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By Mark Hyde

Written in Stone



Mutual Respect

A very warm welcome back to Grosvenor Vale and to our friends from Altrincham.

From a personal point of view our fixtures against Altrincham are amongst the highlights of the season.

Since both clubs simultaneous return to the top flight of non league football, connections have been renewed between ourselves and our old rivals from Greater Manchester. The mutual respect both clubs and supporters have for each other is manifest in the fact that the fixtures here at the Vale and away at Moss Lane are designated as having no segregation for supporters.

The friendly nature of this fixture has witnessed

mixed terraces at the away game and pre game drinks between 'Old School' supporters reminiscing about the good old days.

Obviously the bon accord only extends so far and we will be looking to return maximum points this afternoon and build on last Saturdays win.

Today see's the return of the WFSC MegaStore. located outside the ground and just past the food truck.

Please support the opening, they are stocked with many old favourites as well as some exciting new lines that as always covers

something for everyone.

Mark

Today sees the return of the Supporters Club MegaStore

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People are only allowed entry to The Vale on match days subject to the following rules and regulations:
1) The club reserves the right to eject from the ground any person who is considered to have committed any of the following acts:
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• Entering the field of play before, during or after a game without prior authorisation
• Being drunk, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs • Using violence of any nature
• Carrying items which may be considered a danger to others, including cans, bottles, or glasses containing alcoholic beverages
• Throwing any article onto the field of play • Climbing floodlight pylons, fences, stands or any structure or building
• Using obscene or bad language likely to cause offence to others • Hitting the side or back panels of the Bulla stand
2) No spectator ball games.
3) The consumption of alcoholic drinks is permitted INSIDE the social club bar, garden and boardroom areas.
4) Vehicles parked on the Grosvenor Vale site are at the owners' risk.
5) Wealdstone Football Club supports the FA's campaign on pyrotechnics (e.g. flares and smoke bombs). Any misuse of such items in and around the Ground will result in those responsible being asked to leave the ground and, in line with football authority guidance, may result in a report to the Police, potential prosecution and a ban from the Club of up to three years. 6) No Smoking or Vaping inside the ground.

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2019 / 2020 National League South

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LEAGUE CUPS

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1962 / 1963 Senior Cup
1964 / 1965 Senior Cup
1967 / 1968 Senior Cup
1984 / 1985 Senior Cup
2003 / 2004 Charity Cup
2010 / 2011 Charity Cup

NON TITLE-WINNING PROMOTIONS

1997 / 1998 Isthmian League Division 2 (3rd)
1998 / 1999 Isthmian League Division 1 (3rd, annulled)
2003 / 2004 Isthmian League Premier Division

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Britain's longest-running fanzine column (and it shows it)

Shoot! Shoot! It's easy, just listen to Ben and Paul

BY SUDHIR RAWAL

Management teams come in all shapes and sizes. Old and young; long ball and patterns of play, possession-based football; those that can get their message over succinctly and those who chat for a thousand words and say very little... and then there is Paul Sampson and Ben Hyde, a new team on the block, making their way in the game.

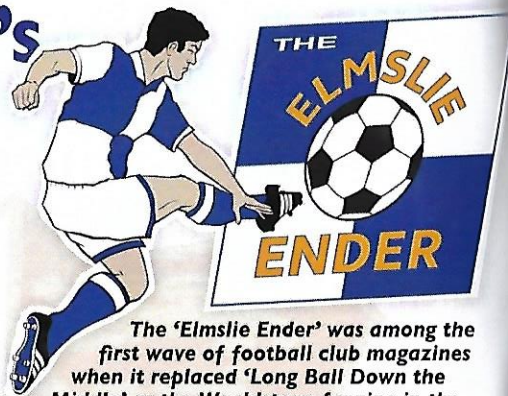
Who, you're probably asking? Well, on our trip home from Hartlepool two weeks ago, some of the Wealdstone squad returned home via the 17:54 Grand Central train back to London rather than on the coach with the rest of the squad.

The trip home was going to be an adventure and eye opening. Not only did the train break down in a place called Eaglescliffe, a nondescript village near Middlesbrough, where we de-trained waiting for a replacement service on a train-strike day which took two hours to arrive to restart our journey.

More importantly, Messrs Sampson and Hyde regaled our trapped players with their thoughts on football and how we could win a game of football. After drinking on the outward train from eight in the morning, most of what was being said may have not been that helpful, but the over-riding theme was "just shoot".

This was said over and over again.

It could be said, against Ebbsfleet last Saturday, that this advice was taken on board. Paul is already claiming the credit



The 'Elmslie Ender' was among the first wave of football club magazines when it replaced 'Long Ball Down the Middle' as the Wealdstone fanzine in the mid-1980s. LBDTM's forerunner 'Wealdstone Whispers' was famously the THE very first football fanzine in Britain when it was published in 1971

for the win!

With both Ashley Charles and Alex Dyer away on international duty, Nathan Ferguson and Sam Bowen started in midfield, with Micah Oberio in a more forward position that suits his style more (and away from wing-back) while Claydon moved to the right and Allarakhia to the left. Wealdstone started the game with an attacking line up and playing with far more aggression and purpose.

It was front-foot football and we were all over the Kent side. Had we gone in at half time three or four goals to the good it would not have been undeserved. Cousins in 'Fleet's goal was having a decent day and they were getting in blocks and making challenges, but above all we were shooting on goal - and even if too many went wide and high, the intent was there.

Young Abdul Abdulmalik looks a talent, with his tricky feet, a wonderful eye for a pass and ability to get a shot away. Yet, for all of our attacking intent, shooting on goal, the score at half time was still goalless.

The fact we played with such intensity in that heat was remarkable and it probably wasn't a surprise that the second half saw a slower tempo, with Ebbsfleet coming more into the game. Yet, Stones took the lead with a lovely turn and roll from Tavhon Campbell and his instinctive shot past Cousins. It feels that

Campbell is a better player when he plays on instinct. The lead just lasted a few moments as a cross was headed in at the far post. By now the referee was having a greater influence on the game, the bookings were racking up and Stones were awarded a penalty.

Ebbsfleet were adamant the incident was outside the box, but it was a trip and clearly inside... and for the third time in four home games, we were awarded a penalty and an opposition player sent off!

Campbell scored, a few more bookings later, with another sending off, with Stones hanging on a little, after seventeen minutes of additional time, the referee blew his whistle and Stones had stopped the rot of three defeats on the spin. We deserved it, by a greater margin and whilst the referee seemed to love himself and taking names in his black book, he didn't affect the result.

Saturday saw Wealdstone host their first #hergametoo match, and the fact that there were some people on social media complaining that it was sexist to allow female UI8s free admission (yes, really) just shows how much more work has to be done.

At Wealdstone, over the years, women have played a significant part, from Julie Verral in the formation of the Supporters' Club, to Barbara Robson the doyen of away coaches when I first started watching the Stones; to the dearly loved and hugely missed Mim Goodman, who held back Boreham Wood hordes as a steward at Edgware; to Lee Cross, Sally Morris, Dionne Etan-Thorpe, Lori Rumens, Pauline Worby, Lee Rumball, Syl Allen's incredible in-match goal videos and of course Nicola Brown on the supporters side.

Rachel Hill is a hugely valuable member of our conditioning team and Libby McElhinney and Nicole Choe-Yee are big-hit-



Getting the message across: The Stones squad with their #hergametoo teeshirts last Saturday, joined by the club's #hergametoo ambassador Nicola Brown and strengthening and conditioning coach Rachel Hill

ters on the media team. Of course, I've doubtless missed out so many and I apologise for that. That said, the truth - in the same way as we lord ourselves in having many people of colour watching Wealdstone - when you look across the terraces, the numbers are still too few, so there is still so much work to be done.

Last Saturday, Fela Olomola's former youth team pal from their Harrow St Mary days Dapo Afolayan was in attendance on the terraces.

Fela's pal Dapo shows that the route to success is roundabout but hard work is always the key

Dapo now plays for the iconic St Pauli in Bundesliga 2 and has had an interesting journey to the pro game. Formerly at Merchant Taylors' school, Dapo's route went via HSM, Chelsea, Barnet to family emigration to Toronto and time in the local club's academy, back to univer-

sity at Loughborough, being signed by Solihull Moors, where he made a real mark (and spent time with Tavhon Campbell); then sold to West Ham United and further loan spells at Oldham, Mansfield and Bolton, before being signed by the Trotters

where he had a prolific spell in front of goal... and now the move to Germany.

As with Chris Mepham, a fellow Chelsea academy teammate, the journey isn't always straight and easy but if you work hard, who knows where the road takes you. It was great to see Dapo for the first time in many years.

Fela, Dapo and Sudhir's own son Nikhil Rawal - all ex-HSM boys



The players (in pink) try to keep their heads down on the way home from Hartlepool

Below: the iconic Elmslie Stand at the Stones' former ground, Lower Mead in Harrow



MAX KRETZSCHMAR

Taking it to the

M₃ A₁ X₈

Stones' striker/midfielder Max Kretzschmar looks back on a sweaty Saturday to remember

Hello and welcome back to the Vale! It's always nicer sitting down in front of my laptop to write these notes off the back of a Wealdstone win.

Our last 2-1 home win v Ebbsfleet was very valuable and impressive in two ways. Firstly it showed a lot of character to continue playing the high standard of football we have set this season. We've played well on the face of it for a large majority of the games. But with three defeats in a row, it would've been easy for the players' confidence to be dented but there were no signs of that last Saturday. A strong performance with large parts of the game dominated.

This time it was the chances we took which made the headlines not the ones we spurned. The lads' keenness to get shots off onto the opposition's goal caught my attention. I don't think that was a conscious effort from the players. We always want to test the keeper as much as possible. Maybe those instances just arose more clearly last week. Who knows?

Secondly, the scorching heat! With my return to play hopefully imminent, I was doing sprints with our physio Michael Owen prior to kick off and I was cooked in more ways than one! Several measures were taken by the physiotherapy and conditioning team to keep the performance levels high. Ice packs, wet towels and ice in the drinks bottles to name just a few. Well done Rachel! Those conditions were one of the hottest I've ever seen so to take the three points was fantastic!

The hottest conditions I have ever played came a few years back in my time as a young professional at Wycombe Wanderers. We travelled to Spurs' state-of-the-art training ground to play in a friendly.



There's ice on our balls.... Rachel's a master of the finer details

Do I HAVE to wear gloves today Jason?

Picture: Jon Taffel

Stones players feel the heat in the pre-match warm up last Saturday. 30 degrees in the shade!

Saturday was a real scorcher! But try facing Spurs in 34° heat... that was my personal hot point

which at Portsmouth descends below the pitch as you walk off, was about four and half feet under water!

We had to wade back across the temporary river to the team coach. We drew the replayed fixture 2-2 a few weeks later.

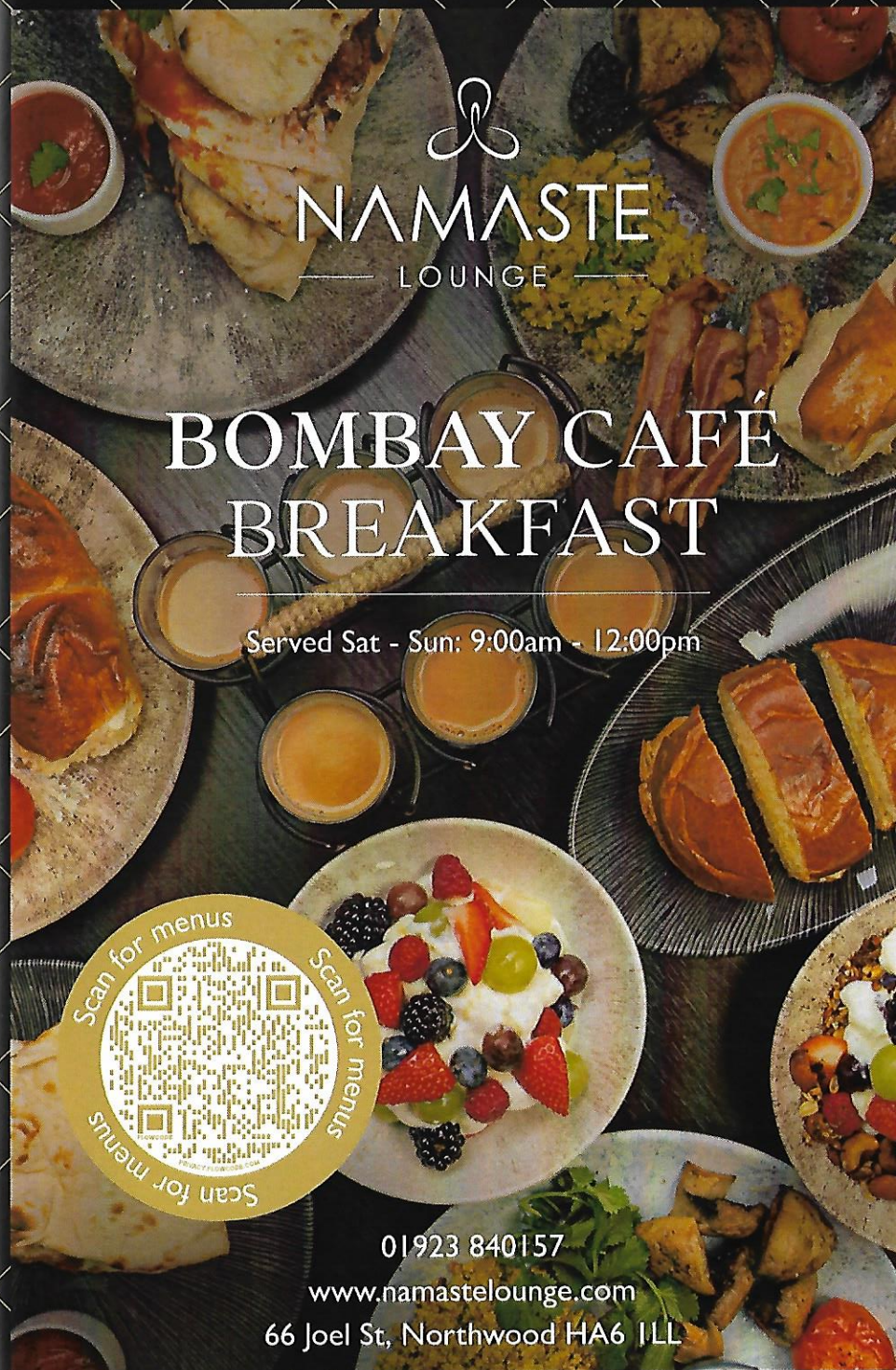
Today's opponents Altrincham are a side similar to us. A well-coached side with a strong identity. Judging by their recruitment too this season, I think their fans are in for an enjoyable season. The match here last season was a thoroughly enjoyable one. A 4-0 home win in front of a raucous Vale crowd. That day we were relentless with our press and atypical in possession. Two goals from Micah and one each from Corey and Dyer capped off my favourite performance of the season. Altrincham just didn't have any time on the ball that day and it will take a similar performance this afternoon to ensure the three points.

