette's own correspondent in Ilkeston, Jon Taffel, first arrived trouble when he drove into the town an hour before the kick-off.

"I literally couldn't get my car down the High Street. There was a mob, about 200 or 300 strong, marching down the road, with about 100 of them wearing green berets," he said.

"They seemed organised, like a small army, and deployed themselves around the ground while the game was going on." Enfield secretary, Alan Diment, supported the "organised army" theory. "It was eerie," he said. "During the game they intimidated the police and the crowd, but at half time they just seemed to switch off."

Timetable of trouble

- 1.30 p.m.: Youths gather in town centre.
- 2.30 p.m.: Match kicks off.
- 2.53 p.m.: Ilkeston take the lead. Youths surge forward down grass banking and break pitch perimeter rail. Two people taken to hospital.
- 3.39 p.m.: Soon after Enfield equalise, youths spill on to pitch through hole in rail. Match is held up for 10 minutes while police and youths brawl on pitch. One Midlands "supporter" runs the length of pitch and drags the net of the goal at the opposite end.
- 4.07 p.m.: After play is resumed and Enfield take 5-1 lead, youths suddenly swamp the pitch and the players rush for the dressing rooms. Enfield winger Steve King seeks refuge in the stands.
- 4.15 p.m.: It is announced over the tannoy that the referee has abandoned the match. The youths jump for joy, believing their "mission" to have been a success. It is later revealed that police had made 13 arrests – 12 from Ilkeston, and one from Enfield.

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Why did it happen?

THE OVERRIDING question after the game was, simply: "Why?"

Why did the "Mad Squad" from Derby County FC, as some of the youths described themselves, decide to disrupt the Ilkeston-Enfield match?

Was it because they achieved national Press coverage after their similar disruption of the game at Barnet in the previous round? Was it because they had been banned from watching Derby and decided to wreak havoc elsewhere?

And why, for goodness sake, weren't there more than the reported 20 policemen at the Ilkeston ground at the start of the game? Why were these youths allowed into the ground at all?

And why, even with reinforcements hastily brought over from the Second Division match at the nearby Derby, weren't there more than 40 policemen at the height of the trouble.

How are 40 policemen supposed to control 300 organised troublemakers?

Sensible

The only good thing to come out of the whole sorry proceedings is the fact that Ilkeston, although entitled to ask the FA to have the match replayed, have taken the sensible option and decided to forfeit the match.

Alf Jackson, their secretary, said on Sunday: "To ask for a replay would mean victory for the yobbos who took part in a planned operation to get the match abandoned."

And Ilkeston manager Steve Holder hinted at the possible repercussions when he said after the game: "I must consider my whole future in football after witnessing some of the things I saw today."

"I came to Ilkeston to bring them success – but if success brings this sort of thing is it all worth it?"

Match report, pictures p47

Above: the programme cover from the Ilkeston-Enfield game, a little less sophisticated than today's glossy publications. And right: Jon's contribution to the Enfield Gazette report

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



Oh crikey! Our man with the Oxford (City) English Dictionary goes overboard on O'Brien & overloads

O is for **OVERLOAD**, a term that I really hadn't heard until a few years ago. Nowadays it's nigh-on impossible to hear a manager interviewed without some mention of **OVERLOAD**, and in some cases it's a matter of **OVERLOAD OVERLOAD** particularly if you listen to Dorling's Marc White. In my simple world an Overload is an excessive amount of something. It's not a word heard much in everyday language, so we're more likely to hear about having One too many naan breads or beers than an Overload. That was until the football coaches hijacked the word, and if I've correctly understood it now means when a team has more players than the other team in an area of the pitch.

An example might be when the ball is on the left side of the pitch, but when the ball is played into the opposite side of the pitch quickly, the team is able to create a numerical advantage on the opposite side. If anyone is in any way confused as to what an Overload actually is or how a team creates it, then the easy to follow diagram (below) should help.

The Overload often involves an **OVERLAP**, where a football player passes the ball to another member of their team then runs beyond that player so that they are ready to receive the ball again. The Overlap was



The perfect illustration of an overload, apparently. In reality of course there would be opposition players covering, tackling, falling over and trying to buy freekicks



HARRY REDKNAPP

probably covered in a previous edition of my alphabet thanks to Matt Perry's famous Overlap at Bognor many years ago. The problem young Matt faced was that he didn't have the pace to complete the Overlap, and to the best of my knowledge it still hasn't been completed as I pen this article.

In the olden days, the Overlap may have involved an **OUTSIDE** Right or an **OUTSIDE** Left. Like most people of my vintage, these were established positions in any team and held shirt numbers 7 and 11 respectively. Nowadays of course we may refer to them as wingers or wide men and they probably wear silly numbers such as 23 and 36. In years gone by these positions would be printed next to the players' names in the match day programme. A good example is from my 1970/71 Soccer Stars Picture Stamp Album (above), where Harry Redknapp was described as a 'Former England youth international Outside-right who found his first senior opportunity in a friendly match in Germany

five years ago. Became a professional after his apprenticeship, put on the paid role (sic) in March 1964.' He was very popular at Upton Park as a player, and he had wonderful sideburns then too.

Cast your mind back to COVID and lockdowns in 2020. Unable to see friends in person, one thing that became very popular amongst many people was to get together for Quizzes on Zoom. Now if I was being clever, I might wish to save these for the potentially problematic Q and Z articles.

However, some fellow Stones and I indulged in this articular activity, and a regular subject of many questions was a certain Alan **O'BRIEN**. Alan will be remembered by many as 'Unlucky Alan' principally due to the injuries he suffered that set back his career in its early stages, but also by virtue of the fact that nothing ever seemed to run particularly well for him in a Stones shirt.

