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Just imagine you made your first trip to Lower Mead in August 1985 and were smitten for life by the heroes in blue and white (don't laugh, it *has* happened). Your Wealdstone-supporting career would have taken in four relegations (two of them voluntary), the loss of two grounds and several million pounds, four years with the club in administration, at least one year facing the possibility that every match might be its last, and football so awful that those of us brought up on the exploits of Townsend, Duck or Cordice could reasonably be reduced to tears of rage or frustration. The epithet "Britain's least successful club" was well-earned indeed. If Wealdstone was a cat it would be long dead, nine lives or not.

But against the odds the club survives; sustained by a small but supremely devoted band of supporters, trying to build a new Lower Mead in Harrow's green and pleasant land which will ensure a long-term future. Against a background of years of battles in the boardroom, the courts and council chambers the performance of the eleven men on the field has seemed relatively unimportant. But in 1997 Wealdstone collected their first trophy for twelve years and though that may be a single small step back towards the top of the non-league game, in symbolic terms it could be a **huge stride along the road to survival** and rehabilitation. Wealdstone are back? Well, on the way back at least.

This book is the supporter's record of a successful 1996/97, along with some history: Wealdstone's past glories, recent traumas and uncertain future.

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ONE TEAM IN HARROW

A Celebration of Wealdstone FC ICIS League Division 3 Champions 1996/97



ONE TEAM IN HARROW
A Celebration of Wealdstone FC

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THE MATCHES

Wealdstone 3 Camberley Town 1
Icis 3 - 17th August 1996
Attendance: 271

The opening league fixture started brightly, but the failure to take a few early chances let the visitors back into the game, and a first half goal looked like it would get the season off to the worst possible start for the Stones. Cue Fergus Moore to spare blushes after 70 minutes, with a headed goal from a corner kick.

Fergus showed his prowess in the air again 5 minutes later, with an even better header - again from a corner - that bulleted into the roof of the net. The best was yet to come though, as with time running out, Terry Hibbert picked up the ball inside the centre circle, went on a jinking run, beat about 5 defenders and the goalkeeper and shot into the empty net. It was a fantastic goal from the best player on the field, and I shouldn't think we'll see a better one this season. It was much better than Beckham's hit-and-hope goal that had Trevor Brooking drooling all over his best tweed sports jacket.

Flackwell Heath 4 Wealdstone 0
Icis 3 - 24th August 1996
Attendance: 190

Would you believe it if I said that Stones had a good 20 chances to score, hitting the woodwork 3 times, and the opposition had 4 chances, gifted by an absent defence and an inept goalkeeping performance? Maybe not, but I've since heard from a Flackwell Heath player who couldn't believe it himself!

It's games like this that make you want to go a long way away and become a monk. Or nun. See you soon.

Wealdstone 1 Kingsbury Town 0
Guardian Insurance Cup Preliminary Round
27th August 1996
Attendance: 172

Not a match to remember, but at least we kept a clean sheet for the first time this season. Although Stones had plenty of attacks, not many chances were forthcoming. Indeed the assembled-on-a-budget Kingsbury side played well in defence. Things livened up just before half time as the inept referee booked Lee Walker after a clash between a Kingsbury defender and his goalkeeper. He then

awarded a throw-in, and changed his mind to give a Stones corner instead. These strange decisions only served to wind all the players up.

The second half was marginally better, with a few moves being put together, and once the Stones had worked out that the Kingsbury 'keeper didn't much appreciate catching crosses under pressure, a few good chances were created. David Ross had several good shooting opportunities, but never properly connected with the ball. However much of the play was of a very low standard, and passing in midfield seemed to be a forgotten art. The Stones pressure finally paid off with 15 minutes to go as yet another corner dropped to Rudi Hall outside the area, who hit a firm shot which the keeper spilled, the rebound was knocked back towards goal, was saved well, but the ball popped up and Fergus Moore nodded towards goal. The ball seemed over the line when the defender palmed it away, and the linesman gave the goal.

Just before the end Kingsbury had a great chance to level, as the Stones defence went to sleep. A cross from the left found their 11 unmarked, and he headed over from close range.

Although the win was welcome, a better team would have given the Stones real problems on this performance, and improvements, especially in midfield, are urgently required.

Shoreham 0 Wealdstone 1
F A Cup Preliminary Round
31st August 1996
Attendance: 214

"Deft" isn't a word you hear much nowadays. Only in football reports. And only with chips. Well it was a deft chip from Terry Hibbert from 20 yards in an otherwise mind-numbingly awful game which sent the Stones limping through to the next round of the FA Cup. We had to wait until 80 minutes had gone until Hibbert's great finish, and most of the game up until then was one of the poorest your humble correspondent has ever seen, not to mention one of the poorest officials (unnamed in the programme). You could say that we played down to their level, but to be fair to Shoreham, they weren't hoof-and-run merchants - it's just that neither side seemed capable of stringing more than two passes together.

The main talking point of the first half was a nasty injury to a Shoreham player - Hammatt was free on the right wing, taking the ball towards goal when the defender launched himself into a two-footed



lunge. Hammatt did well to hurdle this rash challenge, but unfortunately landed on the defender's neck. At this point the referee lost control of the game with an undeserved booking for Hammatt. This incensed the Stones fans behind the goal, and we had the unusual combination of beer, referee, angry players and angry supporters squaring up to each other. It soon became obvious that the injury was serious, and some 15 minutes later we had the bizarre sight of a Sussex ambulance driving on the pitch to take him to hospital. This incident didn't help the Stones' confidence, and shortly after this Lee Walker found himself clear on goal, and for reasons only known to himself rather than shooting, he tried a pass to Hammatt, who was called off-side.

In the second half Shoreham had more of the possession, but never really did anything with it. One long range shot which Bonfield turned over, and a scramble near the end which Bonfield finally smothered was about it. Stones should have scored earlier in the half when Walker and then Tekkell had shots cleared off the line, but it was left to Hibbert to win the game. Wealdstone desperately need some of last season's confidence which saw them play as a team from January onwards. We also need the strikers to start scoring some goals, as only Moore and Hibbert seem to know where the goal is at the moment.