Come on you Stones!

Both teams were using the exercise to play some players who weren't featuring in the starting eleven the previous weekend, but let me tell you there was nothing friendly about the conditions! I spent the ninety minutes chasing former Premier League players Tom Huddlestone, Andros Townsend and Ryan Mason in thirty four degree heat!

I can also recall one Tuesday night in October 2013 at Fratton Park, Portsmouth where an immense deluge of rain at half time meant the game had to be abandoned at half time. The score was 1-1 with rain falling steadily before the half time whistle. However, when the players departed from the pitch for their team talks and half time oranges, the heavens opened. Literally!

So much so, the tunnel,



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BY TIM PARKS

ten minutes with... SAM BOWEN



Just picture the scene: It's Cardiff v Premier League Brighton in the EFL Cup at the Cardiff City Stadium, August 2021. Two players are making their debuts for their respective clubs: Sam Bowen for Cardiff and the Ecuadorian midfielder Moises Caicedo for Brighton...

"Yes, it's amazing but I was marking Caicedo that night, well chasing him around anyway" laughs the Stones' new 22-year-old loan capture from Newport County.

"Now he's gone to Chelsea for £100million. That's what football is like".

Match reports from Cardiff's 2-0 defeat that night (see right) have the 19-year-old Sam as the standout player. He'd been at Cardiff from the age of six, capped by Wales at under-21 level and looked set to follow his dad Jason with a long career in the pro game.

"I made my league debut at Nottingham Forest in the Championship a couple of weeks later under Mick McCarthy" says Sam. "But then I went away with Wales and got ill, and a

while after that I was playing at Fulham in the League when I suffered a torn muscle in my foot. It was a massive bleed and put me out for four months".

Cardiff were struggling for wins and when McCarthy was sacked in October that year, Sam knew that he was unlikely to get game time under new manager Steve Morison. "I had a three-year deal

with Cardiff, but Newport County took that over last summer. I'm a Newport boy, brought up near the town so it seemed a good move particularly as James Rowberry (first team coach at Cardiff) had been made manager there. But when James was sacked in October last year my chances became less and less".

Sam played just seven matches for Newport last season and is delighted to get this loan move to kick-start his career.

"My contract runs out next summer so being at Wealdstone is very important for me. And I'm enjoying it! The football we plays is so different to

Newport's style: that is all about getting the ball forward, getting knockdowns. You'd go for a short pass to feet and it's just boomed over your head every time.

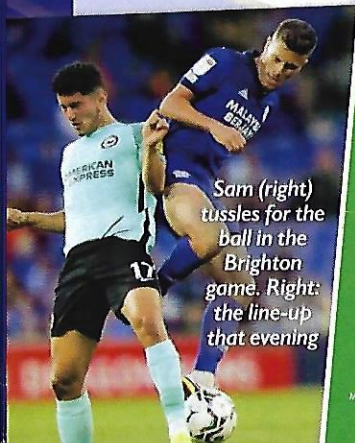
"When we play a possession-based game it can be hard to make chances as the opposition sit ten men behind the ball, but it's much better to watch and we get people praising us whoever we play."

Sam is now living away from home for the first time and getting to grips with a nomadic lifestyle. "Basically I'm living in hotels, sometimes close to the ground in

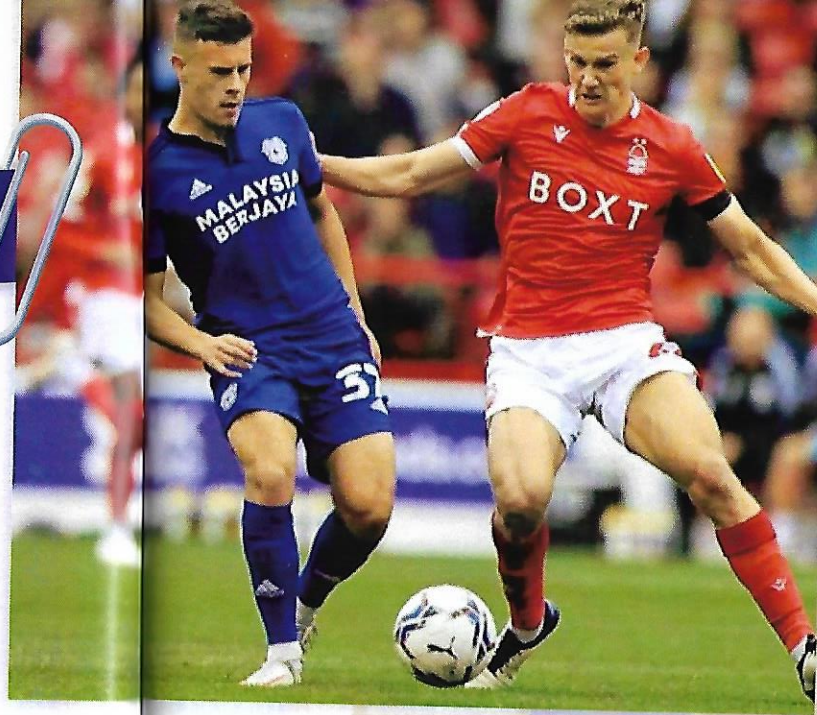
Our loan signing from Newport looks back on tactics, good and bad fortune and what it's like to face £100m man Moises Caicedo

Sam Bowen 8 (star man)

Undoubtedly the best thing to come out of the match from a City perspective. Played in an advanced role and looked sharp, bright and composed. A great debut for the Academy youngster.



Sam (right) tussles for the ball in the Brighton game. Right: the line-up that evening



Ruislip and sometimes close to wherever we're playing that Saturday, training with Wealdstone twice a week and organising my own running schedule and trips to the gym.

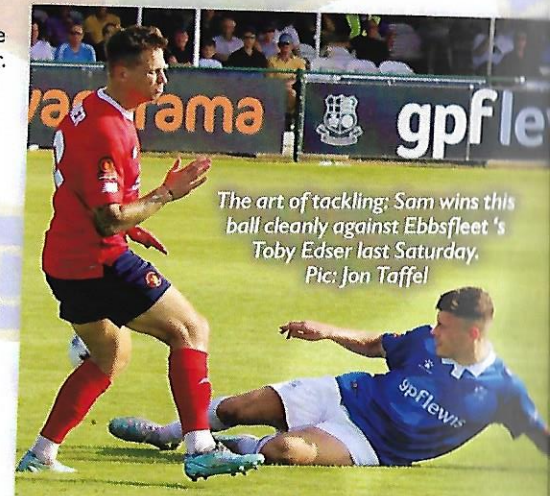
"My girlfriend Jess is a teacher and living in Bath, and now the school holidays are over we'll probably see less of each other. I'll need to limit my driving so I get the right amount of rest before games".

Sam's dad Jason, the former Welsh international with 500 Football League games to his name, was a huge part of Sam's football journey. He was diagnosed with the incurable Motor Neurone Disease earlier this year at the age of 51.

"He was always giving advice to me and my older brother Jaye, who was also in the Cardiff youth system, and was a top player. I don't really remember seeing him play though as I was very young then."

Sam joins a Wealdstone club of two - players' whose fathers played at professional level - the other one being Charlie Barker whose dad Richie (now assistant manager at Derby County) had a long career primarily with Brighton, Rotherham and Hartlepool.

We also had Charlie Cooper a couple of years ago whose dad Mark had played at and managed a vast number of clubs... and whose grandad Terry was a World Cup winner in 1966!



The art of tackling: Sam wins this ball cleanly against Ebbsfleet's Toby Edser last Saturday. Pic: Jon Taffel

Quick fire corner



Your most memorable game? I think that was the game at Nottingham Forest: a big famous ground against a very good Forest team with people like Brennan Johnson, Yates, McKenna and Joe Worrall. The League Cup game against Brighton was pretty good too!

The best goal you've ever scored? I've not really scored in pro football, although I did get a couple in the Welsh Prem on loan for Barry Town United in 2021. The best would have to be in under-14s football against Hull City I think. From the halfway line! I'd tried it a couple of times earlier but I got a good strike on this one and it flew in.

Favourite restaurant? For a casual meal, Nandos. For a posh meal out I'd have to go all the way to Cardiff

Romantic week away? It would have to be somewhere like the Maldives.

Not Barry island then? No, definitely not Barrybados!

Favourite family holiday? We had family holidays in Britain because my mum is scared of flying, but we did go to Portugal a couple of times.

What would your run-out music be? Oooh, that's tough, maybe a bit of R & B. I don't really listen to music except what's on the radio... I like to keep my earphones out when I'm with the lads and just chat.

Adam Edwards

WFCSC Update

Megastore V4

Good afternoon one and all and welcome to The Vale for this afternoon's game versus non-league titans Altrincham. We trust every fan has a pleasant stay here with us in the heart of Middlesex and have time to share drink in the social club after a good game.

Well, it has been a very busy close season for the Supporters Club with groundworks, BBQ's, membership drives, meetings, planning for the new season and the small case of renovating the old outside bar to create Megastore 4.0.

Whilst many are getting used to being dragged around the shops by air better lives, or winning the big summer sale, we've had four Q&As in just over a week bringing our total number of Q&As in the last months to (even). We've had inventory, backport and offfield Wednesday fans over the May Bank holiday followed by Man City the week after. We're a well-oiled machine and huge thanks must go to the various volunteers who helped cater for something like 3,500 individuals in our 'Fan Zones'. We've raised a five-figure sum that we have recently passed over the main Football Club by way of a big old bobby cheque. We hope this will be the first of many such big cheque presentations. It is events like these that make me extremely proud to be on the WFCSC committee. They allow us to demonstrate that we might 'only' be a non-league club, but we do things better than many others, because of our passion and pride that fuel our football club. It has been almost three years since we gave up our old shop so the main club could use it for

corporate purposes on matchdays. Since then, we have battled through Covid and had two seasons of the pop-up Megastore. Despite our small and temporary facilities, we have continued to sell online in our various outlets and on most matchdays, returning valuable finances for the club.

If you have a keen eye, you will have noticed we have not been present down in 'Dead Fox Corner' this season. That is for the simple reason we have been working since probably about July emptying and renovating, not one but two containers on the service road behind the social club; the outside bar

and what was the green container directly opposite the new Megastore. Thanks to all the committee members these have been emptied, cleaned, and painted inside and out. The green container is now battleship / British summer sky grey and cleared of the junk, dead

wildlife, droppings and more that has probably been in there since we moved to the site in 2008. This container, whilst being our main storage area, will also be selling the programmes that many of you have been longing for... and asking me regularly when they will return. If everything goes to plan this will be open today (vs Altrincham), but if time runs out rest assured it will be open in the next few weeks. I have already arm-twisted Grandad Megastore (my dad David) into running it.

That brings us to the new Megastore (version 4). Our new permanent home was once the outside bar. We have cleared and painted inside and out. We owe a huge debt of thanks to Tony Maidment who fitted out yet another shop for us, and Mike Kane who has been supportive getting the shop

over the line and came to the rescue sorting out electrics. Most of the Committee members have pitched in whether it is cleaning, painting or laying paving throughout the summer months. What you see now is a real team effort and shows what can be achieved on little money and bags of enthusiasm.

What is New to the Megastore

Well as is always the case everything seems to come together in the last few weeks and hours. I have done various deals with multiple suppliers. We will be stocking new T-shirts (there might even be a 'Dead Fox Corner' one) and polo shirts, for fans of all sizes and ages. We have various artistic prints of Lower Mead and other grounds from Turf Football Art. We have various Teddy Bears sporting Wealdstone badges, glass coasters, clocks, notepads, door mats and more. To be honest I can't remember everything we have been planning for the shop, but if some of these items don't make it to opening day they will be released throughout the season.

& what is the same

Well we still have a large range of Wealdstone inspired t-shirts from Simon Hibbs, we have the blue and white quartered polos, the hats and scarves, mugs, programme binders, fridge magnets, aprons, coasters, books and a full library of Roger Slater's works. We will also be throwing in some new designs to the previous favourite items, so

there is no reason not to stick you head in and have a gander.

Social Megastore

Keep up to date with the comings and goings of our new stock / kits etc with our Facebook page (Wealdstone FC SC Megastore) & Twitter (@WfcMegastore).

50/50 Tickets

The guys and girls will be selling 50/50 raffle tickets around the ground before kick-off. With prizes rising as high as I think £300 there is no excuse not to empty your pockets of small change before the whistle blows. As they say, "you have to in it to win it" and I know one lucky winner who has won twice in as many weeks. Not a bad return for the odd pound coin.