Alan's career stats for the Stones (thanks Pete Worby) were 3 starts, 8 substitute appearances and 0 goals. He never completed 90 minutes as he was substituted in all matches that he started. His debut was as a substitute in a horrendous 1-5 defeat at Weston-Super-Mare and he also came on as a substitute in our ill-fated F A Cup defeat at Burgess Hill Town.



Anyway, for those who missed out, here we are delighted to exclusively reproduce some Alan O'Brien questions relating to his pre-Wealdstone days...

- 1) In 2006 Alan O'Brien made his International debut for the Republic of Ireland against the Netherlands, Who was the opposing manager?
- 2) According to Wikipedia, Alan O'Brien made a total of 100 appearances in the Premier League, the Scottish Premier League, and the English Football League.

How many goals did Alan score in those games? (Clue: It's less than 10).

- 3) In Alan O'Brien's last match for Newcastle United in 2007, which famous England striker did he replace as a 67th minute substitute?

- 4) How much did Hibs pay Newcastle United for Alan O'Brien in 2007? A) Nothing, B) £50k, C) £100k, D) £200k or E) 250k?

Answers are at the end of this article.. no cheating! !

O is also for **OLDHAM** Athletic, the once Premier League team who suffered the ignominy of becoming the first team to have played in that league to become a non-league team.

For Wealdstone fans there was a tinge of disappointment when the fixtures came out and it became apparent that both our matches against them would be played midweek. However, it could have been worse, and the away fixture was just our

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Above: The impressive Alan O'Brien gallery playing for Eire, Hibs, Swindon and Newcastle Utd

Stones Alphabet contd...

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third match of the season. For many of us it was an overnight trip not to be missed, but for all fans that travelled it was one of the memorable matches in our great season.

Fresh from a horrible game at Eastleigh (isn't it always), off we all went by car, coach and train to witness the Stones in full Brazil kit for the first time. We were rewarded with a fantastic display that saw us rip the opposition to shreds, silence the crowd and deliver a couple of top quality goals from Rhys Browne and Tarryn Allarakhia, the second a move involving all 11 players and 26 touches. Yes Oldham fought back after our dominant first half, but we held on comfortably and the win was thoroughly deserved. Two matches later we were briefly top of the league! It was fun whilst it lasted.... and we haven't done too badly since.

O is definitely for **OLUFELA OLOMOLA**, who like Max Kretzschmar makes the alphabet by virtue of the letters making up his name. An impressive four Os and a total of eight vowels outnumbering the paltry six consonants. Sonny Blu Lo-Everton with three Os and six vowels pips both Micah Obiero and Dominic Hutchinson with two Os and six vowels into second place in this particular grammatical event.

Finally this week let's talk about **OXFORD** City F.C. Now my dislike of plastic pitches is well known, so the idea that Oxford City are currently holding a playoff position in the National League South and may get promoted is of great concern. Every season I hope that we lose plastic pitches from our playing schedule, so this season's ideal scenario is



Disbelieving Stones fans witness our win at former Prem side Oldham

that Bromley get promoted via the play-offs with Dorking and Maidstone going in the other direction.

Plastic pitch aside I have other reasons to hope that Oxford don't come up. The ground is horrible and we have a shocking record there, but more importantly they voted against us in our bid to get promoted in 1999. Their secretary wrote **'Every club (including Wealdstone) are very aware of the rule as it stands and as you state in your letter it had to be their responsibility to ensure all work was completed by the date stipulated in the rules. With respect, the fact that they did not**

do so is no reason to change the rules.'

Well thanks for that Oxford, completely ignoring the verbal assurances that the club were given.

So that's Os exhausted, I'd better mind my Ps and Qs for the Barnet programme!

Those Quiz answers...

(1) Marco Van Basten.
(2) one goal, whilst on loan at Carlisle. (3) Michael Owen. (4) £200k.



Above: Seeing as we mentioned the shocking Burgess Hill FA Cup game earlier, here's our centre back Matt Day proving that you can still be non-conformist and effective. Well, sort of

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



Pitches, progs & pink...our literary editor goes off piste this week, not for the first time

P is for the **PREMIER LEAGUE**. Now maybe I'm in the minority here, but I have absolutely no interest in this overpriced overhyped football competition that our media obsesses over as if no other football exists. The recent row over Match of the Day really didn't bother me one iota as I can't remember the last time I watched the programme. If I ever inadvertently stumble across football at that level on the telly, I don't recognise the majority of the names and have no idea as to their backgrounds. The amount of money floating around is obscene, and that includes what BBC license payers pay for the privilege of watching overpaid Pundits.

As far as watching football on TV is concerned, I really don't go much beyond the BT Sport National League coverage (which is excellent) and I'm not just saying that because they are here today covering our game live. I do get annoyed on weeks where there is no highlights show, particularly when we win! Today is non-league day, there is no Premier League football so hopefully today's televised match here at the Vale will be a good one that attracts more punters to the Vale to watch the Stones again.



Pinky or perky? Ross Lafayette (above) models the grey and pink kit that we wore as a change strip in the Covid season. Luckily not many people saw it live



Pitch perfect? Well, the groundstaff at Torquay two weeks ago were forking marvels...

Beyond the National League I may watch the occasional Cup tie whether FA Cup or Scottish Cup, usually favouring the underdog, but I draw the line at Champions League nonsense.