Wealdstone 4 Kempston Rovers 0
F A Vase 1st Qualifying Round
8th September 1996
Attendance: 241

This was an easy win against a very poor side which could have been many more. Wealdstone didn't play well and after having two early goals ruled out were rather fortunate to go one up as the goal was rather lucky.

Three more goals followed without a great deal of effort being put in - the highlight of these being a volley from the edge of the box from Bryan Hammatt to lob the advancing keeper.

Report: "Big Steve" Wright

Wealdstone 4 Horsham 2 aet
Guardian Insurance Cup 1st Round
11th September 1996
Attendance: 156

An excellent performance by the Stones against last year's league champions led to a well

deserved victory. Horsham went into an early lead against the run of play but Wealdstone equalised to take the match into extra time.

In the extra half hour Wealdstone scored 3 great goals - including a rare Roy Marshall 25 yarder - and were denied an obvious penalty by the infamous Mr Robinson who kept his cards in his pocket for once. Horsham could only notch up one more and in the end were no match for the Stones.

Report: "Big Steve" Wright

Horsham 1 Wealdstone 0
F A Cup 1st Qualifying Round
14th September 1996
Attendance: 361

In the "proper" cup Wealdstone were unlucky to go out in a keenly fought game. The only goal was a doubtful penalty midway through the 2nd half - the general feeling being that the foul was outside the area.

Wealdstone were an equal match for the Div. 2 side and struck woodwork three times - the cruellest being an injury time Ian Waugh 20 yarder that the keeper was just able to turn onto the post.

Report: "Big Steve" Wright

Wealdstone 5 Hertford Town 1
Icis 3- 17th September 1996
Attendance: 274

A respectable scoreline, although when you consider Hertford turned up with no goalkeeper and no physio, they didn't do so badly really. In fact it took over 60 minutes for the Stones to finally make their superiority pay, as lots of good-natured banter with the stand-in goalkeeper was beginning to wear thin. The lack of first half crosses against a keeper who never got near the ball, and wasn't even wearing gloves was amazing. However 15 minutes into the second half a long cross from Fraser found Moore on the far post, and his looping header dropped under the cross bar, and a combination of Hibbert and 2 defenders bundled it over the line.

Stones then overran Hertford, with further goals from Walker, Fraser and I wasn't really concentrating on the others.

A Hertford penalty - their only shot on goal - gave them something to cheer about, whilst ruining several 5-0 predict-a-score guesses!



Tring Town 0 Wealdstone 3
IcIs 3 - 21st September 1996
Attendance: 172

The points today were earned with some excellent finishing, and a masterful performance at the back from Roy Marshall. The first half saw the Stones constantly playing the ball high to a very big and strong Tring defence. This policy never looked like working, although we had most of the possession. A great chance fell to Lee Tekkell on the corner of the 6 yard box, but his left foot shot was hooked so badly it went for a throw-in. Whilst Tring coped fairly well at the back, their attacks were limited to a few high crosses, and Darren Bonfield had a good day in goal, catching everything they could throw at him.

The opening goal was a cracker from Lee Walker, as he tasselised with the Tring number 4 on the edge of the box, he was first onto the loose ball, and hit a great diagonal shot across Wood in the Tring goal just inside the upright. Stones went in at half time with a deserved 1-0 lead. During the start of the second period the home team played their best football, without really penetrating the Stones defence. As they pushed forward further, through balls always threatened to catch them out, although the linesman kept them in the game for a while. Steve Fraser had 2 shots well saved as Stones started to get a grip of the game, and eventually another through ball found Fraser onside, and he took it into the box and smashed it past Wood. The game was wrapped up by Walker, as he broke clear with the defence again looking at the linesman, and he finished easily from 15 yards. After this, Wealdstone took the last 10 minutes easily - all in all a job well done.

Viking Sports 0 Wealdstone 2
Middlesex Senior Cup Preliminary Round
24th September 1996
Attendance: 170

First Half:

To sum up, the person who enjoyed this turgid half most was our photographer Colin Bunner, who was stuck at North Acton station for the 45 minutes. His thanks to London Underground.

Second Half:

Slightly better, and against a VS team short on skill but who never stopped trying. Stones managed to make their possession count. After about 10 minutes, a cross from the left took the keeper out the

game, and Fraser was left with a simple nod in at the far post. A couple of chances then fell to McBride and Fraser before Hammatt, on as substitute for Bircham, finished a good move in style. Walton played a nice diagonal pass to him, and as the ball sat up he lifted it with the side of his foot over the keeper, who was 6 yards out. Thereafter the Stones were quite happy to let VS make the running, and apart from one chance which Bonfield turned round the post, VS were huff, but no puff.

It's Hendon away in the next round.....

Wealdstone 1 Hoddesdon Town 0
F A Vase 2nd Qualifying Round
5th October 1996
Attendance: 258

The scoreline today didn't reflect Wealdstone's complete domination of this match, and the fans went home talking about just one thing - Fraser's last minute miss - the worst miss I've ever seen in football. Only some great saves and sloppy finishing kept the Stones out. During the first half a series of headers from Hammatt and Walker were well saved, and Moore put a header inches over from close range. The visitors failed to create any good chances, and Stones were awarded a penalty after an hour when the lively Fraser, coming on as sub, was clearly fouled in the area. Walker dispatched the spot kick, and the rest of the second half was spent looking for the decisive second goal.

Although Hoddesdon never looked like scoring, you can never be sure at 1-0 up, and so it was that in the last minute Fraser had the easiest chance to settle the matter and perhaps increase his chances of a place in the starting 11. The result of a great move saw the ball being rolled across the box to a completely unmarked Fraser - and with no keeper to beat, an empty net beckoning, and from no more than 2 YARDS out, in the centre of the goal, he side footed it up onto the bar and out for a goal kick. The chance was so easy that it would be almost impossible to reproduce it. Johnson Hippolyte can now rest easy as the "worst miss" trophy must surely pass to Steve Fraser as of tonight. The ref blew the whistle straight away afterwards, obviously wanting to examine Fraser's boots.