Goodbye & goodnight

That ends my umpteenth set of programme notes. Thanks to all the bodies that have sweated and toiled over this very British summer to get the New Megastore off the ground, as well as Mrs Megastore and family for allowing me to do my football stuff off season. Remember the shop will be open all home games and we are still online at wfcmegastore.co.uk and our eBay shop (wfcsc). Come on you Stones and don't forget to bring your wallets.

Adam



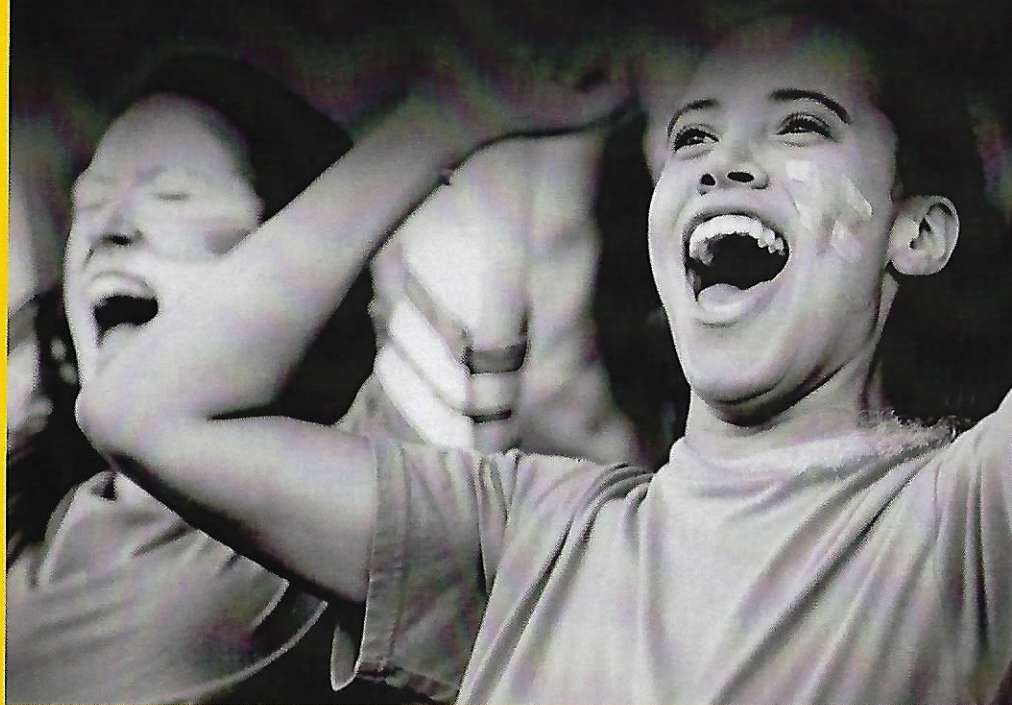
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Everything you need to know about... Altrincham

The opposition in focus

Altrincham was established in 1891 as a Sunday school around 191 as Rigby Memorial Club. They soon merged with another local team, the Rappallers, to form Broadbottom Football Club, and were founder members of the Manchester League in 1913.

After playing at various grounds in the area, including Bradwell, Timperley and Altrincham, the club moved to Little's Field in 1903, at which point they changed their name to Altrincham. They won the Cheshire Amateur Cup in their first season under the new name, and went on to win both the Manchester League and the Cheshire Senior Cup the following season. They won the Manchester League again in 1916-17, and moved to their present Moss Lane ground in 1919.

In 1911 the club joined Division Two of the Cheshire Combination. They finished as runners-up in their first season in the division, only missing out on the title on goal average and earning promotion to Division One. They remained in Division One until World War I. When football resumed in 1919, the club were founder members of the Cheshire County League, where they remained until World War II.

After missing out the 1945-46 season, they joined the Cheshire County League in 1946. They were then founder members of the Northern Premier League in 1968.

They reached the semi-finals of the FA Trophy in



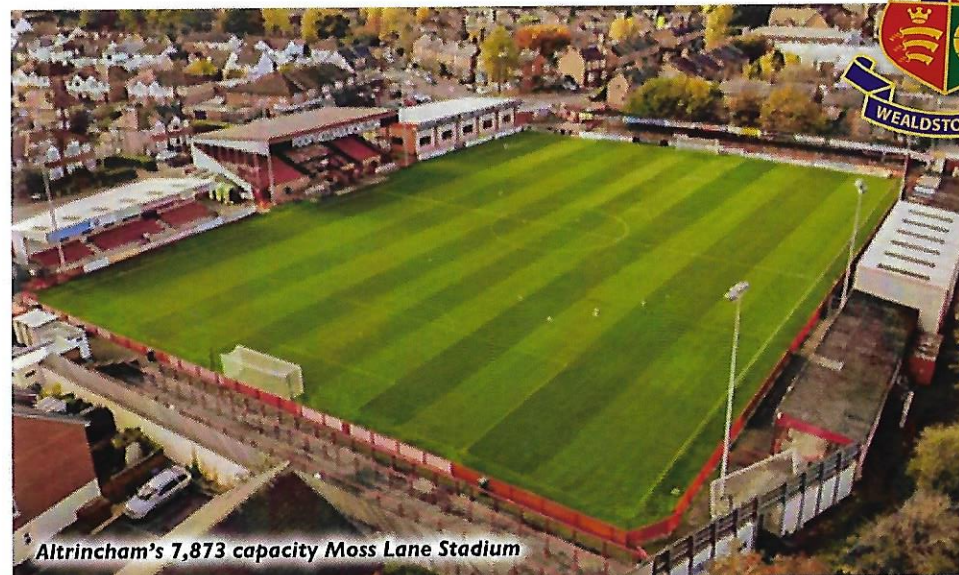
1976-77, losing 2-1 to Scarborough in a second replay; the season also saw them apply for election to the Football League for the first time, but they received only 12 votes compared to the 27 received by the elected Wimbledon. The following season they went one better in the FA Trophy, reaching the Wembley final, where they beat Leatherhead 3-1. In 1978-79 they finished as runners-up

in the Northern Premier League and applied for election to the Football League again. Although they finished as the top non-League club in the ballot, they received only 13 votes to the 37 received by Halifax Town, the lowest-placed Football League club. Instead, Altrincham became founder members of the Alliance Premier League, the top level of non-League football, the winner of which would be the sole non-League nomination for future Football League election ballots.

The league's inaugural season saw Altrincham crowned champions. In the subsequent elections to the Football League, the club missing out by a single vote. Altrincham retained the APL title the following season, but again failed in the Football League elections. The next two seasons saw the club finish in mid-table, together with another FA Trophy final appearance in 1981-82, this time losing 1-0 to Enfield. This was followed by four consecutive top-five finishes between 1984 and 1987 and a second FA Trophy win in 1985, beating Runcorn 1-0 in the final. The 1985-86 season saw them record one of

THE ROBINS

HOME GROUND MOSS LANE
CAPACITY - 7,873 (1,323 SEATED)
MANAGER - PHIL PARKINSON
2022/23 - 17TH NATIONAL LEAGUE



Altrincham's 7,873 capacity Moss Lane Stadium



the biggest FA Cup giant-killings of all time when they defeated top division Birmingham City 2-1 at Birmingham's St Andrew's.

After finishing bottom of the Conference in 1996-97 the club were relegated to the Premier Division of the Northern Premier League. An eighth-place finish in 1997-98 saw them return to the Conference two seasons later as Premier Division champions. However, they lasted only a single season in the Conference as they finished second-from-bottom and were relegated back to the Northern Premier League.

A twelfth-place finish in 2003-04 saw them qualify for the newly formed Conference North. They finished fifth in the new division in its first season, qualifying for the promotion play-offs where they were promoted to the Conference National.

In 2005-06 Altrincham finished bottom of the Conference National after receiving an 18-point deduction when they were found to have fielded an ineligible player, James Robinson, for 15 matches, during which he scored six goals and Altrincham won 18 points. However, they were reprieved from relegation after Canvey Island resigned from the league and Scarborough were demoted. The following season they again finished in the relegation zone, but were reprieved after Boston United were demoted. A third successive relegation reprieve occurred in 2007-08 when Halifax were liquidated.

After mid-table finishes in 2008-09 and 2009-10 and Ricky Ponting becoming a shareholder of the club in 2009, Altrincham were relegated to the Conference North at the end of the 2010-11 season. However, after finishing fourth the following season, they

defeated Guiseley 2-1 in the final to earn promotion back to the Conference National. In 2015-16 the club finished in the relegation zone and were relegated to the renamed National League North. The following season they finished bottom of the National League North, leading to a second successive relegation to the Premier Division of the Northern Premier League. However, the 2017-18 season saw the club win the Northern Premier League title, earning promotion back to the National League North.

In 2019/20 They finished in sixth-place resulting in another play-off campaign. After defeating Chester 3-2 and York City 2-0, the club beat Boston United 1-0 in the final, earning promotion to the National League.

In 2020/21 Altrincham finished their first season back at National League level in 17th position. In 2021/22 the Robins improved on the previous season with a 14th place finish, two places above Wealdstone, on 55 points having won 15 drawn 10 and lost 19.

Last season Altrincham finished in 17th place 4 places below the Stones with 56 points having won 14 Drawn 14 and lost 18.

LAST SEASON

TUE 1ST NOV 2022 (A) W 1-0
SAT 4TH MAR 2023 (H) W 4-0

ALL TIME

P 23 W9 D3 L11 F25 A29

OPPOSITION IN FOCUS ALTRINCHAM

LEWIS BANKS - DEFENCE

Battersea-born, Lewis captained his home club's under-21s and under-23s. After a season at Stafford Rangers, he embarked on a spell with Sligo Rovers in the League of Ireland Premier Division. His travels took him to Arbroath, between Dundee and Aberdeen on the east coast of Scotland, in January, but he readily admitted he was glad to be closer to home after linking up with the Robins.

EDDY JONES - DEFENCE

Altrincham made a significant breakthrough on the transfer front during the 2022/23 season after Eddy Jones' hugely-successful loan was turned into permanent move to The J. Davidson Stadium. The Welsh U21 International made a favourable impression when he first arrived on an initial loan in February 2022 and clocked up 13 appearances to help the Robins to a mid-table finish in the Vanarama National League.

LEWIS BAINES - DEFENCE

Another significant addition to the Alty ranks in the summer of 2022 after arriving from Chorley, where his form was such that it brought him international honours. A strong, powerful left-sided defender who can operate at centre-half or left-back, Lewis was signed by England C against Wales C at Caernarfon towards the end of the 2021-22 campaign. Voted players' player-of-the-year at Chorley for 21-22.

JAMES JONES - DEFENCE

James Jones clocked up well over 100 appearances in an initial spell with Alty and made such a favourable impression, it earned him a move to League Two a year or two years ago. When he decided he wanted a fresh challenge, in the summer of 2022, Alty were delighted to win the battle to sign him and welcome him back to The J. Davidson Stadium. Highly-accomplished central defender, good in the air and comfortable bringing the ball forward.

ELLIOT OSBORNE - MIDFIELD

Another player who benefitted from playing under Phil Parkinson at Nantwich Town and went on to better things, Elliot was soon snapped up by the club boss when League Two side Stevenage released him in January, 2022. Slotted seamlessly into central midfield alongside Isaac Marriott, and as a measure of his consistency, he played every minute of all but two of his 23 league appearances for the Robins in that season.

MATTY KOSYLO - FORWARD

Throughout an eye-catching spell as FC Halifax Town's attacking mainstay, and during a less successful

time at AFC Fylde, Matty's fortunes were closely monitored by Phil Parkinson, who knew all about his special brand of creativity after helping launch his career at Nantwich Town. Matty has thrived under Phil once more since joining Alty in August, 2020, and it was a boost for the Robins when he agreed to go full-time in the summer of 2022.

8. ISAAC MARRIOTT - MIDFIELD

An inspired signing from Bradford (Park Avenue) on Christmas Eve, 2021, Isaac is the sort of dynamic, energetic, hungry young player (born 11/10/99) that fills manager Phil Parkinson with confidence, heading into the new era of full-time football. Soon established himself as an integral figure in central midfield, the Huddersfield-born terrier was a key figure in Alty finishing the 2021-22 season strongly and was an ever-present in the final 16 games.

9. REGAN LINNEY - FORWARD

10. CHRIS CONN-CLARKE - MIDFIELD

Altrincham were delighted to welcome Chris Conn-Clarke back to The J. Davidson Stadium in July 2022 after the Fleetwood attacker agreed a second loan spell with the Robins. Chris will be with us until the end of January 2023. After spells with Linfield and Glentoran in his native Northern Ireland, the Belfast youngster joined Fleetwood from Burnley in February 2021 and made his senior debut for them in September 2021.

11. JUSTIN AMALUZOR - FORWARD

12. LIAM BROCKBANK - DEFENCE

It was hailed as a coup by Phil Parkinson when he succeeded in prising Liam away from Lancaster City in the summer of 2022 and landed a youngster tipped for a bright future in the game. A left-back with outstanding attacking ability, Liam was a double player-of-the-year winner in his final season at Lancaster and was attracting growing interest when Phil signed him and, at 21 years old, confirmed he would be first choice on the left of defence.

14. DIOR ANGUS - FORWARD

15. JAKE COOPER - DEFENCE

Immediately proved a steadying influence alongside Toby Mullarkey in central defence when he arrived on loan from Rotherham United in February, 2022, and though he lost his place in the starting line-up to the impressive Kyle Ferguson, he had done enough by then to convince Phil Parkinson he was worth signing full-time when the Yorkshire club decided against

retaining him. At 21 years old when he committed to Alty in the summer of 2022, he is another who fits the Phil Parkinson identikit of young, hungry players.