Moving on and P is also for **PINK** - and here are a couple of Pinks for you. Firstly, the worrying trend of Pink club garments. I really don't do Pink, I'm under threat from the missus that she'll bin me if I ever wear Pink. Firstly we had the Pink and grey kit a few years ago, the socks were particularly garish and unpleasant. Now we have Pink in our tracksuits, and whilst the physical specimens that are our playing staff wear it with some aplomb, I'm not convinced it suits some of our more portly supporters. Let's hope that this a short term blip and we can resume palatable colours in due course.

More importantly for me growing up was the **PINK** newspaper. This was something that I first experienced on our travels to the Midlands in the seventies. Our coach would be returning home on a Saturday evening and we'd



...and here's the pitch at White Hart Lane for the Chelsea-Watford semi-final in 1970 that Jon talks about. Mudtastic!

stop for an unnecessary journey break at Watford Gap or the like to witness the miracle that was the Pink. Barely had ninety minutes passed since our game ended on a Saturday afternoon, and a whole Pink newspaper had been produced and hit the shelves full of match reports and results from the day - including all the local non-league clubs.

If there was a flaw with this must-buy publication it was that the non-league match reports seemed to get as far as about 70 minutes due to the deadlines. This meant that a match report might report that in the 70th minute Steve Briscoe scored to put AP Leamington ahead (yeah right), only to look at the final score and see that his team had lost. Compare this with what we had in the South, a Saturday evening that gave us a late edition of the Evening News if you could find one. That paper was totally Football League focused, you might get a couple of non-league

results in the stop press section if you were lucky. No internet or teletext back then, so for a southern based non-league fan it was a long wait for the Sunday morning papers.

More nostalgia and P is also for **PITCHES**. Apart from the **PLASTIC** horrors we come across these days, for the most part the playing surfaces are very good and conducive to good football. This has been tested in recent weeks with trips to Halifax and Torquay, and at Plainmoor in particular it may have been tempting for the referee to postpone the game such was the state of it after heavy rain. All a far cry from

PITCHES in days gone by, one of the earliest 'big' matches that I attended was the FA Cup semi final at White Hart Lane in 1970: Not a blade of grass to be seen! Apart from the playing surface itself, I do miss the unique characteristics of lost Pitches such as the unique slopes we found at Underhill, Loakes Park and Huish to name but three.

P is for the **PROGRAMME**, and long live the **PRINTED PROGRAMME**.

If you're reading this in the ground, in the pub, in the loo or wherever, then thank you for taking the time to do so. I would hate our club to go down the digital-only route - our Programme is always jam packed with original content that has deservedly won many awards over the years. For me I rarely read it on the day so I can't as some people claim that it is an essential part of their matchday experience. It's more something I dip in and out of often over several days, particularly now that I have the burden of contributing to it hanging over my head. Writing is more time consuming than reading for sure, and

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Just to prove this programme's originality... here's Jon's Letter P from the 2013 series

Stones Alphabet contd

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

with fixtures coming thick and fast, take a moment to think of the volunteers that spend so much time making it what it is.

For me, my Programme collection is an essential part of my sad life, I am by nature a hoarder and along with other printed football memorabilia, I can often be found reading stuff from fifty years ago.... anything to deflect from other everyday tasks that I really should be attending to.

But: A few things about **PROGRAMMES** that I dislike. Firstly, those with glossy production but no substance, and secondly copy and paste articles that are the same week in week out. As an away fan, reading exactly the same stuff about the Stones wherever we go is a turn-off and the reason why I've pretty much abandoned buying away programmes. Hats off to programme editors that add their own slants to standard articles submitted by visiting clubs.

P is also for **PHOTOGRAPHERS**. No surprise that I've squeezed this one in. One of the things I've enjoyed about taking photos for the club is getting to meet other Photographers, whether affiliated to the opposition club or maybe freelancers working for the press. For the most part they're a decent bunch, and many are long-term supporters like myself.

When you are a supporter as well as a photographer, it can be hard not to express opinions on the match, offering friendly advice at close range to the linesman or referee for example. The Maidstone photographer was telling me about an experience that he had at Ramsgate a few years back, when he had been offering some tips to the referee and was ordered to leave the ground. Not content with this, the referee included this in his match report, the matter went to the F.A. and he was fined £100! It makes you think, but it's also hard to control the natural supporter emotion!

Finally for today, you may recall that in the Alty programme a few



It would be remiss not to mention Stuart PEARCE, our famous former electrician who went on to captain England. Here he shows off his terrific collection of trophies and caps. There'll be a 1982 Southern League championship medal in there somewhere...

weeks ago we featured N for Netstretcher magazine. Now in researching for that particular article, I came across a copy which will be of great interest to fans who were following Stones in the Alliance days. The front cover (below) was dominated by none other than the popular Northwich Victoria keeper Dave Ryan, referred to fondly as '**PIGS** in Goal'.

Nowadays there's a fine line that needs to be trodden, what is fair and what is unfair for paying spectators to say to footballers? Dave would be the first to admit that he wasn't slim of build, and he was certainly of the character to embrace the good natured way in which 'Pigs in Goal' rang out behind him every time he took a goal kick.

So that's it for today, I must get my thinking cap on, the Q's might be more challenging!