Wealdstone 1 Aveley 0
IcIs 3 - 12th October 1996
Attendance: 286

Today was an ill-tempered game which did nothing to diminish the bad blood between ourselves and the Essex outfit. After last season's games where Aveley's players and officials incited our fans with 2 fingered salutes all round, their supporters were so excited they even wrote to Loaded magazine to gloat over the victory. Today's game also saw a constantly whinging Aveley team and manager, whose short tempers eventually got the better of them in a last minute brawl.

The Stones took some time to get going today, and the visitors had the better of the game for the first quarter, without really generating a serious chance. Wealdstone started to exert some pressure later in the first half, creating several chances and corners. The best of these was a nice headed flick in the box from Hibbert, which Bircham did well to accelerate onto, but ballooned over from only 5 or 6 yards.

Wealdstone were much the better side in the second half, and had a shot cleared from the line before finally making the pressure count. The goal was a strange one - a cross from the left found Walker unmarked, and from 12 yards out his looping header looked like it may go wide of the mark, but sailed in slow motion into the far corner as the keeper went down very late. After the goal the Stones worryingly failed to build on the lead, and let the visitors back into the game. Fortunately the defence did their job well, with Roy Marshall and Ian Waugh having particularly good games. An Aveley attack shortly before the end was broken up and a free kick was awarded to the Stones for an obvious push on the defender. This was the cue for some pushing and shoving, which soon turned into a free-for-all involving nearly all the players. Goalkeeper Darren Bonfield would have been better off staying out of it, as being 6'4" and wearing a luminous orange kit he was an obvious target for the referee afterwards. The final whistle came shortly after that, and Aveley's dozen supporters may have noticed our players not making rude gestures to them.

Lewes 0 Wealdstone 1
IcIs 3 - 19th October 1996
Attendance: 160

This was a game that Wealdstone never really got

hold of, but the home side had very little to offer up front. Several good chances were made in the first half, but a header from Moore went over, and shots from Fraser and Hibbert were dragged wide. The only other action of note was a 50/50 challenge from London on the Lewes 4 - a nasty injury for the Lewes player who required hospital treatment.

At half time we had the unusual sight of seeing the Stones players drink their tea and get the team talk in the centre circle - whether this was punishment or because the dressing rooms were too horrible to stay in is unknown. Shortly after the second half started Chris Walton came up with the moment of inspiration the game needed as he latched onto a lofted through ball, took it into the box and round the keeper to score a fine goal. The game should have been sewn up well before the final whistle, as a nice Hammatt touch left Walker in the clear, but he couldn't finish. Bircham also had an easy shot from 6 yards, but hit the defender on the line. Another 3 points today, and with Tony Smith standing in well at centre half, we can't complain.

Wealdstone 3 Wingate & Finchley 2
IcIs 3 - 22nd October 1996
Attendance: 333

It's games like this that make the whole thing worthwhile. 2-0 down at half time, having squandered a handful of chances, with Wingate taking their only chances at goal. Unlike some Wealdstone teams of the past however, some real character was shown as the battle was taken to the visitors during the second half.

It wasn't looking good for the Stones as shot after shot peppered the hoardings around and behind the goal and vastly superior possession was wasted time and again. It really looked as if today's opponents were turning into a bogey side as a corner for Wingate was flicked on, and the ball was buried into the net. Only 2 minutes after that the Wealdstone defence disappeared, and Bonfield pulled the advancing striker down. Booking, penalty, 2-0.

Just before the half time whistle, Walker saw a great header saved brilliantly as the keeper somehow palmed the ball over the bar.

Wealdstone came out firing after half time, and put the visitors under extreme pressure, but really lacked that telling cross or shot. Fraser got into some great positions, but didn't seem able to use that left foot to any purpose. At least until the 65th

minute, when he crossed from the left and Bircham timed his run superbly to nod home at the near post. From here on there was only one team in it - Walton ran the game from midfield, and passion occasionally got the better of the Stones as bookings were handed out regularly. This wasn't helped by a sloppy referee who seemed to blow at the least physical contact. The pressure had to tell, and after a game of ping pong in the box, the ball finally fell to Walton's feet, and he coolly advanced on goal and put it away.

Manager Gordon Bartlett obviously agreed with fans that it was 3 points or nothing today, and took off full-back Massey and stuck Hammatt up front. His first touch was an excellent chance created from another cross from the left, but his firm header was off target. As the Stones poured forward once again, with 5 minutes to go, Hammatt was released on the edge of the box, and he kept his composure to slot the ball in at the near post. Amidst manic celebrations on the pitch and terraces, funniest sight was Lee Walker kneeling in the back of the goal making strange hand gestures to the Wingate team. Not sure what they meant, and unfortunately no camera today, so we'll never know. It was well into injury time when Hammatt showed some delightful skill by the corner flag - he turned and danced past 2 defenders, took the ball into the box, and shot over from a sharp angle when he maybe should have crossed. He's forgiven for today though.

A thoroughly deserved and thrilling win eases Stones to the top of the league tonight, although 7 bookings tells its own tale!

Camberley Town 0 Wealdstone 3
Ic1s 3 - 26th October 1996
Attendance: 156

The result today was never in any doubt as Wealdstone cruised past Camberley to record their first "double" of the season. The home team never looked very comfortable at the back, and it was Steve Bircham who stuck a leg out to a cross-cum-shot in the fifteenth minute to open the scoring. Thereafter the first half was pretty evenly matched in terms of possession, but it was good to see full backs Massey and Smith get forward whenever possible. The Stones defence shut out the opposition effectively, and this solid performance at the back continued into the second half. Fergus Moore must enjoy playing against Camberley, as on the opening day of the season

he scored two headed goals from corners. As Stones applied plenty of pressure to the Camberley goal, another corner from the left after 60 minutes was met by Moore, and the goalkeeper and defender could only watch as the ball sailed high into the net. Lee Walker's celebrations get sillier each game, and we were treated to the ball being shoved up his shirt along with some goldfish impressions. There was really only one side in it now, and only some fine saves kept the score down - most notably from Walker and Hibbert shots. Stones broke through the opposition defence time and again, and Bircham got through on goal only to be met by a crunching tackle from the No. 5. The referee obviously didn't like what he saw, and pointed to the spot. It has to be said that even the most ardent Stones fan would be mystified by the decision, but Walker was in no mood to show mercy, and sent the keeper the wrong way.