16. SAM ROSCOE - DEFENDER

Phil Parkinson added a towering presence to Altrincham's defence for the 23/24 season after landing 6ft 5in centre-back Sam Roscoe from Northern Ireland Premiership runners-up Linfield. Manchester-born Sam made more appearances than any other Linfield player last season, and his signing is seen as a real coup for the Robins after he opted for a return home rather than staying with David Healy's side when his Windsor Park contract ran out. Sam started out at Aberdeen and worked his way through the Academy ranks to win his first professional contract in June 2016 before being loaned to Alloa Athletic, where he made 25 appearances in the Scottish Championship in 2018-19. He then signed a two-year deal with Ayr United before accepting a contract for the same duration at Linfield, where he became a firm fans' favourite as the cornerstone of their defence who also posed a threat in the opposition area. He made his Linfield debut as a second-half substitute in a 4-0 home win over Bosnian side Bora Banja Luka in the Europa Conference League in July 2021 and was on the scoresheet for the first time in a 2-1 away defeat to Luxembourg's Fola Esch in the same competition the following month. Apart from bringing experience of European football with him to Alty, he also boasts an impressive pedigree for helping lift trophies after picking up a Premiership title winner's medal in 21-22 and a League Cup winner's medal last season. In all, he made 84 appearances for Linfield, scoring six goals, his final outing being a 2-0 win away to Cliftonville in April, by which stage he had decided the time was right for a return to his native North-West.

17. JUSTIN DONAWA - FORWARD

19. GEORGE WILSON - MIDFIELD

21. MATT GOULD - GOALKEEPER

A New Zealand international, Matt joined Alty from Spennymoor Town in August, 2000 and has made a favourable impression for the Robins and also on loan at Nantwich Town. The son of ex-Celtic keeper Jonathan Gould and grandson of former Arsenal striker Bobby Gould, Matt is taking on extra duties as specialist goalkeeping coach as well as continuing to provide experienced cover between the posts.

22. JOEY JONES - MIDFIELD

24. EWAN MCGEADY - DEFENCE

A highly-promising full-back with a reputation for

dependability, Ewan had loan spells at Alsager Town and Northwich Victoria during the 2022/23 season, and is one of a number of young academy graduates who will be looking to impress Phil Parkinson.

29. ETHAN ROSS - GOALKEEPER

Phil Parkinson strengthened his goalkeeping options after landing Ethan Ross from Stockport County in a season-long loan deal for 2023/24. The giant keeper comes in at an imposing 6ft 5in and will be familiar to Robins fans after he went on as a second-half substitute in County's recent pre-season win at The J. Davidson Stadium and capped an assured 45 minutes with an excellent late save to deny Regan Linney in a one-on-one with the Alty striker. Born in Enfield, Ethan came through the youth ranks at Arsenal and Cambridge United and had a three-year spell at West Brom before making his EFL breakthrough after joining Colchester United in 2018.

Following a successful loan spell in the National League with Maidstone United, he made his League debut for Colchester in a 1-1 draw with Yeovil Town. After a brief spell with Lincoln City, he signed a three-year deal with Stockport in 2021 and made his debut for Dave Challinor's side in a 2-1 win over Wrexham. In total, he made 12 appearances in the campaign that ended in promotion to League Two for County, who also loaned him out to Aldershot and York City and have now sanctioned a season-long stay with the Robins for the 26-year old.

TBC. OLLIE CRANKSHAW - FORWARD

MANAGER. PHIL PARKINSON

Phil Parkinson was appointed on 28 April 2017, the eve of the last game of the 2016-17 season in which Altrincham had been relegated to the Northern Premier League. He had managed The Dabbers since February 2015 and in that time he had transformed them from a relegation-threatened club to promotion contenders. Phil also took Nantwich to the FA Trophy semi-finals in 2016. As a player, he was a junior at Crewe Alexandra, and then at Reading, before having a year at Port Vale. He made some two hundred appearances for Nantwich as a player, where he captained the team that won the FA Vase in 2006, as well as leading the Dabbers to promotion from the North West Counties League and UniBond League First Division. Phil enjoyed promotion from the NPL as champions in his first season and reached the play-offs in 2018-19 in National League North before winning promotion to the National League via the play-offs in 2020. On 9 April 2021 it was announced that his contract had been extended to the end of the 2023-24 season.



Altrincham Greatest Seasons CLASSIC CAMPAIGNS

1965/66

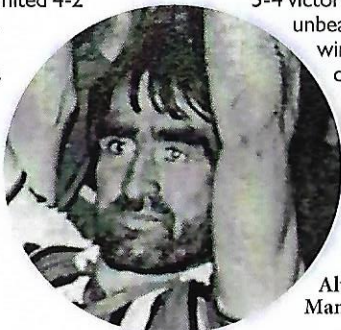
Altrincham reached the FA Cup third round for the first time in 1965/66. The Robins defeated Prescot 2-1, Marine 4-0, Skelmersdale United 4-1 and Bangor City 3-2 to set up a first round tie at home in Scarborough. Ace marksman Jack Swindells netted five goals in a 6-0 victory, then was on target as Altrincham triumphed 3-0 at Rochdale in the second round. They lost 5-0 to Wolves in front of 40,475 at Molineux in the third round. Freddie Goodson's side also won the Cheshire League and Cup double, losing just twice and scoring 132 goals as they pipped reigning champions Wigan Athletic to the title with 73 points.

1974/75

Altrincham made headlines as they took Everton to the FA Cup third round replay in 1974/75. They beat Brighton Stanley 3-0 to reach the FA Cup competition proper for the fourth successive season, then defeated Scunthorpe United 3-1 in a second round replay and Gateshead 3-0 to set up a first round visit to Everton. John Hughes netted to give the Robins a 1-1 draw in front of 60,909 at Goodison Park but Everton triumphed in the replay watched by 35,530 at Old Trafford. Altrincham finished third in the Northern Premier League for the second consecutive year, eight points behind champions Wigan Athletic.

1977/78

John King captained Altrincham to their first FA Cup final triumph in 1978. The Robins had been unlucky to lose to eventual winners Scarborough in the semi-final second replay the previous season. They defeated Workington 4-0, Frickley Athletic 2-0, Matlock Town 2-0, Winsford United 4-2, Runcorn 1-0 en route to the FA Cup final. Goals by leading goalsman Jeff Johnson, John Rogers and John King gave Altrincham a 3-0 win over Leatherhead at Wembley Stadium. Other heroes included Ian Morris, John Davison, Graham Heathcote and Peter Jones. Altrincham finished fifth in the Northern Premier League.



Altrincham legendary Captain & Manager John King.

Football historian LEIGH EDWARDS selects ten post-war Altrincham 'Classic Campaigns'.

1978/79

Altrincham took Tottenham Hotspur to an FA Cup third round replay in 1978/79. The Robins received a bye to the competition proper for the first time and defeated Southport 4-3 in the first round, then won 2-0 at Droylsden to reach the third round for the third time in their history. Jeff Johnson's late equaliser gave Altrincham a 1-1 draw with Tottenham Hotspur in front of 31,081 at White Hart Lane. Colin Lee's hat-trick gave a Spurs side including Argentina World Cup stars Ossie Ardiles and Ricky Villa a 3-0 victory in the replay watched by 27,878 at Maine Road. The Robins finished runners-up in the Northern Premier League.

1979/80

Altrincham won the Alliance Premier League title in 1979/80. Tony Sanders' side kicked off in the new competition with a 0-0 draw at Weymouth, then won at home to Telford and Maidstone to emerge as early pacesetters. They won nine times in a ten-match spell to underline their title credentials, also beating Crewe and Rotherham in the FA Cup before losing 2-1 at Orient in a third round replay. Altrincham finished their Alliance Premier League campaign with a ten-match unbeaten run to pip Weymouth to the title. They lost on penalties after a 2-2 aggregate draw with Northwich Victoria in the Alliance Premier League Cup final.

1980/81

Graham Heathcote and John Rogers scored 33 goals between them as Altrincham retained the Alliance Premier League title in 1980/81. The Robins began with a 3-1 win at Stafford Rangers and went top with only two defeats in 25 matches, including a thrilling 5-4 victory at Bangor City. They remained unbeaten in their last four games to win the title with 54 points and completed the 'double' by defeating runners-up Kettering Town 3-2 on aggregate in the Alliance Premier League Cup final. The Robins beat Burscough 2-1 and Scunthorpe United 1-0 in the FA Cup before losing 4-1 to Liverpool at Anfield



1985/86's Historic FA Cup 3rd round victory v top flight Birmingham. Pic, Manchester Evening News

in the third round.

1981/82

Altrincham reached the FA Cup third round for the fourth successive season in 1981/82. Two goals by John Rogers gave the Robins a 2-2 draw at Sheffield United in the first round and Barry Howard scored twice in Altrincham's 3-0 replay win. After a 0-0 draw at York City in the second round, Barry Whitbread netted twice in a 4-3 replay triumph but Altrincham lost 6-1 at Burnley in the third round. In the FA Trophy the Robins beat Nuneaton Borough 1-0, Epsom & Ewell 1-0, Mossley 2-0 and Bishop's Cleeve 3-1 before losing 1-0 to Enfield in the Wembley final. They also reached the Bob Lord Trophy semi-finals.

1985/86

Altrincham shocked the football world by winning at top-flight Birmingham City in the 1985/86 FA Cup third round. They won at Chorley 2-0 and Blackpool 2-1, then Jeff Wealds starred against his former club as Ronnie Ellis' strike and Robert Hopkins' own goal secured a 2-1 third round victory at Birmingham. John King's side lost 2-0 at York City in the fourth round. In the FA Trophy they defeated Ryhope CA 3-1, Bangor City 6-1, Bishop Auckland 1-0, Cheltenham Town 2-0 and Enfield 3-1 before Mike Farrelly's goal clinched a 1-0 victory over Runcorn in the Wembley final. Altrincham finished fourth in the Conference.

1994/95

John King managed Altrincham to the FA Cup third round in 1994/95. The Robins started well and won their first five away matches, including a 5-2 victory at Merthyr Tydfil. In the FA Cup they defeated Marlow 2-1, Southport 3-2 and Wigan Athletic 1-0 before losing 3-0 to Tottenham Hotspur watched by 25,057 at White Hart Lane. The policy of fast, attacking football saw Altrincham among the Conference leaders but they lost ground to Macclesfield Town and finished in fourth position. Paul Collings and Steve Cross were ever-present, while Andy Green was top scorer and Chris Sharratt voted Player of the Year.

1998/99

Bernard Taylor guided Altrincham to the Northern Premier League title in 1998/99. They made a shaky start and their first victory, 2-1 over Spennymoor, was not until their ninth match. Altrincham grew in confidence and lost just once in their next 20 games, surging up the table to hit top spot by the end of the year. Strikers Leroy Chambers and Paul Power netted 22 goals between them, while Paul Ellender and goalkeeper Stuart Coburn also made a significant contribution. A seven-match unbeaten run saw them win the Northern Premier League title with 80 points and regain Conference status after two years' absence.



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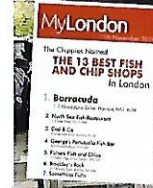
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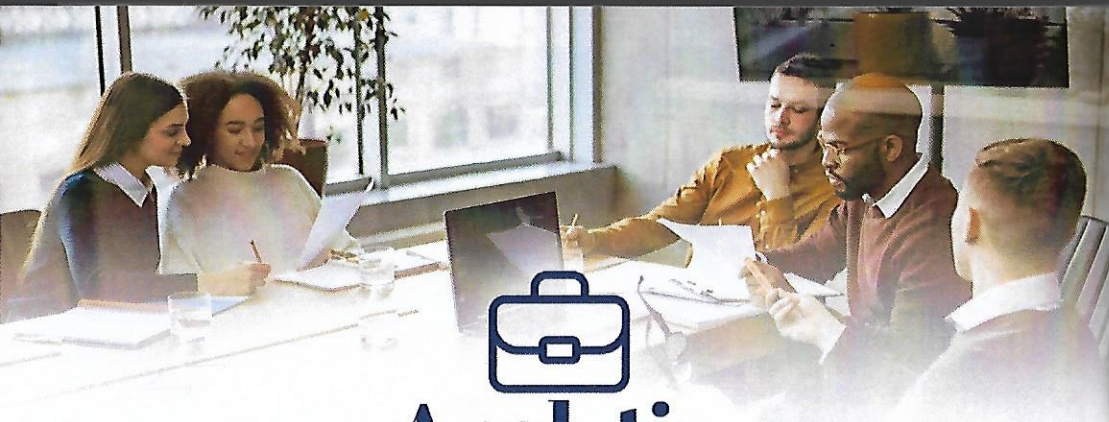
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Time to press on with football's ever evolving language



First things first, it's great to be playing Altrincham today.

For fans of a certain generation, Alty represent the sudden, expansive national frontier that we at Wealdstone first encountered in league form back in 1979 during the first ever National League (then 'Alliance Premier

League') campaign. We Southern Leaguers were mixing it on a week to week level with our Northern leaguer counterparts. Everything smelt fresh and new, and in the case of Alty they went on to win the league, in so doing sharing with us the weird honour of in peaking too early during the 1980s with automatic promotion to the Football League just handful of years later. Bah! When we were promoted back to the National League, Altrincham was the name that I looked for. Forget your League Two day-tripper BELTs, Alty are the true non-league real-deal.

Tell you what, when we were playing Alty in the eighties no bugger spoke about 'the press'. It is telling that talking about 'the press' in football used to mean those rain-jacketed folk with the word written on a card stuck in their trilby hats, notebook in hand to take stories from the players and then write something entirely different in their newspapers.