The porcine Dave Ryan, much-loved Northwich Victoria goalkeeper of the 1980s Conference years.... he was relatively sylph-like when this was taken

BY JON TAFFEL



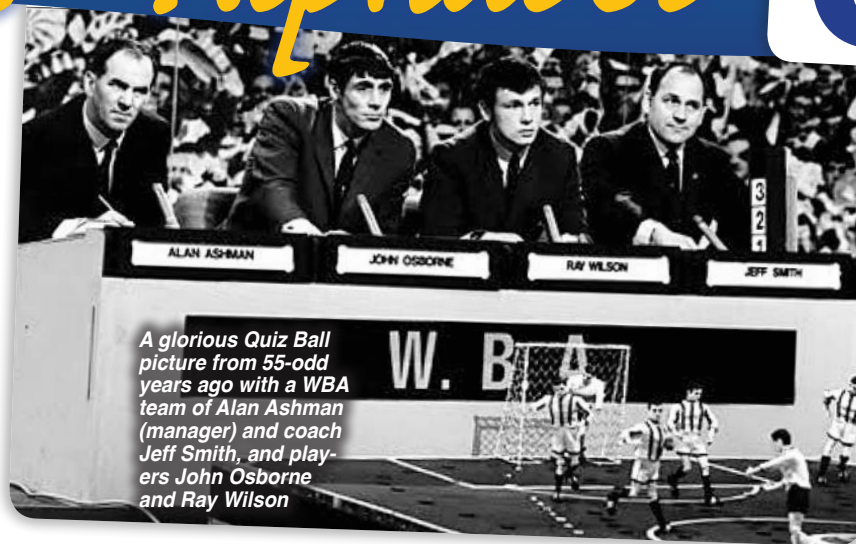
The Stones Alphabet



Jon gets a bit Queasy as he tackles the hardest letter so far...



Queen of the South fans at their cup final



A glorious Quiz Ball picture from 55-odd years ago with a WBA team of Alan Ashman (manager) and coach Jeff Smith, and players John Osborne and Ray Wilson

discuss all sorts of nonsense, the on-line Quiz was a bit of an outlet in an otherwise fairly miserable period with no football. For my particular cohorts, topics covered were multi-faceted, but Stones related stuff was always my favourite. Some Questions were rather extreme in the level of anal knowledge (not literally, thankfully) required, such as 'name numbers 1-11 in our starting line-up in a random match 20 years ago'. Anyway, here are a few that you may or may not

So here we go - we've reached the 17th instalment of this alphabetical adventure, and with it the most difficult letter to date, it's Q! In time honoured tradition I'm desperately trying to rule out any repetition from series 1 and 2.

So that rules out **QPR**, and even though Loftus Road was the scene of our only ever appearance in the FA Cup 3rd round way back in 1978..... any mention of that particular cup competition is too painful to bring up given our woeful record over the years.

Instead we'll head north of the border and bring **QUEEN OF THE SOUTH** into the equation. I love Scotland and whenever I visit I try and take in a new ground.

Whilst I haven't been to their home ground in Dumfries, their 2008 adventure in reaching the Scottish Cup final for the first time ever meant that getting a ticket for Hampden Park proved very easy, they aren't that well supported. Off I went for the weekend, and my seat was pretty much on the edge of the



Rangers fans (above) enjoy baiting the plucky QoS supporters... what makes fans of the bigger clubs want to do this? Insecurity I guess...

Queen of the South section just yards from the opposition Rangers fans. It was a lively affair, but just why so many Rangers fans felt the need to bait the fans of my adopted team for the day is a bit of a mystery. 'We' gave a good account of ourselves going down 3-2, and despite great wins en route to the final including a semi-final victory over Aberdeen, this particular fairy tale didn't have a happy ending.

Q is also for **QUIZ BALL**, one of the greatest TV shows ever invented. This ran from 1966 to 1972 and was must watch TV for all football fans. Presented originally by the great David Vine and then later by the disgraced Stuart Hall, this was a quiz game between two teams, each comprising three players or officials of that club and a celebrity supporter. The teams made their way up the pitch by answering questions of varying difficulty (Route 1 being the hardest), scoring if their opponents failed to tackle them.

In Quiz Ball world, tackling meant answering the opposition's question to gain possession, getting it wrong meant an own goal conceded. The list of celebrity supporters that appeared on the programme is impressive, such as Magnus Magnusson for Kilmarnock, Jon Pertwee for Dunfermline, and Percy Thrower for West Bromwich Albion. This was quality TV, and if you're too young to remember it the good news is that the very first episode is available to view on BBC iPlayer.

Back to Stones-related matters, and as mentioned in 'O', the lockdown Quiz became a bit of a thing during COVID. A good way to keep in touch with friends that one would normally meet up with week in week out to

enjoy from that summer of 2020....

- 1) Which one of the following resigned their position because of allegations about their expenses?
 - a) Former Wealdstone Chairman Howard Krais;
 - b) Former MP for Harrow East Tony McNulty; or
 - c) Wealdstone President Paul Rumens
- 2) Which manager gave unlucky Alan O'Brien (ex Wealdstone winger) his Newcastle United debut?
 - a) Bobby Robson, b) Graeme Souness, or
 - c) Glenn Roeder
- 3) "What about the big questions. Is there a heaven, does God exist, and Did Jesus really rise from the dead after three days?" Who asked this prior to their match v Wealdstone in season 2019-20?

4) Who wrote the following on the club forum? "The next appointment has to be spot on; if we go for the likes of Brennan and Maynard we will be looking for a new manager by Xmas..."

5) Who responded to 4) above with "Great post"?

6) In 2019, Notts County

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Above: the three gentlemen in the frame for Question 1 above! (Messrs Krais, McNulty and Rumens)

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became a non-league club when they were relegated after losing to which of unlucky Alan O'Brien's former clubs on the final day of the season?

7) A Which? Survey in 2014 found that an average doner kebab contained how many calories? Answer to the nearest 500.

8) Which London Underground Station contains all 5 letters in the name Pratt and in the correct order?

Good luck with these, answers at the end!