The last 10 minutes saw the introduction of one of our foreign imports, who has finally received clearance from Her Maj. Croatian Airen Zafi, who used to be known by his Greek name of Niko Airben (don't ask me!) came on sporting an Impossibly short haircut, but showed little other than his scalp. Hopefully he'll have another chance soon, and for now Stones can rest happy on top of the league, after a run of 8 straight wins in all competitions. It's off to Spalding now in search of Vase glory, but is there any need to leave at 10am? What are we going to do for 4 hours before the game.....?

If you're interested, we're meeting at King's Cross at 10am next Saturday. Scarves optional, beer is mandatory.

Spalding United 1 Wealdstone 1
F A Vase 1st Round - 2nd November 1996
Attendance: 271

This match was spoiled by a totally inept referee, who required a police escort off the pitch at the end of the match. Mr Culot was the sort of referee who likes nothing better than the sound of his whistle, so he made sure he kept blowing it. His ignorance of the advantage law, and willingness to flourish cards like he was Paul Daniels made for a disjointed game.

It had started perfectly for the Stones, as their very first attack after 2 minutes paid dividends - a cross from the left found Walker beyond the far post, and he nodded back for Hammatt to volley sweetly home. Only 5 minutes later Moore headed in



from a corner, but Mr Culot made the first of his many mistakes of the afternoon, and disallowed the goal. Moore had clearly won the ball fairly, but his momentum from running in had carried him into a defender after the ball had been headed, and this according to the referee was foul play. He must have a different law book to other FA officials.

After 20 minutes the ref's assistant saw an incident which no-one at our end of the ground did, and Walker was sent off. This changed the whole match, as the Stones started to play very deep, and rely on Hammatt up front on the break. For the rest of the game, the home team had the majority of possession, but the Stones defence coped comfortably. After 70 minutes the game was there for the taking as a 3 against 2 attack saw Walton break with Bircham to his right and Hammatt unmarked on the left. He laid the ball off to Bircham, and as Hammatt screamed for the ball at the far post he played the short pass back to Walton, who took the ball on and into the defender. Spalding broke straight upfield, and the number 10 Darren Edey swivelled on the edge of the box and curled the ball past Bonfield for a memorable goal. At this stage it looked like Stones wouldn't get back into it, and it was time for Mr Culot to show his skills again. During the first half, Terry Hibbert had made a pantomime dive in the box, and had rightly not got anything for it. Well the back end of that horse tried a dive again this time in our box, and the referee fell for it. Even the home fans were mystified, but justice was done as Bonfield guessed right to save a weak penalty.

FA Vase rules this year mean extra time in the first game, and the extra half hour saw Bonfield make a good save from a free kick, but not much else in the way of chances. Mr Culot wasn't quite finished with his shameful performance though. In the 120th minute, the ball was cleared from the Stones penalty area, and a late challenge led to a bit of pushing and shoving. Rather than using some common sense and a strong personality, the referee showed what a weak man he is by pointlessly showing cards left and right, sending off Bircham in the process. This further incensed an already angry crowd, and even Gordon Bartlett had seen enough and made his views quite clear, earning him an entry in a crowded notebook.

It's the replay Wednesday, and we can only hope Mr Culot has had some emergency tuition, or has gone back to the kindergarten duties he's more suited to.

Wealdstone 1 Spalding United 2
FA Vase 1st Round Replay - 6th November 1996
Attendance: 239 (and the rest!)

Stones missed a handful of chances in what was a bitterly disappointing evening. A good crowd were expecting a better performance than Saturday, and Lee Walker nearly provided the perfect start with a near post header from an excellent Massey cross. Unfortunately this miss was to set the tone for the game, as chance after chance went begging. Despite looking the team more likely to score, Wealdstone never really got a grip of the game, and the visitors attacked with conviction, although never looked like scoring. That is until Waugh tried a back pass from the right, the Spalding 10 (again) intercepted, took the ball around Bonfield and pulled it back to a waiting striker who easily scored. How the Spalding fans celebrated. At least I guess they did when they found out the score, as there certainly weren't any in the ground.

Stones rolled forward once more, and a through ball saw Walker's leg get sandwiched in a challenge, but he limped gamely on after treatment. Shortly afterwards Massey, who was playing at right midfield today, made a run inside the box. He looked to have knocked the ball too far, but the Spalding 4 couldn't resist a little trip, and the referee gave the penalty. Walker took it, and placed it beautifully in the top corner. Not much more action in the first half, and it was no surprise when minutes into the second Walker limped off, and Sheldrick came on. Walton also didn't appear for the second half, with Jones taking his place.

Shelly will be hoping to forget this evening quicker than the fans, as he had the worst game I've ever seen him play - he looked jaded and uninterested, and he'll surely have to do more to get his place back permanently. Hammatt however had a good game tonight, and never stopped running. He came closest to the second goal when he hit a great curler from the edge of the box, but the ball hit the post, and somehow rebounded to between the two Stones attackers, and was cleared. After that followed a period of great Stones pressure, playing with the wind in their favour. Hammatt received the ball with his back to goal and was felled by a tackle from the Spalding 4 as late as Great Eastern's Peterborough train. As he'd already been booked it looked certain he'd have to go, but astonishingly the ref waved play on. It's this sort of terrible refereeing mistake that turns a game, and after Hammatt had some physio, he



carried on but never really looked the same. During the second half Hibbert shot over twice, Bircham had his chances, but a good save and some wayward shooting kept us out.

And so to extra time, and with the prospect of a Monday night replay looming, a goal out of nothing sealed the tie. The ball was half cleared from defence, and hooked back in hopefully. The defence was absent as a good cross from the left was met with an excellent near post header that Bonfield couldn't get near.

The last 5 minutes saw desperate attack, and Bonfield was nearly a hero as he came up for two corners, and won them both. First a firm header was saved by the keeper, then in our final attack he met the corner with a deft flick, and it fell to Marshall 5 yards out who somehow managed to volley over. There's only so many chances you can miss when you have to accept that it's not going to be your day, and that was the last of them. Bugger.

Edgware Town 2 Wealdstone 1
Middlesex Charity Cup 2nd Round
12th November 1996
Attendance: 212

Times must be hard at Edgware - you can tell by the way the players went berserk at the end of this Charity Cup game. They did a jig of delight around the home supporter, who had turned up in his droves.