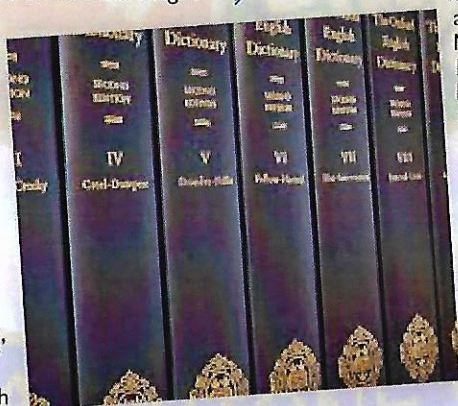
No, today's version of 'the press' is defined as 'when pressure is applied on the player or the team

that's in possession, to win the ball back, dictate play, or delay the opposition'. I'd wager it wasn't in use as much as a decade ago, if not even sooner. It's a good example of the world of football commentary now populated by everybody at every level. No one can bemoan the availability of so much football being broadcast, be it online or on TV, so all

these pundits are going to need something to discuss, right? And naturally the internet will then grab hold of this shiny new phrase, 'the press' for example, such that it is almost immediately snaffled up by another pundit for use in another match, and before you know it everybody's using it.

I wonder how long 'the press' will last, seeing as it's not exactly describing a new formation or tactic so much as the meat-and-drink approach hitherto described as 'getting into them' (although perhaps a little more sophisticated). I ask because we've seen other such phrases come and go in recent years. 'Touch tight', anyone? This was all the rage in the

noughties, from what I can tell an invention of former Northern Ireland and Crystal Palace player (and, ahem, Harrow Borough boss) Iain Dowie. So much did he reach for the phrase in his interview as Palace boss that I would often see kids putting it to use in Sunday League games. You have no idea how much a phrase sounds absurd until you hear an eight year old goalkeeper screaming it at his defence.



Football terms and conditions

But then, language is constantly evolving, or in some cases expanding. Our American cousins have somehow got into the habit of using the phrase 'correctional facility' to describe a prison, for instance.

Some football speak has strong origins. Prior to 1870 a 'brace' would typically describe two peasants shot from the skies by the landed gentry. In football, it's always related to a player scoring two goals in a single match. But there again, you don't hear 'that's a brace of yellow cards, he's off', do you?

And then of course, 'park the bus' - not a thing prior to 2004 and the arrival at Chelsea of Jose Mourinho, but very much a thing after it was used at some point to describe his defensive tactics. Mourinho's ego is now too large to leave Italy, and use of the phrase has subsided - but it's still out there, available to be used when the occasion allows.

I've also wondered about the concept of a 'clinical' finisher. This is meant to describe a certain detachment from the player doing the finishing, unflustered by the potential to launch the ball out of the ground. These days it's typically reserved for players putting serious power behind their shot rather than necessarily being cucumber-cool in the 'despatching (yes, I know) of the ball.

That launched ball could, of course, end up in 'Row Z', the go-to description of a wayward shot being lost in the stands. Assuming the row nearest the pitch is Row A, that's 26 rows of seats, then - making this much more a league ground than non-league ground problem.

There's also a pretty relaxed approach to positioning suggested by some pundits these days. To be in prime position to receive the ball, we are told that strikers need to be 'in and around' the box, which as I'm sure we can all agree is an impossible aim. One is either in the box, or around it. Both states cannot be simultaneously the case. "In OR around" obviously, but that's what they say.

New football terms increasingly have a technological underpinning, as is the case with xG - as in, 'expected goals'. This is perhaps the first phrase to enter the football vernacular that no one can readily explain. Yes, it describes a numerically expressed 'expectation' of goals, but what witchcraft is coming up with that number.

Perhaps we should also have xB - 'expected bleating', this being the statistical measurement of



Above: identification of the media has come a long way from a hat with the word 'press' written on a card.

"One is either in the box, or around it. Both states cannot be simultaneously be the case."

likely post match tweets from fans of a former league club bemoaning their humbling by some non league stalwart such as ourselves (or indeed our illustrious visitors Altrincham).

That's it for today. I should tell you that ahead of a further WOB column I'm trying to ascertain how many football clubs' grounds you can see in the Eastenders map during that programme's credits. I know what you're going to say - that Charlton are obvious (the Valley is that upside down 'U'), as are Millwall, and that's clearly West Ham in the taxpayers' stadium top of the screen in the Olympic Park. But - is

Leyton Orient on there? How about Clapton FC? Greenwich Borough? Thamesmead Town? Cray Valley Paper Mills? You expect nothing less than total satisfaction to this question that you now can't get out of your head, so I'll get back to you on that. And as for today, well, come on you Stones, obviously. (Sorry Alty fans, but you know I have to say it.)

@Wealdipedia





FIRST TEAM RESULTS 2023/2024

COMPETITION	Score	(Total)	(Away)	Lge	Goal scorers
YORK CITY	VNL 2-1	1,805	680	6	Kretzschmar (P), Mundie-Smith
Eastleigh	VNL 0-0	2,030	172	8	
Bromley	VNL 1-1	1,810	159	8	Campbell
AFC FYLDE	VNL 3-2	1,145	20	5	Campbell 2, Ferguson
Aldershot Town	VNL 1-3	1,860	149	9	Adarkwa
DAGENHAM & RED.	VNL 0-2	1,513	275	12	
SEPTEMBER					
Hartlepool United	VNL 1-2	4,072	115	15	Allarakhia
EBBSFLEET UNITED	VNL 2-1	1,422	186	11	Campbell 2 (1 Pen)
ALTRINCHAM	VNL				
Dorking Wanderers	VNL				
Chesterfield	VNL				
Woking	VNL				
OLDHAM ATHLETIC	VNL				
OCTOBER					
Gateshead	VNL				
Kidderminster Harriers	VNL				
THD	FAC40				
BOREHAM WOOD	VNL				
OXFORD CITY	VNL				
Sellhill Moors	VNL				
NOVEMBER					
ROCHDALE	VNL				
FC Halifax Town	VNL				
Southend United	VNL				
BARNET	VNL				
DECEMBER					
ALDERSHOT TOWN	VNL				
THD	FAT30				
Dagenham & Redbridge	VNL				
HARTLEPOOL UNITED	VNL				
Maldenhead United	VNL				
JANUARY					
MAIDENHEAD UNITED	VNL				
Ebbsfleet United	VNL				
ROCHDALE	VNL				
SOUTHEND UNITED	VNL				
FC HALIFAX TOWN	VNL				
FEBRUARY					
Barnet	VNL				
Altrincham	VNL				
GATESHEAD	VNL				
DORKING WANDERERS	VNL				
Woking	VNL				
MARCH					
York City	VNL				
EASTLEIGH	VNL				
BROMLEY	VNL				
AFC Fylde	VNL				
KIDDERMINSTER	VNL				
Oxford City	VNL				
APRIL					
SELLHILL MOORS	VNL				
Boreham Wood	VNL				
CHESTERFIELD	VNL				
Oldham Athletic	VNL				

Player	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Dante BAPTISTE																												
Jack COOK																												
Charlie BARKER																												
Ashley CHARLES																												
Alex DYER																												
Mason BARRETT																												
Tarryn ALLARAKHIA																												
Nathan FERGUSON																												
Oluofela OLOMOLA																												
Max KRETZSCHMAR																												
Corie ANDREWS																												
Giovanni MCCREGGOR																												
Jed WARD																												
Micah OBIERO																												
Luke DREHER																												
Dom HUTCHINSON																												
Charles CLAYDEN																												
Abdul ABDULMALIK																												
Sam BOWEN																												
Jaydn MUNDIE-SMITH																												
Sean ADARKWA																												
Tahvon CAMPBELL																												
Eric NEGRARU																												
Joseph CULLIS																												

KEY

- PLAYERS IN FILLED-IN CIRCLES STARTED THE MATCH
- PLAYERS IN OUTLINED CIRCLES CAME ON AS SUBSTITUTES
- PLAYERS IN GREEN INDICATE FIRST SUBSTITUTION
- PLAYERS IN PINK INDICATE SECOND SUBSTITUTION
- PLAYERS IN BROWN INDICATE THIRD SUBSTITUTION



PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY RESULTS

8th July	Bracknell Town	N	3-2	Campbell, Allarakhia, Mundie-Smith
10th July	Milton Keynes Dons	H	2-1	Dyer, MacGregor
15th July	Farnborough	A	4-2	Oluofela, Campbell, Trialist C 2s
18th July	Billerica Town	H	0-0	
22nd July	Chariton Athletic	H	0-5	
25th July	Wycombe Wanderers	H	0-1	
29th July	AFC Wimbledon	H	0-2	

WED DATE = Midweek

Pictures from our win here last Saturday against Ebbsfleet United courtesy of Jon Taffel @RomeoRaffle

#hergametoo... you bet it is! Our ambassador on a local triumph



LAST SATURDAY saw Wealdstone's first #hergametoo event so we thought we'd ask the club's #HGT ambassador Nicola Brown (pictured left) on how it all went..

"Well, we started planning at the back end of June/early July with myself, Darren Linden, Mark Randall, Chris Woods and the media team and WFC general manager Richard Hopwood contributing - so all areas of the club.

"We shared planned ideas for the day (such as a guard of honour, pitch walk, T-shirts) and use these as a base to start.

"T-shirts were kindly purchased and donated by the Social club (and will be kept to use again!) while I provided sanitary products in all of the ladies toilets which is something HGT are encouraging all clubs to do. I hope to continue this throughout the season.

"Paul Fingers Fruin supported from a logistic/league/opponent perspective and introduced us to Ebbsfleet so they were involved in the day.

"I worked with the wider

HGT team and Katie the Ebbsfleet ambassador to ensure we continually had their support and approval on everything. We then wrote to a number of local girls' football clubs and local schools inviting them to the day and offering the special ticket price, while Lee Rumball supported with getting us some female mascots - and Anita Davies was brilliant in bringing along a number of the girls who took part in the activities.

"The media team provided daily video clips from female staff/fans during the week leading up to the day as another way to share, along with the regular posts, while Stu Maynard mentioned the event during his interview with BBC Sport London on the Thursday before, which then led to me being interviewed by them, giving us another platform to promote the event, ticket price, support of HGT etc.

"The club are super supportive of the campaign and we are already talking about what else we can do!"

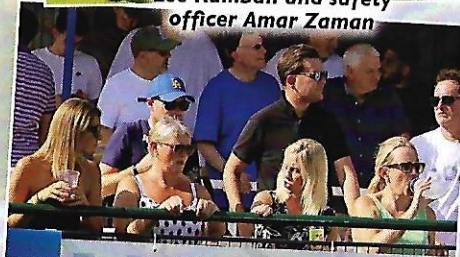


Captain Jack had his admirers...

It says Cook on your back so why haven't you got a chef's hat? That would probably make you too tall to go in the tunnel



The girls fly the flag (top) along with Stones superfan Lee Rumball and safety officer Amar Zaman



MATCH REPORTS

EBBSFLEET UNITED (H)

Grosvenor Vale Saturday September 9th 2023

Wealdstone 2 - 1 Ebbsfleet

Attendance - 1,422



The largely dominant Stones side opened the scoring in the 63rd minute after a tidy solo effort from Campbell beat Mark Cousins, who was outstanding in goal for Ebbsfleet all afternoon.

The visitors hit back with an instant equaliser from a corner when Josh Wright headed past Jed Ward from a set-piece.

But the scores didn't stay level for long when Campbell bagged his second goal of the afternoon from the spot in the 74th minute, which came after the striker was taken down by Ebbsfleet captain Chris Solly, earning him a red card in the process.

A late red card for the Stones came when Micah Obiero stopped an Ebbsfleet break with a sliding challenge, earning him a second yellow card and an early bath in a staggering seventeenth minute of second half stoppage time.

Stuart Maynard made two changes to the side that lost at Hartlepool with Ashley Charles and Alex Dyer both away on international duty with Grenada and Montserrat respectively. Tarryn Allarakhia came into the side off the back of his goal-scoring cameo last week as well as new signing Abdul Abdulmalik, making his professional men's debut.

Maynard's side dominated the early proceedings and came close to opening the scoring just three minutes in when a corner met the head Jack Cook, but the skipper's header bounced narrowly wide.

Two big chances in quick succession almost had the Stones in front, the first chance falling to Campbell, who fired a well-struck effort narrowly wide and then a big chance fell to Obiero, after being played in on-goal, but the forward couldn't beat Cousins in the Ebbsfleet net.

It was almost a dream debut for Abdulmalik, 21 minutes in, when his goal-bound effort from range looked destined for the bottom corner, but a fine save from Cousins denied the 20-year-old his first professional goal.

With the 30-plus degree heat clearly taking a toll, more gaps began to open for the away side and they would've been ahead in the 36th minute, if it weren't for a brilliant sliding block from Jaydn Mundle-Smith to deny Luke O'Neills fierce effort at

goal.

Minutes before half-time, the Stones conjured up a flurry of half-chances with Obiero once again going close with a curling effort before the lively Abdulmalik forced another diving save out of Cousins.

The second-half began as the previous half finished, with Wealdstone dominating the ball, looking to breakdown the Ebbsfleet defence and their first chance of the half came in the 48th minute when a trademark longshot from Nathan Ferguson forced a diving save out of Cousins.

What felt like an inevitable breakthrough for the Stones came in the 63rd minute when Campbell received the ball on the edge of the box, spun his man and finished precisely into the bottom corner.

Not letting the Wealdstone goal affect them, the visitors hit back with an instant response when Stuart Wright fired a bullet header into the bottom of the net from a corner. A goal that came relatively early in the second half.

The Stones were given another chance to take the lead in the 72nd minute when Campbell was played through on goal but scythed down by Ebbsfleet captain Solly, earning him a red card and a subsequent penalty for the home side, which was converted coolly down the middle by Campbell.

Five minutes later, everyone inside Grosvenor Vale thought Campbell had scored his first Stones hat-trick with a point-blank header, but an outrageous diving save from Cousins once again denied the Stones another goal.