Q is for also for **QUILLFELDT**. Who, or what I hear you ask? Well this was Mr Quillfeldt, my A-level economics teacher from 1977 to 1979 at St Nicks in Northwood. A couple of things of note here, he was a good teacher who generally enjoyed a laugh and a joke with his pupils. He soon became aware that I was a Wealdstone supporter and even more aware that Wealdstone had a striker by the name of George Duck,,, and this seemed to amuse him. Nonetheless, first lesson of the week he would always ask how we got in and in particular whether George Duck had scored, I liked his interest.

Sadly I was less interested in economics, in



These late-night kebab-scoffers look rather familiar. Amazing that they've kept their figures

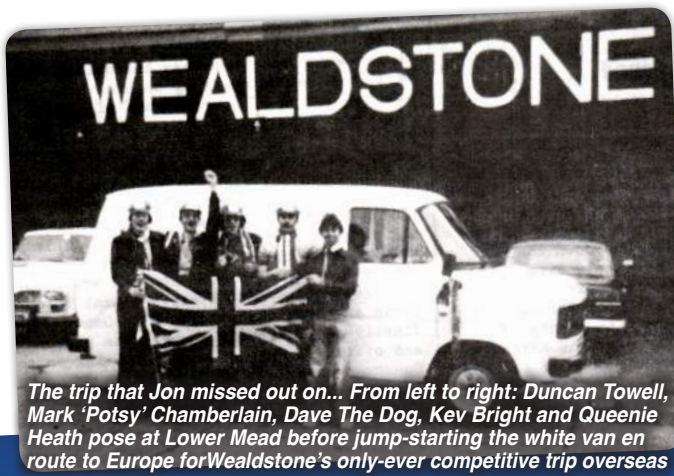
fact I was generally speaking a very lazy student who tried to get by with doing the absolute bare minimum. For most of my life that has worked well, but in 1978 this was to become a massive problem. Mr Quillfeldt clearly felt that my progress was not as it should have been, and whereas the rest of my class had to sit internal exams in June, I was made to sit an 'O' level – fail and I would be kicked off the course. That wasn't a problem in itself, but what was a problem was that the exam in question clashed with the dates of the Stones

participation in the Italian leg of that season's Semi-Professional Anglo-Italian tournament. My parents were fine with me missing school, and I was all set to be in the hired van from Jafvans with fellow supporters Kevin Bright, Duncan Towell, Mark Chamberlain, Dave Heath and Dave 'the Dog' Thomas. To this day I remain gutted not to have been there for the matches against Reggiana and Arezzo. Whilst it could be argued that this was all of my own doing, thanks for nothing Mr Quillfeldt. I duly passed my exam as well as the A level the following summer, but I'd have rather been in Italy, probably a never-to-be-repeated experience.

So that's that for this edition, Roll on the R's next time!

QUIZ ANSWERS:

- 1) Tony McNulty MP
- 2) Graeme Souness - in Jan 2006, he was sacked within a month and never managed again
- 3) Paul Barker, Hampton & Richmond Borough's chaplain
- 4) "Bornundertheelmslie" 5) "Breakspearstone"
- 6) Swindon Town
- 7) 2000 (blimey!)
- 8) Great Portland Street



The trip that Jon missed out on... From left to right: Duncan Towell, Mark 'Potsy' Chamberlain, Dave The Dog, Kev Bright and Queenie Heath pose at Lower Mead before jump-starting the white van en route to Europe for Wealdstone's only-ever competitive trip overseas

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet

R

Re-election and of course relegation! It's the Rs-end of the Alphabet today

Good afternoon all and today it's the turn of R to be put through the alphabetical wringer.

R is for **RE-ELECTION**, the method by which Football League clubs used to preserve their status at the expense of ambitious non-league clubs. That was the case until automatic promotion was introduced in the 1986-87 season. This was of course two years too late for the Stones - I wonder how much our recent history would have differed had this been introduced earlier? As it happened, our Lower Mead ground did not meet the minimum requirements, but would money have been spent had it been in place beforehand?

For the younger audience, the basic principle was that the Football League clubs would vote whether they were happy to vote one of their own

clubs out of the league in favour of something new and different, in essence it was the classic Turkeys voting for Xmas situation, it was rarely going to happen. Clubs lying in the bottom four of the fourth division would be the subject of the Re-election process.

Much as in the way that Eurovision voting is to say the least suspect, then dodgy deals and handshakes between member clubs to make sure they voted for each-other and harnessed support from elsewhere was the order of the day. The result was that things barely ever changed.

As it happened in our title winning year, neither 2nd placed Nuneaton or 3rd placed



Roy of the Rovers: An R (or two) not to be missed. The Melchester Rovers striker must be in his Nineties now

Dartford met the ground criteria either, so 4th placed Bath City went into battle for **RE-ELECTION** with Northampton, Stockport, Torquay and Halifax. They scored 8 votes out of 208 available and that was that, as predictable as was the case most years.

Roll on to 2022-23 and because Notts County and Wrexham are doing so well, the predictable BELT clamour for more automatic promotion places is at fever pitch. If only the old boys voting act was still in place then they wouldn't be here in the first place. You shouldn't have agreed to automatic promotion chaps!

Intrinsically linked therefore to Re-election is of course **RELEGATION**. Wind back to the start of this season, and for some and maybe the vast majority of our supporters, success for 2022-23 would be achieved by avoiding Relegation. For those with long memories, the Relegations that we have suffered from this league are painful.

In 1981 we had a very good team, there was no way we should have gone down, but go down we did on the final day of the season at home to AP Leamington who survived by virtue of the most unlikely of wins at Lower Mead. Compare that with 1988 when we simply very poor, the club was in decline and just five league wins all season tells its own story.