The game itself was fairly even, although the Stones had the better chances, especially a diving header from Hammatt which would have been great had he connected. As it was we had to content ourselves with some bad-natured banter with the Edgware player Lewin, who had apparently been begging the Wealdstone management to join. Sorry mate - we've already got an overweight centre forward. The home team were sporting no less than 4 ex-Stones, so it was nice to see them in action again - some for the first time.

Jones got the Wealdstone goal - a fierce shot after 55 minutes which took a big deflection on its way in. 10 minutes afterwards Edgware pulled level with a shot from nothing outside the box that looped amazingly over Bonfield's head. This was either a huge fluke or an excellent strike.

The game was thankfully decided by a penalty with 10 minutes to go, to spare us yet more extra time. The final whistle left players contemplating yet another year without Middx Charity Cup glory, and

supporters sitting forlorn on the terraces, weeping inconsolably.

Hendon 3 Wealdstone 1
Middlesex Senior Cup 1st Round
14th November 1996
Attendance: 163

A poor performance from the Stones, and Middlesex glory hopes are once again dashed early. Hendon had mostly reserve players, but still looked more likely to score. Stones also rested a few key players tonight. The first half: time passed. Stones goal came from sloppy defending, but 10 minutes later Hendon scored from a well placed free kick. It was cold on the terraces, and extra time was the last thing we needed tonight, but neither team managed anything else during the 90 minutes.

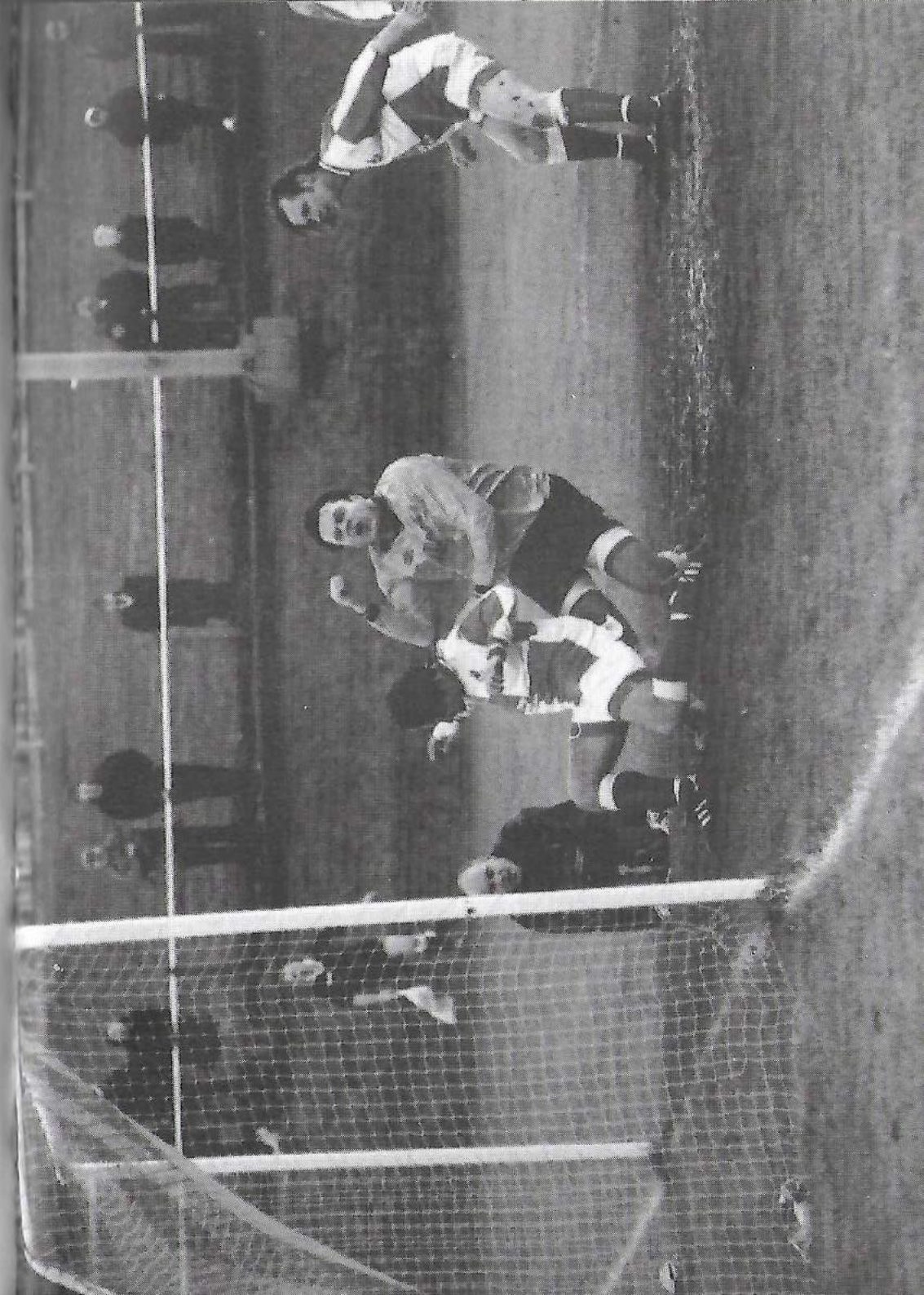
The first half of extra time saw the home team win the game with a scrappy header, and a good lob over Bonfield. Smith had a chance to put Stones back in the game, but missed an open goal. The only other things worth recording are Sheldrick's appalling lack of form - last season's leading scorer has looked very poor recently.

Also worth a mention was a fine song from the massed bank of Hendon faithful - 5 kids singing "We're going to Cardiff, we're going to Cardiff, you're not". Sums it up really.

Wealdstone 1 Southall 0
Ic1s 3 - 16th November 1996
Attendance: 276

Just about the only positive thing from this game was the three points, as Stones nearly contrived to lose a game that should have been wrapped up by half time. Instead Southall, who started the game second from bottom of the league, were unlucky not to score during a tense final 15 minutes. Chances in the first half fell to Jones and Zeffi, who both had headers close to goal, and as Stones had nearly all the possession, a goal looked inevitable. However the lack of penetration in crucial areas, and the failure to work out the Southall offside trap kept the game goalless at the break.