With the game coming to a close and Ebbsfleet looking for a last chance at goal, a sliding challenge from Obiero to stop a quick breakaway earned the forward a second yellow card and a dismissal, but the home side managed to close out the game, earning the Stones **their first win in four matches**.

WEALDSTONE:

Ward, Cook (c) (Barrett 57), Barker, Mundle-Smith, Clayden, Ferguson, Bowen, Allarakhia (Andrews 90), Obiero, Abdulmalik (Olomola 60), Campbell.

Subs not used: McGregor, Adarkwa.

Report by **Will Beam**

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 AFC FYLDE Saturday 19th August Vanarama National League	Harrow Windows	
 DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE Monday 28th August Vanarama National League	Danny Kindell – NBM Technology	
 EBBSFLEET UNITED Saturday 9th September Vanarama National League	Rolfe-East	The Bugler Group
 ALTRINCHAM Saturday 16th September Vanarama National League	Ruislip Windows & Doors	
 WOKING Tuesday 26th September Vanarama National League	Rolfe East	The Bugler Group
 OLDHAM ATHLETIC Saturday 30th September Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 BOREHAM WOOD Saturday 21st October Vanarama National League	Barry Eynon – in memory of John O'Connor	
 OXFORD CITY Tuesday 24th October Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available



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 ALDERSHOT TOWN Saturday 2nd December Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 HARTLEPOOL UNITED Saturday 23rd December Vanarama National League	Harrow Windows	Sponsor 2 Available
 MAIDENHEAD UNITED Monday 1st January Vanarama National League	Keith Davies	Sponsor 2 Available
 SOUTHEND UNITED Tuesday 23rd January Vanarama National League	Rolfe-East	Sponsor 2 Available
 FC HALIFAX TOWN Saturday 27th January Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 GATESHEAD Saturday 17th February Vanarama National League	Rolfe-East	Sponsor 2 Available
 DORKING WANDERERS Tuesday 20th February Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 EASTLEIGH Saturday 9th March Vanarama National League	Harrow Windows	Sponsor 2 Available
 BROMLEY Tuesday 12th March Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 KIDDERMINSTER HARR. Saturday 23rd March Vanarama National League	Rolfe-East	Sponsor 2 Available
 SOLI HULL MOORS Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 CHESTERFIELD Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	(Reserved)	

WIND SPECIAL >>>> by tim parks

It happened 50 years ago

Part eight: stones' bright start hits a double as 'minnows' chesham pull off an fa cup shock at lower mead

This season we are reliving an extraordinary campaign fifty years ago... which ended with the Stones' very first promotion in its long history and our first league win in 22 years.

Monday September 18 1973, FA Cup First qualifying round replay: Wealdstone 2, Chesham Utd 4

Amazing what you can recall decades later: Arriving at Lower Mead pretty much soaked under the lights, having decided to wear a new 'waterproof' jacket that patently wasn't.

The jacket was Royal Blue, which was good enough for 15-year-old me although I was loathe to ditch my parka coat that had been a lifeline for every other

Stones match I had seen that season - we were still unbeaten since I'd started wearing it.

After all, we were only playing 'little Chesham' who had somehow survived the battering we had given them at their own Meadow ground the previous sun-baked Saturday thanks to lashings of good fortune.

I bought my 5p match programme (pictured below), a little soggy as the constant, heavy rain slanted under the overhang of the programme booth, and read that the pitch had received "72 hours of watering to make it playable for tonight's replay, as the players are fed up with playing on rock-hard pitches".

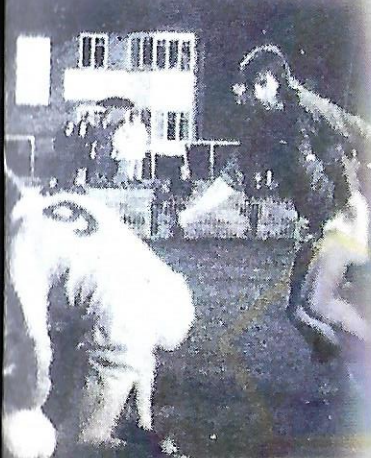
Well it had bucketed down all afternoon - but luckily we had strikers with perfect names for such aquatic conditions like George Duck and Derek Otter (okay, I made the last one up).

It would be just typical to find that we couldn't cope with a slippery surface, after three straight wins in blazing sunshine had Stones top of the Southern League Division One South (until the surprise reversal at Canterbury which we talked about last week). Wearing my parka hadn't always been the wise choice but 15 is the age to be making such mistakes and anyway, sweat and grime is part of the charm of the teenager (I told myself).

The game kicked off in front of a decent Tuesday night



George Duck (above) and Bill Byrne past Chesham Utd keeper Coles who



(No.9) try to smuggle the ball makes an unorthodox save

crowd of 1,000. Chesham's Taylor swung in the first free kick of the night, towards the Cinema End goal the Athenian League side were attacking, but it was an easy catch for our keeper Roy Mackenzie. Well, it might have been had he been wearing those Peter Bonetti 'non-slip' gloves that were so fashionable in the game's higher reaches. The ball squirted from his grasp, ran up his arm and behind his head, and then bounced once in the proximity of the goalline, gleaming white and shimmering with collected water. Mackenzie grabbed the ball and went to play it quickly upfield, only for a furiously-flagging linesman to signal that Chesham were 1-0 up.

What? How?! This was an age when linesmen were pretty much invisible (unless they were being consulted, and becoming heroes in a World-Cup-Final-Geoff-Hurst scenario) and yet here was Mr P.B. Clarke or Mr R. Letsome (choose your anti-hero; he wasn't identified in the match report) scuppering our cup hopes as early as the fourth minute.

I'd been a die-hard Wealdstone fan for four years and already the misery of average league performances and shameful FA Cup exits

were burned on my soul.

The previous year we'd been knocked out 3-1 at Hayes, almost acceptable, but before that came horrific defeats by (then) Athenian League minnows Boreham Wood (0-2 in a home replay) preceded by Spartan League Leighton Town in 1970 (again 0-1 at home in a replay after 1-1 away).

This tie was far from over but it all seemed so horribly predictable. Wave after wave of yellow-shirted attacks (we were strangely wearing our second strip) bore down on the Chesham goal but the Buckinghamshire club were convinced that they were Stones bogey side and that 'hex' came true as we ran out of puff in the second half after George Duck had headed a beautiful equaliser.

But then, as the lamentable Phil Sugden describes in his Harry O match report (right) we simply collapsed in the face of Chesham's youthful second-half exuberance. This same Wealdstone team had walloped the much-lauded Barnet 4-1 in the London Challenge Cup only a week earlier but now those same fans were singing 'what a load of rubbish'!

Even after five decades nothing really changes...

Too many mistakes, no luck

'Stones again get F.A. Cup K.O. from amateurs

By Phil Sugden

Wealdstone 2, Chesham United 4

IT WAS, a Wealdstone supporter told me last Saturday morning as he prepared to travel to Chesham, a little unkind of me to bring up the unhappy subject of Boreham Wood in our Saturday line-up column. It could not, he strongly asserted, happen again.

Well, I take little satisfaction from recording that it could — and did, at Lower Mead Stadium on Tuesday evening when by half-time all those appalling memories of scoreline reading Wealdstone 0, Borehamwood 2, on the night of October 12, 1971, came flooding back. For the third season running Wealdstone crashed out of the F.A. Cup to an amateur side and in the end they were well beaten.

Let it be said right away that nothing went right for Wealdstone. Everything, but everything, flowed Chesham's way — and their officials were the first to admit the fact.

Chesham were ahead by a dubious goal after only four minutes and how a referee 10 yards from the scene can give a doubtful score on the word of a linesman 60 or so yards away, is something that only Mr. J. W. Godfrey, who was in the middle, can tell us.

Thereafter Wealdstone, attacking with frenzied, passionate desire to put matters right, had half a dozen efforts cleared from the line in the first half and three more in the second.

But a reminder to those who were bemoaning these facts long after the game. Defenders are paid (or not paid, according certain stipulations) to keep their goal intact wherever possible.

It is one of the mysteries of soccer that if a home defender clears from the line he is a hero, if a visitor performs the same honest job of work he is a villain.

Another simple fact is that goals count, near misses don't. Statistics show that in this game Chesham got the ball in the net five times (one was disallowed) and Wealdstone twice. Something else perhaps emerged from a depressing night with rain falling steadily for most of the match. When 'Stones started the second half 2-1 down, most of the approximately 1,000 crowd expected them to take over, show professionalism and teach their visitors what football is all about.

HEADS DOWN

This tie was never able to do. Too many heads had gone down and much as this may have been a tough enough fight, too many players appeared not to want the ball and too many were half a yard slower than the opposition.

Training methods, they told us before the season started, would make Wealdstone the first to be...

their efficiency in defence and one or two of their back-men were lucky to escape harsher decisions than were meted out by Mr. Godfrey.

Wealdstone's tale of woe started in the fourth minute when McKenzie made a hash of Taylor's free-kick which ran up his arm and onto his shoulder before he scrambled the ball away.

Chesham appealed frantically for a goal. Mr. Godfrey consulted a far distant linesman and allowed the score. Was it a goal? From where I sat it was impossible to say.

SURVIVED

For the next 25 minutes the ball was never out of Chesham's half and seldom out of their penalty area. Time and again Wealdstone seemed certain to score, mainly through Duck, but somehow goalkeeper Cole and his men survived.

Ultimately Chesham gave away one free-kick too many. Dyson bent his cross beautifully and this time Duck's head gave Cole no chance.

Chesham survived another five minute storm but then, quite suddenly, the fire went out of Wealdstone's work and they gave away a goal.

Burgess should have cleared a through ball. McCormick could have. Both hesitated and Beaven nipped into shoot low and accurately.

Nothing to worry about said the experts. 'Stones will take over. They couldn't and didn't. After 61 minutes McKenzie found himself in no man's land

with Beaven and Taylor bursting through. The keeper hauled down Taylor and Peek stepped up to slam home the penalty.

MISSED

Two minutes later Watson completely missed his tackle leaving Beaven to run into an area of space and cross for Taylor to head in.

Watson was withdrawn and Fairclough went on and minutes later 'Stones were virtually down to ten men when Fulton took a nasty knock in a tackle.

Finally the home side pulled another back when after Brown had been fouled for the umpteenth time Dyson first timed Kinnear's free-kick into the net.

Hopes were raised momentarily, but the fire had gone and once more there was no way back for Wealdstone.

Perhaps the unhappiest part of the night was to hear those who had cheered so wildly when Barnet were thrashed last week, jeering and hurling that too often heard taunt — "what a load of rubbish!" — although it was just that at times.

Wealdstone: McKenzie; Watson; Fulton; Kinnear; McCormick; Burgess; Godfrey; Brown; Byrne; Cuck; Dyson; Sub. Fairclough.

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 Challenge Cup, First Qualifying Round Replay
WEALDSTONE v. CHESHAM UNITED

Above: Phil Sugden pens a typical match report from his time at the Harrow Observer. He liked to invent a character with a strong opinion to then prove him wrong. I often now use that device myself!



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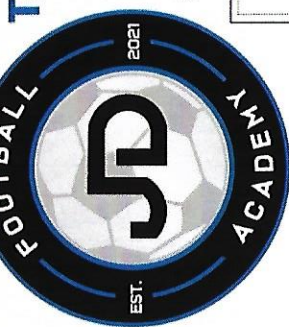
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2023/2024

CORRECT AS AT 09/9/2023	VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE			FA CUP			FA TROPHY			MIDDLESEX SENIOR CUP			MIDDLESEX CHARITY CUP			TOTALS			STONES CAREER			
	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	
Abdulmalik, Abdul	1															1			1			
Adarkwa, Sean		4	1													4	1		4	1		
Allarakhia, Tarryn	2	5	1													2	5	1	54	11	10	
Andrews, Corie		5														5			13	9	3	
Barker, Charlie	8															8			40	2		
Barrett, Mason		1														1			19	8		
Bowen, Sam	5	1														5	1		5	1		
Campbell, Tahvon	8		5													8	5		8	5		
Charles, Ashley	7															7			105	21	2	
Clayden, Charles	8															8			31	3	4	
Cook, Jack	8															8			94	2	8	
Dyer, Alex	7															7			203	37	34	
Ferguson, Nathan	3	2	1													3	2	1	53	11	8	
Hutchinson, Dominic																			20	8	1	
Kretschmar, Max	3	2	1													3	2	1	28	8	7	
McGregor, Giovanni																			13	3		
Mundle-Smith, Jaydn	8		1													8	1		45	14	4	
Obiero, Micah	8															8			36	6	8	
Olomola, Olufela	4	3														4	3		36	13	10	
Ward, Jed	8															8			8			





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Dene Field

GIS graduate, First Team Analyst and Coaching Assistant at **Watford FC Women**

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Mya Graham,
UCFB graduate, Assistant Producer at **talkSPORT**



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Altrincham, we've played you before BY TIM PARKS

39 years ago, Graves triple fires Stones to top of the Conference but boss Hall puzzled by Lower Mead crowd of just 760

Graves' treble strike

WEALDSTONE 3 Altrincham 1
Mark Graves celebrated a hat-trick for Wealdstone as the only unbeaten team left in the Alliance Premier League on Saturday.

It was his second goal from the penalty spot two minutes into the second half that changed the course of the match, writes Paul Jacques.

Altrincham had battled back to level the scores at 1-1 at half-time, but Graves' early strike after the break opened the door for a host of Stones' goals.

And really, Wealdstone should have run up a healthy total. Nigel Pearson was guilty of a catalogue of errors and Alan Cordice missed two clear opportunities that he should have buried.

Team manager Brian Hall was buoyant enough with the three from Graves, and was particularly satisfied with the Stones' second half display — 45 minutes of probably the best football to have played all season.