So the fact that we are comfortably safe going into the final stretch of this season has certainly meant a stress-free time for us. Who'd swap places for those involved in the fight at the bottom? It's nice to be looking up! There's still some work to do for our visitors today but I think they'll be OK. The original Aldershot club when in the Football League survived the **RE-ELECTION** process on multiple occasions.

On the subject of **RELEGATION**, it does look as if we are going to be joined in the National League next season by **ROCHDALE**. Ten points

adrift of safety with just eight matches remaining, it's looking rather bleak for 'The Dale'. So another new ground tick is on the horizon for the Stones, hopefully on a Saturday.

Unlike neighbours Oldham, Rochdale does have a train station and this is a good thing. Rochdale have played at their Spotland ground for over 100 years, and hold some rather interesting records if Wikipedia is to be believed. Firstly, they have played the most seasons of any club in the English Football League without reaching the top two tiers or being relegated to non-league - this is their 95th season. Their run of 36 consecutive seasons in the bottom division between 1974 and 2010 is also a record to be proud of. They survived several Re-elections (see above), including by just a single vote ahead of Altrincham in 1979-80 after a 2nd successive bottom place.

RUBBISH has featured before, but only in the context of team performances, some of the worst of which were during our Yeading years. Today we'll focus on a few other varieties, starting with the litter version of Rubbish.

At the risk of sounding like an old person taking

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Yeovil and Wimbledon set their stall for promotion to the League in the 1970s with these glossy publications. No expense spared. And my, that Wimbledon physio room looks well equipped

S AT PLOUGH LANE



Peter John Baptiste on his usual voluntary litter-picking round after a Stones game. His least-favourite chant: what a load of rubbish!

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to a child, when you eat food at home do you throw the packaging on the floor or put it in the bin? There are plenty of bins at the Vale, use them! If you don't someone else has to do it for you, it's not fair and not necessary, so please play your part!

Secondly, the written version of Rubbish, of which you may consider this article to belong. I am a regular user of social media and there's some really good and worthwhile stuff out there, but there's a lot of **RUBBISH** too. All too often it spills over from being simple **RUBBISH** to being downright vile and nasty. Whatever happened to being nice to people?

Maybe I'm stretching things a bit here as this is football not croquet, but last weekend we played Barnet and there's a lot not nice about that. Unfortunately having such a large crowd brings its own problems, and as with any section of society the numbers game tells you that there will be some **ROTTEN** apples in there. So whilst I am disappointed to read about accusations of racism towards a Barnet fan (totally abhorrent), the way that this has been sensationalised and jumped on by a few idiots and used

to tar all of our fans with same brush is simply **RUBBISH**. The name of Wealdstone is a good one, rightly so, and the respect that we have gained throughout this league won't be tarnished by a few social media Rotten apples from Barnet. For the record, I am sure that the vast majority of Barnet fans are good people who share our values.

Who remembers **RUSH** goalie? I have no idea of whether this is still

a thing nowadays, but when I was a kid playing football in the park we'd often have the situation where there was an odd number of players. So for example if six were playing against seven, the six would have a Rush goalie. In essence this meant that the goalie would spend more time out of the penalty area than usual playing a more active part in the game, then rushing back to his area when required to defend. This could often lead to the Rush goalie being hopelessly out of position. The weird thing here was that it would be announced that a Rush goalie was in place, all rather pointless given that the laws of the game allowed the goalie to do what he wanted anyway.

Did the former Wales & Liverpool striker **IAN RUSH** (above) ever play in goal? That would have been mildly amusing

Finally this week, we've touched on this before, but if you are reading this Sam Howes, please can you stop wearing **RED**, the devil's colours? Thank you.

Next up is S, when we face **SOLIHULL**. It's a **SHOO-IN!**



Sam, have a word with Brett the kit man! Red is unacceptable. Don't we have a nice yellow kit for when we face the Yeovils of this world?

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



Our literary editor wears a sad face for all those who have suffered in semi-finals. Some quite recently actually

S is for **SUNSHINE**, hopefully and finally. After a miserable March of rain, rain and more rain that has caused havoc for the ground staff, I can confidently predict that today's game will go ahead.

Today we welcome **SOLIHULL** Moors hoping that we might finally take three points off of them at the sixth time of asking. All of our away games there have been midweek, thus depriving our supporters of the chance to fully take in the local area. There is more than an airport and a motorway network there, trust me, with some good local pubs and lovely canal side walks to boot.

And for those of us who like to make a day of things, nearby Birmingham also has much to offer. From my perspective as someone brought up in Eastcote (Ruislip), it is also exciting that Solihull has an Eastcote just a few miles away.

The recent postponement against Aldershot was disappointing but inevitable, for me this provided an opportunity to catch some early season cricket with **SURREY** taking on Middlesex at the Oval in a pre-season friendly. I always feel a bit dirty going South of the river to that place, although roaming a pretty much deserted pavilion and the museum was very enjoyable. A few hours in the cold was enough for me before I ventured off in search of some new (to me) pubs back on the right side of the river.