10 minutes after the restart, Southall had a rare break forward, and Marshall scythed the attacker down as he ran through. The referee gave a free kick on the edge of the area. According to this correspondent, who for once was in the right place to see the action, Stones were mighty lucky to not be



facing a spot kick. The free kick was tamely put into Bonfield's hands, and as is so often the way in football, Wealdstone 2 minutes later had a penalty themselves as Zefi appeared to be wrestled to the ground when he only had to shoot past the keeper. Hammatt put the spot kick away. The final half hour saw Stones wilt visibly, although new signing Peter Green had a glorious chance to score on his debut when he chested down a lovely pass to put himself in the clear, and from 15 yards out volleyed wildly over the bar.

Green had come on for Zefi, who unforgivably threw his shirt to the ground in a petulant gesture before he came off. This didn't exactly endear him to the fans, and it would be a surprise to see him play again.

Thereafter Southall had some great chances to pull themselves level, but managed to shoot wide twice, and a fierce drive from the right rebounded away from the crossbar. The final whistle put us out of this agony, and the players will be grateful for a rest at the end of their 4th game in a week.

Wealdstone 2 Hornchurch 0
Icis 3 - 23rd November 1996
Attendance: 243

Wealdstone's ninth league win on the spin sees us clear at the top of the table, and today's victory was won in style against a battling Hornchurch team. It was only 2 weeks ago that Stones won easily at Hornchurch, but the visitors looked more interested today, and actually managed some shots on goal.

As usual for the Stones these days, the first half was goalless despite dominating, although Fergus Moore had a header well saved. Wealdstone made most of the attacking, and had over 10 corners, but the defence always got to the ball first. Stewart Jones should have done much better when alone in front of goal he could only manage a feeble shot. The Urchins also had a great chance to take the lead, but the squandered chance left all 11 of their players with hands on heads. Perhaps the story of their season, as the visitor's keeper was blatantly wasting time from the 5th minute of the game.

Early in the second half Fergus should have opened the scoring when a free kick from the left was headed back across goal by Croad, but his free header went just over the bar. Peter Green was starting as centre forward today, and he had a much better game than last week, and it was his

header that led to the first goal. After about an hour he headed a cross goalwards, the keeper could only parry, and Bircham was in the right place to prod the ball into the top of the net. The visitors didn't give up though, and had a couple of shots that Bonfield saved comfortably. The second goal was a cracker - a beautiful move started by man of the match Steve Bircham. His influence over midfield is certainly repaying Bartlett's faith in him as last season several fans would have been glad to see him go. Not so now, as he controlled the ball on his chest in the centre circle, then turned past 2 opponents, took the ball on before releasing the perfect pass to Hammatt. He accelerated past the defender and squared a fine pass for Green to sweep the ball home in style.

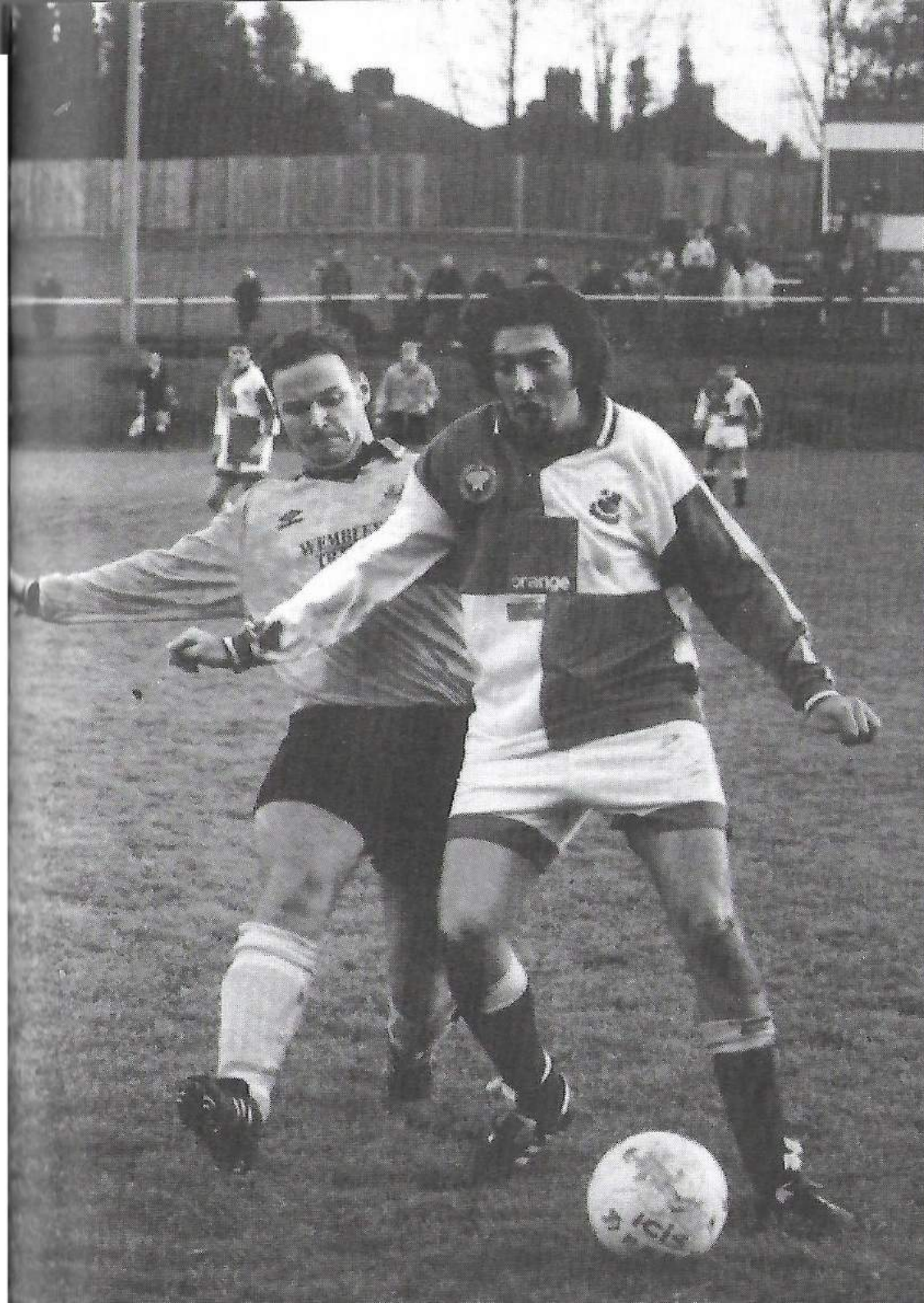
The three points today were earned with none of our close rivals playing, and we look forward to the Christmas period when we play them 4 times in 20 days.