Goals opened at a gallop, winning the corner in the opening five minutes. Their early pressure was rewarded when Graves found the mark in the 19th minute. Stuart Pearce cut in from a short corner and his low, post cross was forced home by

Graves. A rare error from keeper Bob Iles in Altrincham in for an equaliser after 45 minutes. He somehow let the ball slip from his grasp and grateful Jeff Pearson stabbed home the gift.



NUMBER THREE ... Mark Graves is on target with a header to complete his hat-trick at Lower Mead on Saturday. PICTURE: DOUG AVENT

On the stroke of half-time Altrincham keeper Gareth Smith made a remarkable point blank save to deny Gary Donellan.

The teams had barely drawn breath after the interval when Paul Johnson

tripped Cordice for a penalty. Graves' spot kick was blocked by the keeper but the Wealdstone striker fired home the rebound.

Graves completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute when he met Dennis

Byatt's cross with a powerful header that Smith could only palm into the roof of the net.

Wealdstone: Iles, Perkins, Pearce, Byatt, Bowgett, Price (Wainwright 45), Greenaway, Donellan, A. Cordice, Graves, Johnson.

Bring on the crowds

THE ALLIANCE'S dwindling gates, one of the game's biggest worries at all, is now haunting Wealdstone.

There are riding high among Non-League soccer's elite, yet they are losing a losing battle against the big boys, writes Paul Jacques.

Crowds at Lower Mead are severely short of the 1,000 mark, writes Paul Jacques. Wealdstone's position, which finished third last season in the Alliance Premier League, and this season are still unimpressive. In what is effectively the county's Saturday's attractive visit of

Wealdstone boss puzzled by 'poor' home attendance

Altrincham attracted just 760 fans. In contrast, Altrincham, despite their recent decline as a Non League force, managed to top 1,000 for the majority of their home matches. Indeed, most of the top Alliance clubs regularly pull 1,200 or more through the turnstiles.

Wealdstone's low gates puzzle team manager Brian Hall. "As a top of the table team we've got to be worth a crowd of 1,100.

"Wealdstone v Altrincham was an

attractive fixture and it was as big a gate as we've had so far, but it was still very poor.

"I can't see what more we can do. What do people want? Our facilities are good and the team's doing well.

"I certainly don't think the admission charge of £1.00 is a lot in 1983. It would cost more than that to buy you and I a pint.

"We are now relying on a good run in the FA Cup and a Challenge

Trophy to get people in for our bread and butter.

"And when we play the likes of Enfield and Dagenham we should be getting 2,000 or more. They attract two or three big gates a season isn't enough".

One simple solution that Hall sees is for every Stone's fan to bring a friend when they go to Lower Mead. "That would almost certainly double our gate," said Hall, who would love to see a big crowd for Wealdstone's next home match.

That is on Saturday October 8 against Boston United, another attractive side which finished fifth last sea-

Saturday Sep 24, 1983, Alliance Premier League: Wealdstone 3 Altrincham 1
THERE is still much wailing and gnashing of teeth about how we can 'grow' our crowds at Grosvenor Vale... and it's somehow reassuring to know that almost four decades ago, with the club about to lay claim to being the best non-League side in the country (if not Europe) we were perplexed by the same problem. If not more so.

When the powerful Manchester outfit Altrincham came to Lower Mead 39 years ago to face a Wealdstone side unbeaten in the Alliance Premier League (now Vanarama National League) there was talk of a 1,500+ crowd. Alty had won the first two APL Championships and were unlucky to dominate the non-League game in the days before automatic promotion to the Football League.

What a shame then that all the talk in the next week's Harrow Observer was about the size of the crowd and the competing attraction of our neighbours up the road at Watford.

"I'll confess to having watched the Stones through five decades - and

Interesting reports in the Harry O investigating why the Stones crowds wereso low... and a certain S.Rawal puts a positive spin on things

in every one of them the thorny question of attendances has been a source of pride... and also frustration.

In the sixties you couldn't keep the crowds away. Coupled with the feelgood factor of the World Cup 66 and our own victory in the FA Amateur Cup, 2,500 and more regularly trooped into Lower Mead. The seventies saw a big decline nationally (largely allied to hooliganism) with top-flight games often watched by just 10,000 while our own crowd

stayed in four figures. But into the eighties and, well, decrepit stadiums, continued violence and a hopeless national team saw crowds generally decline. And that was even before the events of Hysel stadium turned football fans into pariahs.

More locally, the rise of the Hornets from bottom-rung also-rans in the late 70s (when they had only a few thousand more than the Stones

Continued overpage >>>>



'Stones stung by Hornets

WATFORD'S rush into the First Division of the Football League has not gone unnoticed by Wealdstone supporters. A short car or train journey will take you to the Watford Stadium in Vicarage Road — and many soccer fans in Harrow have not been slow to take advantage, WRITES PAUL JACQUES.

The chance to see the top teams in English football virtually on your doorstep has caused a fan drain from Wealdstone's Lower Mead stadium.

Stones' team manager Brian Hall asked: "Where are our supporters?" It seems the clash between Wealdstone's and Watford's matches could give him one of the answers for the disappointing "stay away".

Dennis and Karen Taylor of Boniface Gardens, Harrow Weald, pointed out:

"What would any local football supporter rather choose to watch? For example, on September 24 — Wealdstone v Altrincham for £1.50 or Watford v Spurs for 80 pence more? This situation will be repeated for most of Wealdstone's home matches."

Graham Smith, of Burnell Gardens, Stanmore, added:

"When Brian Hall was complaining of low attendances at Wealdstone, it was the same Saturday that Watford were at home to Spurs.

"I don't think he could have expected a big crowd. Then, the next home match was against Boston. He asked supporters to

More revealing views from Wealdstone fans

bring a friend and extra people did come through the turnstiles.

"Unfortunately, the Boston team coach broke down and quite a few people asked for their money back — some of these being Watford supporters as they did not have a home match.

"This was just unfortunate and Wealdstone were not to blame."

The Watford problem was backed up by Sudhir Rawal of Grange Road, Kenton. He feels that Wealdstone's attendances are bigger than all the local clubs put together, but admits that their decline is down to the clash with Watford's home matches.

"The recent match against Altrincham only gained an official crowd of 760 — actually higher than last year's match which had an attendance of 737. On this day Watford were at home to Tottenham Hotspur and this must have taken a few hundred supporters away from Wealdstone's match as it was a very attractive fixture.

"The loyalty of Wealdstone supporters can never be denied as they have probably the largest away support in Non League football."

Mr K. Dixon has been a Wealdstone supporter for 35 years, and still travels down from his home in Bletchley to Lower Mead — a journey of 40 miles.

In answer to Brian Hall's question he explained:

"I'm glad someone has asked at last. It's a pity they were asked years ago before the loss so many supporters."

He has followed Stones for the days of Tommy McGee, White and Charlie Barker and remembers the days when Stones would get 1,000 for a respite match, mainly to hear at 11 time and full-time how the team were doing.

A point that now annoys is the shortage of programme matches. They sell out too quickly, a point that frustrated supporters at Saturday's FA tie with Bishop's Cleeve was the last programme had been well before the kick-off.

"Last season when we played Enfield, which was our most important match and certainly the biggest gate of the season in league, I got to the ground at 7pm and just managed to get in. The last programmes available

"Thinking there must be a crowd already in I was appalled to find only a couple of hundred there and to continually from 7.15 over the tannoy they had sold all the programmes. This was a bad, no disguise interest in the needs of the public. Mr Hall should realise that I think about the public, they think about you."

Altrincham, we've played you before contd

home games, and indeed were only one step higher on the nominal pyramid) to the top flight under Graham Taylor had a big impact on the numbers at Lower Mead.

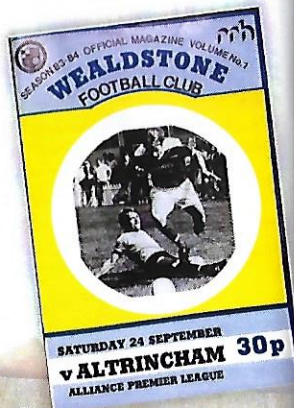
Especially in this '83-84 season when every home Saturday game seemed to clash with Watford, and the Vicarage Road side were flying high after a second-placed finish behind Liverpool the previous season, their first in Division One.

As pointed out in the cutting on the previous page, after this sparkling win over Altrincham and a plea to bring along a friend' (no money-off deals in those days) over 900 attended the next home game against high-flying Boston United, helped by Watford paying away.

But... Disaster! The Boston team coach broke down at Welwyn Garden City and only arrived at the stadium, by which time a third of the 900-odd crowd had drifted away with the offer of a refund for their gate money. Not anybody's fault, but really bad luck especially when Boston equalised in injury time (about 7pm) to force a 1-1 draw. Our crowds only topped the 1,000 mark that season bringing our FA Cup run, around 1,700 seeing the

First Round 1-1 draw with Enfield and 2,000 the second replay.

Line-up v Altrincham: Bob Iles, Steve Perkins, Stuart Pearce, Dennis Byatt, Paul Bowgett, David Price, Brian Greenaway, Gary Donnellan, Alan Cordice, Mark Graves, Nigel Johnson. Sub: Robin Wainwright Sub: Robin Wainwright



Bob's new challenge

CHELSEA'S goal was protected for years by Peter Bonetti. But Bob Iles' first team appearances never came within a whisker of those of The Cat.

Now by day Bob Iles clutches a civil service pen and telephone. On Saturday afternoons and weekday evenings his hands come in just as useful, when he swaps a suit and tie for a green shirt and stands in Wealdstone's goalmouth as the club's new keeper, writes Russell Newmark.

Running out of the Lower Mead dressing rooms is a bit different from being cheered onto the turf at Chelsea's famous Stamford Bridge stadium. Iles, 27, made the switch from south west London when five years with Chelsea ended with a free transfer.

He had joined Chelsea from Weymouth, who had an agreement with Chelsea that if he made 15 first team appearances they would receive £5,000. But Iles' top-line career floundered — unlike that of Spurs' ex-Weymouth capture Graham Roberts, who reached the pinnacle of playing for England.

"It was disgusting, really. I was playing in the first team — justifiably so, on merit — and the team was still precariously positioned in the Second Division. It appeared to me that they gambled on putting Steve Francis back in and saving £5,000 — and jeopardising their Second Division status."

But Iles — whose father also played as a keeper — found himself without a league club at the end of the season.

"I wanted to maintain as high a standard of football as possible on a non-league, part-time basis. I felt Wealdstone was sufficiently go-ahead with enough potential in the club for my ambition at the moment."



Bob Iles — fresh start.

"It doesn't have the pressure of being a career now. That doesn't mean to say it becomes any easier — you still play to win and it's still competitive — but you go home not worrying about the next day."

Our goalkeeper back in 83-84 was Bob Iles, who signed from Chelsea after realising he couldn't depose No.1 Peter Bonetti or his deputy John Phillips. Just imagine that happening today...

Bob was in goal for the next few years - including the Double season - until following manager Brian Hall to Yeovil at the end of the 1980s.

Left: Bob (who lives on the South coast) is pictured at the Brockenhurst FA Cup game a few years ago with 'seventies star Johnny Henderson (right who also lives nearby). Both still instantly recognisable!



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 BROMLEY Tuesday 12th March Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 KIDDERMINSTER HARR. Saturday 23rd March Vanarama National League	David, Adam & Guy Edwards - in Memory of Rowland Edwards	
 SOLIHULL MOORS Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	Terry Hissey	Sponsor 2 Available
 CHESTERFIELD Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	Peter & Steve Drew, Ron Moore & David Edwards - in memory of fans no longer with us	

tim parks

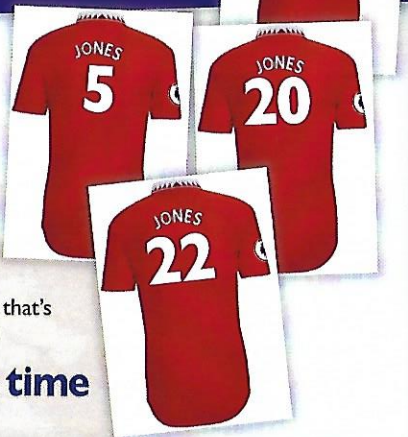
THINGS WOT WE LIKED THIS WEEK

up, it's a bit of a strange from today's visitors Fincham. Hard to believe, they've got FOUR players and Jones in their squad. Now! It's not like they're Carver Swansea or anything. But I their fans enjoy singing: 'There's only one Jones in Alty, Jones in Alty, there's only one Jones in Alty, four Jones in Alty' etc etc. Or maybe that's

just me.

My old mate Geoff from work is an Altrincham fan and when we had a chat about today's game he mentioned all the Joneses (Eddy, James, Tom and Joey). I asked him: 'Don't they get confused?'

He said "Only Tom. But that's not unusual". Boom boom



It's nostalgia time! Let's crank the time machine back to September 1976

... we'd played AFC Wimbledon in season 1 had a very nice email from historian Stephen Crabtree.

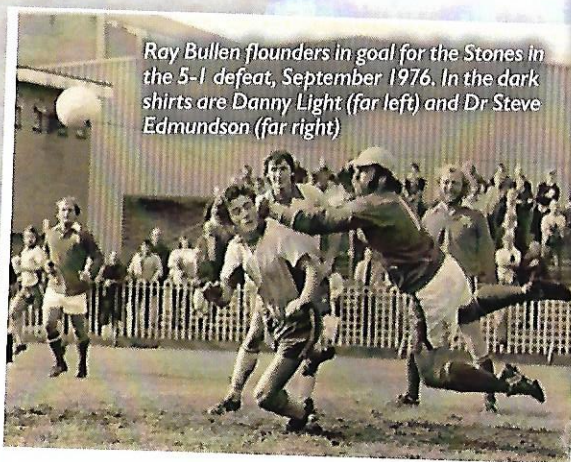
I'm almost as fascinated by the history of football as I am by ours, and delighted me by reading over match reports and photos from games between our two clubs in the 1970s when they were promoted to the Football League for the first time, as plain old Wimbledon FC.