Like many Stones fans robbed of their Saturday afternoon live footy fix I found myself following events up in Gateshead. We're talking **SEMI**-finals here, and we know from our own recent experiences that losing in an FA Trophy Semi-final can be painful. We are lucky in that we've been to Wembley before and won it, but we have a new generation of fans coming through, how good would it be to do it all over again? Our recent Semi-final defeats were disappointing but then again we were playing at a lower level, making it that far was an achievement. Our run in 2011-12 as an Isthmian League club is up there with providing some of my best memories watching the Stones. Wins over higher ranked clubs such as Barrow, Dartford and Cambridge United provided some epic never-to-be-forgotten moments. We were pinching ourselves that we may be able to go all the way to Wembley, but sadly the two-legged affair



Stones fan Paul Franklin is pictured with the Solihull mascot earlier this season. That's Paul on the left (I think)

with Newport County proved a step too far. Some calamitous defending handed Newport a 3-1 1st leg lead that we never looked like overturning at the Vale. I've just watched the 1st leg highlights on YouTube again, the moment where Jolly scored gave me goosebumps. I'm not sure how that temporary

stand housing our fans survived, it was truly bouncing up and down with us. One other thing I liked about that match, a white ball with black spots on it!

Roll on six years and we made the **SEMI** finals again as a National League South side. We certainly had luck on our side, every draw was against sides at our level or below. The highlight of that run was a 5-2 win at Glenn Tamplin's plaything Billericay, but we sadly came unstuck in the Semi-final against Brackley. Having lost the 1st leg by a single goal in freezing conditions (contrast this with shirtsleeves weather at Newport), we were full of optimism for the 2nd leg at the Vale. But we never looked like threatening the visitors and there was a lack of urgency until it was all much too late, one of the great let downs of our time.

I digress, Gateshead v Barnet last weekend, and as one Stones fan put it on twitter, 'Don't think I've ever followed a game, rooting for a team I don't really support so avidly.' All of Wealdstone were Heed fans for the day, for my part I decided to tune into the rather excitable commentary as the match entered the last ten minutes. Sitting in the Sutton Arms with my pint and earphones, I was nervous. Barnet had just pulled the 3-0 deficit back to 3-2.

STOPPAGE time, twelve minutes

added. Surely not? 90+12 and Barnet equalised, S is for **S**T**. Penalties. Absolutely glorious, Gateshead take it 4-1, substitutes Kabamba and De Havilland fluff their lines. Okimo having experienced Semi-final defeat with us now feels further pain. I've a smile like a Cheshire cat: other pub goers must think I'm an incredibly happy chap.

Meanwhile Dean Brennan in his post-match interview seems more bothered by Monday's game at York. The interviewer fails to ask why De Havilland and Kabamba didn't start... he's been bitten by DB's responses before and is perhaps intimidated. To me it would have been akin to excluding the Cordice brothers from our Semi-final v Enfield in 1985. Surely you have to give your club the best chance of getting your fans to Wembley? I'm not complaining as it all worked out just fine, up the Heed!

S is also for the **SOUTHERN LEAGUE MONTHLY**, probably the earliest non-league magazine that I ever came across, it was somewhat of a novelty to have something relevant to the team I supported beyond the match day programme. Full of snippets that

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as part of a special advertising campaign.

Wealdstone's first season in the Southern League was not the success that officials anticipated. They had hoped that a successful season would pack in the fans to enable a £7,000 wage bill to be met by takings at the gate. But they had only an average season and lost a total of £6,000.



A section of the excitable 600 or so Stones fans who filled the away end at the FA Trophy semi-final at Newport 11 years ago. Balloons? Whatever next!

The bright garish mastheads of the Southern League monthly were a beacon of excitement 50 years ago. Though not all the stories were welcome...

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you'd often be hard pushed to find elsewhere, I've had some fun looking back at some of the articles from over fifty years ago.

For example reading how Nuneaton Borough's David Pleat had given up playing to concentrate on managing, and how Ron Atkinson had changed from thinking a top five finish at Kettering Town would be good to believing they could actually win the league. I wonder what happened to them? In later years, the Southern League Monthly became a newspaper with sister publications covering the Isthmian League.

I can't finish S's without returning to my **SOCCER STARS** collection. I had my Esso World Cup coins collection from 1970 when I had constantly nagged my parents to fill the car up at a garage nowhere near home, but this was my first experience of collecting stamps for an album. Most of my pocket money was spent on buying these. Back then I knew all the players, very different to today.

Somehow I have a full set! The album itself was two shillings and sixpence, or twelve and a half pence in new money. As I've mentioned before, these particular stamps were produced pre-Photoshop or the like, so where players had perhaps recently transferred between clubs, this gave rise to some astonishingly poor touch up jobs. I'll break the rules slightly by going beyond 'S' in the case of Ajax's Eddy Treytel. Eddy is described as a 24 year old goalkeeper of promise and the picture (far right) certainly makes him look a bit older, and why the paint job is red and white not a goalkeeper's jersey I don't know.

That's all until next time when we may have to skip quickly through all of the remaining letters – a few double programmes and lack of cup ties have played havoc with my planning!



Two former England stars who had spells in Southern League football try their hand at Subbuteo table soccer. Stan Mortenson (extreme right), who played for Bath City, and Jackie Milburn (third from right), the former Hillingdon manager, are pictured with another England international Jimmy Mullen, taking a few tips from 11-year-old Phillip Wolff, of Liverpool. An estimated 1,500,000 people play table soccer each week and 32 nations are competing in the Subbuteo World Cup championships which will be climaxed with the finals at Munich in 1974.



Calm down ladies! Looking magnificent in their 1970s retouched glory are (from left) Palace's Jim Scott and John Sewell, and Ajax keeper Eddy Treytel. Nice hairstyle!