Also worth noting today was the reaction of the Hornchurch players. Most opponents come in for some abuse at Wealdstone, and so often this season this has been met with V-signs and worse. Good to see some good-natured banter and smiling from today's opponents. Oh and a rarely competent referee - Mr I Trow from Milton Keynes.

Banstead Athletic 6 Wealdstone 0
Guardian Insurance Cup 1st Round
26th November 1996
Attendance: 72

45 seconds in. Corner. Bonfield misses. Header. 1-0. And so it went. A combination of schoolboy-like defending and shocking lack of fight made Banstead look 10 leagues above us, not one. Possession was about even, but for every poor Wealdstone pass, Banstead found a good one. Their finishing was superb, and Stones were embarrassed in every area of the pitch, including the red shirts we had to borrow from the home team.

2-0 at half time, but only one team came out for the second half. Sure there were 11 players on each side, but only one team on display. If we'd been a horse, they would have shot us midway through this half. Saving graces? Not many, although a couple of key players were missing, and it hasn't done our goal difference any harm. Manager Bartlett now has his work cut out lifting the team to "concentrate on the league". Simply woeful.



Wealdstone 5 Kingsbury Town 0
Icis 3 - 30th November 1996
Attendance: 313

And Smith must score...

Wealdstone's winning streak continued today with a fine display against Darren Bonfield's former club, Kingsbury Town. The Stones took the lead after only nine minutes, when Steve Bircham's cross was flicked on by Peter Green and volleyed in by Tony Smith. The second came mid-way through the first half, Steve Bircham bundling in after the ball stuck in the mud in a goal-mouth scramble. Terry Hibbert scored a fine goal just before half time to give us a 3-0 lead at the break. The result wasn't really in any doubt after that, as the Kingsbury players didn't really seem to want to get

involved. I even started to feel sorry for the Grant Mitchell lookalike goalie. In the second half, Kingsbury had very few chances, one of which ended up with their striker shooting not just over the bar, but over the house behind the goal, too. Wealdstone's fourth (and Smith's second) came midway through the second half. Ten minutes later, a Kingsbury player handled in the area, and the ref gave a penalty. Smith, on a hat trick, grabbed the ball from Hammatt, plonked it on the spot then drove it well wide of the goal. Oh, well. The Stones wrapped it up about ten minutes from time, when Paddy McDaid delicately chipped the ball over the advancing goalie for a grateful Paul Sheldrick to nod in an easy goal.

Match report courtesy of Rob Harries - many thanks to him.

Epsom & Ewell 2 Wealdstone 3
Icis 3 - 7th December 1996
Attendance: 129

A tense finish to a game that should have been wrapped up well before the end, and Wealdstone were grateful to three excellent finishes from Terry Hibbert. The Epsom team was populated with many tall players, and crosses into the Stones area gave the defence problems all afternoon.

In a bright start Wealdstone took the lead after 15 minutes, as Smith broke down the left, beat the defender to get to the line, and his cross found Hibbert in the right position. Although Wealdstone always looked the dominant side, Epsom broke quickly 10 minutes later, and a high cross that Bonfield should have perhaps come for was met with a firm header that found the corner of the net.

The home team also had a chance when the ball wasn't cleared from a corner, but the shot dipped just over the bar. As Stones continued to pressure the home team, Walton hit a fierce shot straight at the keeper, before Hibbert put the Stones back into the lead, with a superb low shot from the edge of the box - the keeper got a hand to it but it still went into the corner.

Just before half time Hammatt was put through, only to be scythed down by the defender. It wasn't the referee's last strange decision of the afternoon when he gave the free kick but didn't even speak to the offender.

Stones started the second half looking dangerous, and it was no surprise when a neat move between Peter Green and Hibbert resulted in the third Stones goal. The finish was also first class - a great shot inside the near post from 10 yards. The game should have been wrapped up when Hammatt was clearly fouled inside the area, but neither referee nor his assistant made the obvious decision, and the game continued. Moore could have finished matters when clear through, but blasted over. Epsom then scored the goal that ensured a tense final 20 minutes. Once again it was a high cross - from a corner - that was headed back towards goal and the striker had another free header to score.

Wealdstone absorbed some Epsom pressure from then on, but Walker who had just come on should have done better from a great Hammatt cross, but shanked the ball wide. Bonfield fortunately caught most of the crosses that came towards him, and the performance today certainly deserved the 3 points in our eleventh consecutive league win.

Wealdstone 2 Clapton 0
Icis 3 - 14th December 1996
Attendance: 254

2-0 is no reflection on this cracking match, as Stones were rampant today and should have won by far more. As it was we had to wait until the moment of the season so far - an own goal with 5 minutes to go - before the points were wrapped up.

It was looking good for the twelfth league win in a row early in the first half, as Hibbert and Smith shot wide with the goal gaping, and a fierce Walton strike was parried by the keeper. Stones kept creating chances all through the half, but were lacking a killer instinct, and the poor Clapton defence were let off the hook time and again. Indeed they



had to resort to dirty tactics, and picked up several bookings for late tackles during the game. The Clapton number 3 was particularly lucky to stay on the pitch after 2 rash challenges in quick succession. Bryan Hammatt looked very sharp today, and it was him that set up a beauty of a first goal. With 45 minutes on the clock, Hammatt made a run down the left wing, and timed his pass to Hibbert running inside him perfectly. Hibbert clipped the ball superbly from the narrowest of angles over Drake in the Clapton goal. 1-0.