I'm particularly fascinated to hear mention of much-derided goalkeeper Ray Bullen, whose story deserves much wider recognition (in a good way).

In April 1976, Stones were in the Southern Premier Division relegation zone (the height of non-League football in those preference days, alongside the Northern Premier League) and had just sacked the management of Eddie Presland and Terry Dyson. Geoff Coleman and Alan Fogarty of Nuneaton Borough - and in their first match we chalked up the first away win of the season, 2-0 at Weymouth on a Wednesday

... it came at a cost as regular keeper John ... on came off at half time with concussion and we later found out that he'd also ... red his hand.

... here to go at short notice? Loan deals
Continued on next page >>>



Ray Bullen flounders in goal for the Stones in the 5-1 defeat, September 1976. In the dark shirts are Danny Light (far left) and Dr Steve Edmundson (far right)

Saturday 11/09/76: SLP (19th v 15th) 1,356
Wimbledon (3) 5 Leslie 22, 80, Aitken 37, Marlowe 43, Connell 46
Wealdstone (1) 1 Aitken (og) 40
Finally clicking into gear after their sluggish start to the campaign, The Dons proved far too strong for a Wealdstone side for whom reserve goalkeeper Ray Bullen had a nightmare match. Dominant from the kick-off, Wimbledon went ahead after John Leslie lobbed home a beautiful goal mid way through the first half and doubled their lead when Glenn Aitken nodded in a fine header eight minutes before the break.

Within minutes Aitken had turned from hero to villain when he turned the ball past his own keeper for an own goal but Ricky Marlowe restored the two goal advantage when he pounced on a Bullen mistake just before half time. Immediately after the interval Roger Connell made it 4-1 with a header from a corner and Leslie rubbed salt into the wound with a fifth ten minutes from time.
Guy, Tilley, Bryant, Donaldson, Edwards, Bassett, Aitken (Eames), Cooke, Connell, Marlowe, Leslie

have existed since football's very beginnings, but maybe we didn't have decent contacts with top non-League or Football League clubs because the best we could do was to hastily sign Ray Bullen from Kodak FC.

Kodak, of course were one of Harrow's biggest employers but their works football team wasn't the best. Hence the trepidation as Bullen (who had his own sports shop in Headstone Drive) made his home debut the following Saturday against high-flying Dunstable Town, managed by Barry Fry and featuring luminaries like Jeff Astle and Anniello Iannone.

Remarkably, Bullen looked the part. The match report was full of his athleticism and quick reflexes as we won 3-0. But sadly, he was a one-match wonder... and what a pity he played a further five games!

He ended that season as a figure of fun as he conceded four goals at Chelmsford and Wimbledon in successive matches, waving at shots as they flew past him, mis-punching crosses and now looking every inch the London Commercial League amateur.

Happily, John Morton was fit again to start the 1976-77 season but he was missing for two games that August and, amazingly, the call went out to Ray Bullen again. What was our MT thinking? Coleman and Fogarty were uncompromising West Midlanders, surely with a contacts book full of reliable glovesmen.

Maybe they were let down at the last minute? Whatever the reason, Bullen reappeared for the home SL game with Bath City. We lost 2-0. He was in the side again for the subsequent trip to champions Wimbledon and this, thankfully, saw him play woefully enough to never be seen in a Wealdstone shirt again. We were beaten 5-1 that afternoon by a Wimbledon side who had made a poor start to their defence of the title - and the match report (left) doesn't really describe how his soft punch allowed Leslie to lob the first; or his slow movement to Aitken's header for 2-0; or his spillage of a shot allowing Marlowe to make it 3-1; or his statuesque positioning for the Connell header for 4-1; or indeed his scrambling half save that allowed Leslie to make it 5-1.

So Bullen departed to Willesden of the Athenian League, more his level, but that wasn't the last



At the end of that 76-77 season, Wimbledon drew 0-0 with the Stones at Lower Mead to pick up their second successive Southern League title. The match report is below

story about him. Oh no.

In the summer of 1976, I had started up a Sunday football team with some friends, just playing to play some friendlies and we needed a kit... and fast.

So I popped down to Mr Bullen's shop in Headstone Drive, just off Wealdstone High Street and placed our

order - 12 shirts and a keeper's top, with numbers sewn on the back... and also smaller numbers on the shorts, as was the style with several clubs including Chelsea.

Ray promised that we'd have them in two weeks, max. A fortnight later I phoned him and he was all apologetic, saying that there had been 'unforeseen circumstances' and that it might be an extra few days' delay - a bit annoying as we needed the kit for a match that weekend.

On the Friday he said they were all set for collection, so I drove down to Headstone Drive and was surprised to find the shirts a bit scruffy - as if something had been sewn onto them and then unpicked.

Ray owned up. I couldn't believe it. "I'm really sorry" he said. "It was the first time I've had numbers sewn onto a kit and it wasn't until all the numbers were sewn on the shirts that the ladies realised that the numbers for the shorts were far too big to fit there. They'd sewn the little numbers on the shirts by mistake!"

He knocked some money off the bill and we had a slightly tatty kit... but a good story to tell.



Guy rocks Stones

Wendalstone 0
Wimbledon 0
DONS were presented with the Southern League title-winners tuckards at Wealdstone last week.

But they were held to a draw by relegation trouble Wealdstone at Lower Mead.

In fact struggling Stones, needing a point to stay safe from the drop, nearly watched two with a splendid move four minutes from the end.

A right wing cross found striker Bill Byrne in the box. He neatly flicked the ball into the path of midfielder Nicky Griffiths - but his powerful header was superbly saved by keeper Dickie Guy.

The triple champions who were applauded on to the field by the Wealdstone players should have been receiving their.

Dons opened in stirring fashion and the Wealdstone goal felt a charmed life for the first 15 minutes. Dave Bassett was unlucky to see a fifth minute shot cleared off the line at the last second by mid-fielder John Watson for a corner.

Shortly afterwards Ian Cooke shot against the post and Billy Holmes, the best player on the park, hit the rebound for Wealdstone's sprawling keeper Chris Lightfoot to force yet another corner.

Byrne hooked the ball into the net after a Paul Thomas

free-kick after 63 minutes but the referee disallowed the 'goal' for pushing.

Then after that marvellous they save from Griffiths Wimbledon broke quickly and nearly watched an undeserved winner. Cooke worked his way round the back and his goalbound shot was blocked off the line for a corner by a grateful Thomas.

Wealdstone: Lightfoot, Thomas, Price, Dawkes, Parral, Watson, O'Kane, Griffiths, Moss, Byrne, Girkman. Sub Fulton (not used).

Wimbledon: Guy, Tilley, Bryant, Donaldson, Edwards, Bassett, Cooke, Aitken, Connell, Holmes, Leslie. Sub Marlowe (not used).

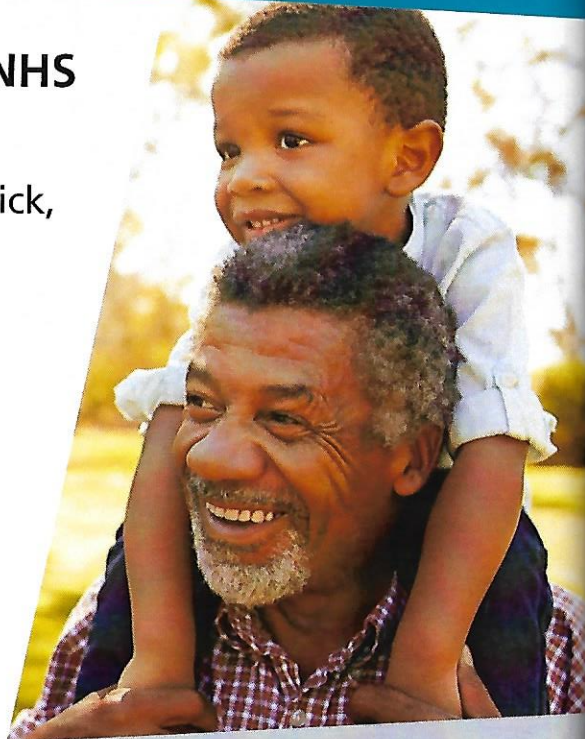
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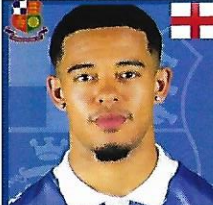
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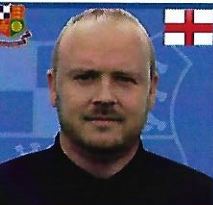
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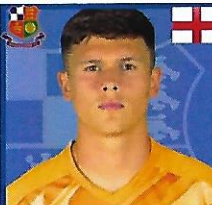
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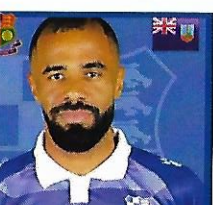
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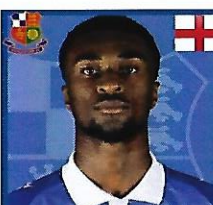
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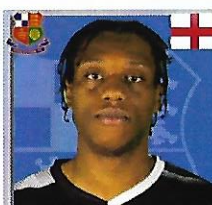
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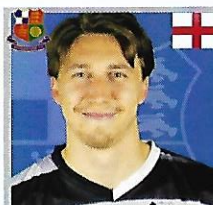
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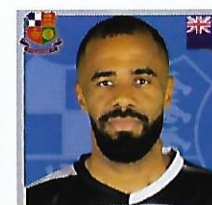
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CARRYING YOUR TEAM TO SUCCESS



Find The Best Van Leasing Deals At

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Next up at The Vale:



Woking

National League
Tuesday
26 September
7:45pm



Oldham Athletic

National League
Saturday
30 September
3:00pm



Boreham Wood

National League
Saturday
21 October
5:30pm

For all Vanarama National League fixtures:

£15 admission for EFL or Premier League season ticket holders and members of the armed forces

FINAL VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLE @ 4/9/2023

	ALL						HOME						AWAY						RESULTS			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS	(H)	(A)
1 Barnet	8	6	1	1	17	8	4	4	0	0	11	4	4	2	1	1	6	4	9	19		
2 Chesterfield	8	6	1	1	22	15	4	3	1	0	11	7	4	3	0	1	11	8	7	19		
3 Solihull Moors	8	4	4	0	15	8	4	1	3	0	8	5	4	1	0	3	9	13	2	15		
4 Hartlepool United	8	5	0	3	19	17	4	4	0	0	10	4	4	1	0	3	9	13	2	15	1-2	
5 Halifax Town	8	3	4	1	8	6	4	1	3	0	4	2	4	2	1	1	4	4	2	13		
6 Gateshead	8	3	3	2	20	12	4	1	2	1	9	8	4	2	1	1	11	4	8	12		
7 Ebbsfleet United	8	4	0	4	15	12	4	3	0	1	10	3	4	1	0	3	5	9	3	12	2-1	
8 Woking	8	3	3	2	11	9	4	2	1	1	8	6	4	1	2	1	3	3	2	12		
9 Bromley	8	3	3	2	11	10	4	2	1	1	7	5	4	1	2	1	4	5	1	12	1-1	
10 Rochdale	8	3	2	3	11	9	4	1	1	2	4	4	4	2	1	1	7	5	2	11		
11 Wealdstone	8	3	2	3	10	12	4	3	0	1	7	6	4	0	2	2	3	6	-2	11	--	--
12 Altrincham	8	2	4	2	13	15	4	1	2	1	5	5	4	1	2	1	8	10	-2	10		
13 Dagenham & Redbridge	8	3	1	4	10	12	4	2	0	2	6	7	4	1	1	2	4	5	-2	10	0-2	
14 Maidenhead United	8	2	4	2	7	9	4	1	3	0	3	2	4	1	1	2	4	7	-2	10		
15 Aldershot Town	8	3	1	4	15	18	4	2	1	1	12	8	4	1	0	3	3	10	-3	10	1-3	
16 Oxford City	8	2	3	3	16	14	4	2	0	2	10	5	4	0	3	1	6	9	+2	9		
17 Oldham Athletic	8	1	4	3	9	12	4	1	1	2	6	5	4	0	3	1	3	7	-3	7		
18 Boreham Wood	8	1	4	3	8	12	4	1	1	2	3	3	4	0	3	1	5	9	-4	7		
19 Kidderminster Harriers	8	1	4	3	4	8	4	0	4	0	1	1	4	1	0	3	3	7	-4	7		
20 Eastleigh	8	1	4	3	7	14	4	1	2	1	6	9	4	0	2	2	1	5	-7	7	0-0	
21 Dorking Wanderers	8	1	3	4	7	14	4	1	2	1	4	5	4	0	1	3	3	9	-7	6		
22 Fylde	8	1	2	5	13	21	4	1	1	2	7	10	4	0	1	3	6	11	-8	5	3-2	
23 York City	8	0	4	4	10	17	4	0	2	2	5	8	4	0	2	2	5	9	-7	4	2-1	
24 Southend United	8	4	1	3	15	9	4	3	0	1	10	4	4	1	1	2	5	5	6	3		



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GPF Lewis is an award winning national contractor providing Construction, Maintenance & Facilities management services.

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Follow Stones on the road:



Dorking Wanderers

National League
Tuesday
19th September
7:45pm

DorkingWanderers.com



Chesterfield

National League
Saturday
23rd September
3:00pm

Chesterfield-FC.co.uk



Gateshead

National League
Tuesday
3rd October
7:45pm

Gateshead-FC.com



Wealdstone FC's first team travel is sponsored by Osmo, specialists in the supply of wood finishes

Wealdstone FC Supporters' Club often runs subsidised coach travel to our away games. Check online for full details.