BY JON TAFFEL



The Stones Alphabet



It's T and sympathy for our man of letters as the Stones alphabet nods off long before we get to Zzzzzzzzzzzzz



German fans at Mainz have turned loo-roll tossing into a Bundesliga art form

T is for Toilet rolls. I'm not sure when the act of throwing **TOILET** rolls on to football pitches started, but this was certainly a big thing as I was growing up in the seventies. There was an art to throwing a Toilet roll: do it correctly and the roll would unwind as it flew through the air, ideally landing with the tissue ending up draped over goal posts and goal nets. This act would usually follow a goal being scored, meaning that an already grumpy goalkeeper would have to clear up said paper from the goalmouth before play could continue.

Toilet roll throwing can be seen on old match replays on TV, but this was certainly not confined to big matches. I can confirm that I am guilty of throwing a couple of loo rolls on the pitch at Lower Mead although these were poor efforts - the rolls didn't fully unwind and the cleaning up exercise was very straightforward.

The good thing about Toilet rolls is that I'm not aware anyone was ever hurt by them. Compare that with eggs which made a one-off appearance at Lower Mead for the visit of Harrow Borough in the early eighties.

Given that the distance between the Elmslie End and the target, Borough keeper Les Currell was fairly small, and that eggs were more lobbed than thrown (not by me I hasten to add), there was actually no hurt involved other than pride. For sure there was a practical matter here in



The toilets at our old Lower Mead ground were a particular horror: Any visitors would know that lack of loo rolls was the least of their problems

that the nutrients contained in eggs are good for keeping hair thick and healthy. Nonetheless throwing eggs was not something that could ever be condoned, oh no.

Another practical use of Toilet rolls at football matches is of course for the purpose for which it is intended. Facilities generally are better nowadays than they once were, but most people tend to avoid No 2's at football. Historically facilities were sub-standard and unclean, but worse for those in need, Toilet roll was very often in short supply - presumably stolen for the purpose outlined above.

Moving on to the late seventies, the 1978 World Cup in Argentina to something a bit different on the paper greeting front, the Ticker tape welcome. This was quite spectacular to view and rather made toilet roll spectacles appear rather amateurish. Streams of paper would rain down from all over the stadiums to greet the Argentinian football team, certainly creating a lot more mess than toilet rolls. I remember a small band of visiting supporters to the Vale creating a dreadful mess with their version of a Ticker Tape welcome and asking them to clear it ... which they did!



Goalkeeper Eddie Treijtel could easily have been a matinee idol, but instead he is famous for having brought down a seagull (above, in the museum) with a goalkick... though the claim is contested by rivals

for AZ67, as well as representing Netherlands five times and being a non-playing member of the 1974 World Cup squad. This however is not his main claim to fame: On 15th November he took down a gull with a goal kick during the Rotterdam derby. Supposedly, the now stuffed gull sits proudly in the Feyenoord museum. However this is subject to a dispute as opposition Sparta fans claim that the gull in question couldn't have been the gull hit by the ball as it was the wrong time of year for the species. They claim to have the 'real' stuffed gull in their museum. I don't know what to believe but I'm keen to visit the respective museums to find out more.

Twitter, I enjoy it. There, I've said it. Despite all the rubbish and bile that's spouted there (see R), for me it has become an addiction. An unhealthy one arguably in that I spend too much time on it, but good in that there is so much content that is genuinely informative and entertaining. As a football fan it is a great medium to find out what is going on around other clubs, to listen to interviews and insights as well as engage in friendly banter. Sometimes that can spill over and become a bit unnecessary, but on the whole the positives outweigh the negatives. I wish I would spend less time on it, but there's always the chance of missing out on some crucially point-less statistic or nugget of comedy gold. I clearly need to set myself a target for Twitter activity reduction as there are plenty of better things to waste my time on (until Barnet lose in the play-offs anyway).

T is for **TRAINS**, my preferred form of transport to away games. Train, beer, football as a slogan sums up a perfect day for me, or at least it did until I took on photo duties. I'm carrying enough excess baggage anyway without the added burden of all my camera equipment. Our recent trip to Nottingham, what a great day it was despite the result. The **TRAIN** to and from Nottingham was the easy bit, getting to and from St Pancras a different matter due to

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engineering works. By the time I crawled in through my front door some fifteen hours after I'd left, I was positively creaking and desperate to unload my 9.5k of photographic gear. My worry now is next weekend and our trip to Southend. The late kick off is concerning, beer intake will have to be carefully managed given that we are bound to arrive by lunchtime anyway. It's the end of the season and I need to capture the fans the team, the management in full (hopefully) celebratory swing.

Tis for Training. All managers have their own favourite phrases for interviews, and on numerous occasions after an inexplicably poor performance, the legendary Gordon Bartlett would trot out the 'we were good in training' line. This did cause amusement at times and perhaps would have been a good title for his book, but that



Stones practice defending long throws before the visit to Wrexham earlier this season

would have been unfair and seriously undermined his outstanding achievements for us. Earlier this season I was asked to attend **TRAINING** to take some pictures of new signing Miguel Freckleton, so I took the opportunity to watch the bulk of the session. I have to say I was mightily impressed. This was just prior to our 0-0 draw with Wrexham and the intensity and speed of footwork I found quite mesmerising at times, as well as seeing first hand how much of what we see on a Saturday was on show. Given the

time available, the amount of it given to specific threats Wrexham might pose was fairly limited. This principally focussed on the Tozer throw to Hayden, rendered a bit irrelevant given Hayden was ruled out through injury, but we were not to know that.

So that's my lot for this series, you'll just have to wonder what may have been included under U (underdog story?), V, W, Y and Z. Maybe next season.....Thanks for reading!



Earlier in the feature we mentioned eggs being thrown: This was the game when the yolk was on Harrow Boro keeper Les Currell... skippers Paul Bowgett and Harry Manoe show the simmering tension even before kick-off