Clapton had one good spell in the entire game - it only lasted 2 minutes but brought 3 fine saves from Bonfield, including an amazing tip over when a header looked destined for the far corner. This was when the score was 0-0, but a goal for the opposition would have been a travesty.

The second half continued the Stones' accomplished performance, and we never looked in trouble, although certainly should have put the game beyond doubt before that fabulous OG. Smith had 2 great chances to score when inside the box, but failed to hit the target, and Hibbert might have scored the goal of the season with a volley from the edge of the box, but it went straight to a grateful keeper who beat it away. As Stones put the Clapton defence under intense pressure, a ball along the edge of the box was surprisingly knocked back towards the keeper by the Clapton 7. It certainly surprised the keeper, who made a pantomime-horse kick in an attempt to clear, missed, and the ball rolled slowly, wickedly and marvellously over the line into the net. Cue major celebration, consternation on the Clapton side, and a big Thank You to that number 7.

After this Wealdstone may well have increased the lead, as Hammatt was unlucky to hit the post with the keeper well beaten, and Peter Green should have got his free header on target with 2 minutes to go. Clapton didn't mount one serious attack in the second half, and Walton and Bircham had bossed the midfield for most of the 90 minutes.

After the match a relieved Wealdstone chairman Paul Rumens kept his wallet in his pocket, as his promise to refund anyone who had failed to be entertained didn't need to be taken up - a fine performance, and an enjoyable afternoon.

Dorking 0 Wealdstone 7
Associate Members Trophy 1st Round
17th December 1996
Attendance: 74

First things first, Dorking were lucky to get none. Hopeless up front, clueless in midfield and laughable at the back, they were by some margin the worst team we've seen this season. That Stones only scored seven was down to some truly awful finishing - it really should have been twelve or more. It was no wonder the ground resounded to the sound of silence as the home fans knew what to expect on a damp and misty evening. The Dorking side failed to mount a serious attack in the entire 90 minutes, and gave us some hilarious moments kicking at thin air, planting free kicks straight into touch, etc. etc.

Copper haired Colin Bunner found his way to the ground courtesy of a map supplied from an obliging Dorking "fan", who should now draw another - of the pitch - to help her players. For the record the score was 2-0 at half time. Goals were as follows

Hammatt - had ages in the area, and scored easily
Hammatt - great Hibbert tackle in the area gave simple scoring opportunity

Moore - free header from a corner

Walker - Smith put nice cross over, and Walker headed the ball and keeper into the net

Sheldrick - first touch after coming on, all alone 18 yards out, shot into corner

Smith - great work by McDaid put Smith in clear

Hammatt - shot after nice McDaid pass

There were at least 5 other shots with just the keeper to beat that went sailing over, and what looked a clear penalty turned down. The poor Dorking No. 1, having his first game for the club, also made a couple of fine saves. Marshall and Hammatt picked up silly bookings though.

Enquiries were made whether the home team fancied a return game - against the Wealdstone under-10 side.

Braintree Town 2 Wealdstone 0
IcIs 3 - 21st December 1996
Attendance: 394

In the end Braintree were worthy winners, but for the most part the two sides cancelled each other out. Chances were rare, and the first good opportunity of the half fell to Wealdstone, as a Hibbert cross was met by Peter Green with a firm header, tipped over the bar by the home keeper.



The half ended with Braintree failing to score when put through whilst looking clearly offside - the shot came back off the post, hit Bonfield's head and was eventually gathered by the keeper.

Stones looked content to play out a 0-0 draw, but that always looked a risky policy, with the home side looking dangerous in attack. So it proved when what looked like a defensive slip mid-way through the second half let an attacker through, and he made no mistake with his shot. Hammatt up front tried to no avail against a strong defence, and the introduction of Walker for an ineffectual Green didn't help much. The game was sealed up with a nice move slicing the Stones defence wide apart, and a fierce shot left Bonfield with no chance.

On this evidence Braintree are the team to beat in this division, and we'll be looking for a more positive performance in the forthcoming home fixture.

Wealdstone 3 Flackwell Heath 0
IcIs 3 - 25th January 1997
Attendance: 324

After Wealdstone's enforced 5 week break with no competitive football, the players were looking a bit rusty, but always too strong for today's visitors. Revenge for the unbelievable 4-0 defeat earlier in the season came in the form of Hammatt, Walker and Hibbert goals. A bright start led to the first goal, as the Flackwell number 5 made himself look a bit stupid as he failed to clear, and Hammatt leapt onto the loose ball and rounded the keeper to score into an empty net. The rest of the half was pretty dire, with passes going astray all over the place.

A Flackwell shot was the opening action of the second half, which Bonfield parried, and then managed to scramble to before the advancing forward. This was the visitor's first, and last, real chance however, as the Stones started to play some neater football, with Tony Smith always looking dangerous on the left wing. As the Stones mounted more and more pressure, one of a succession of corners from the left finally found the head of Lee Walker, who made no mistake. The third was a gem, as Smith beat a defender and squared the ball to Terry Hibbert on the edge of the box, who in one movement turned and curled the ball beautifully into the roof of the net. Thereafter there were several more great chances to increase the lead, but the game was soured when the referee decided that Ian Waugh had dived in at the

ball as he was dribbling through midfield, and sent him off for his second bookable offence.

As Roy Marshall was suspended for the game today, Gordon Bartlett had strengthened the squad with ex-scummer Paul McKay, who had a solid afternoon at the back.

Wealdstone 3 Bracknell Town 1
Associate Members Trophy 2nd Round
28th January 1997
Attendance: 120

An accomplished performance saw Stones out-class the opposition from mid-table in the ICIs 2nd division, and ended up cruising into the next round of the only trophy we're still in. Great possession in the first half didn't bring any reward, as Hammatt particularly caused the Bracknell defence constant problems. He came closest to finally scoring in the last minute of the half as a good cross from Sterling, playing well in left midfield, was met by a Hammatt header, but the keeper made a good save.

As so often this season, the deadlock was broken early in the second half, as a nice move ended with Walton making ground into the area, pulling the ball back to Sterling, who had the simple tap in. More pressure paid off shortly afterwards as another low cross from Sterling was well finished by Lee Walker, lunging forward to stab the ball home.

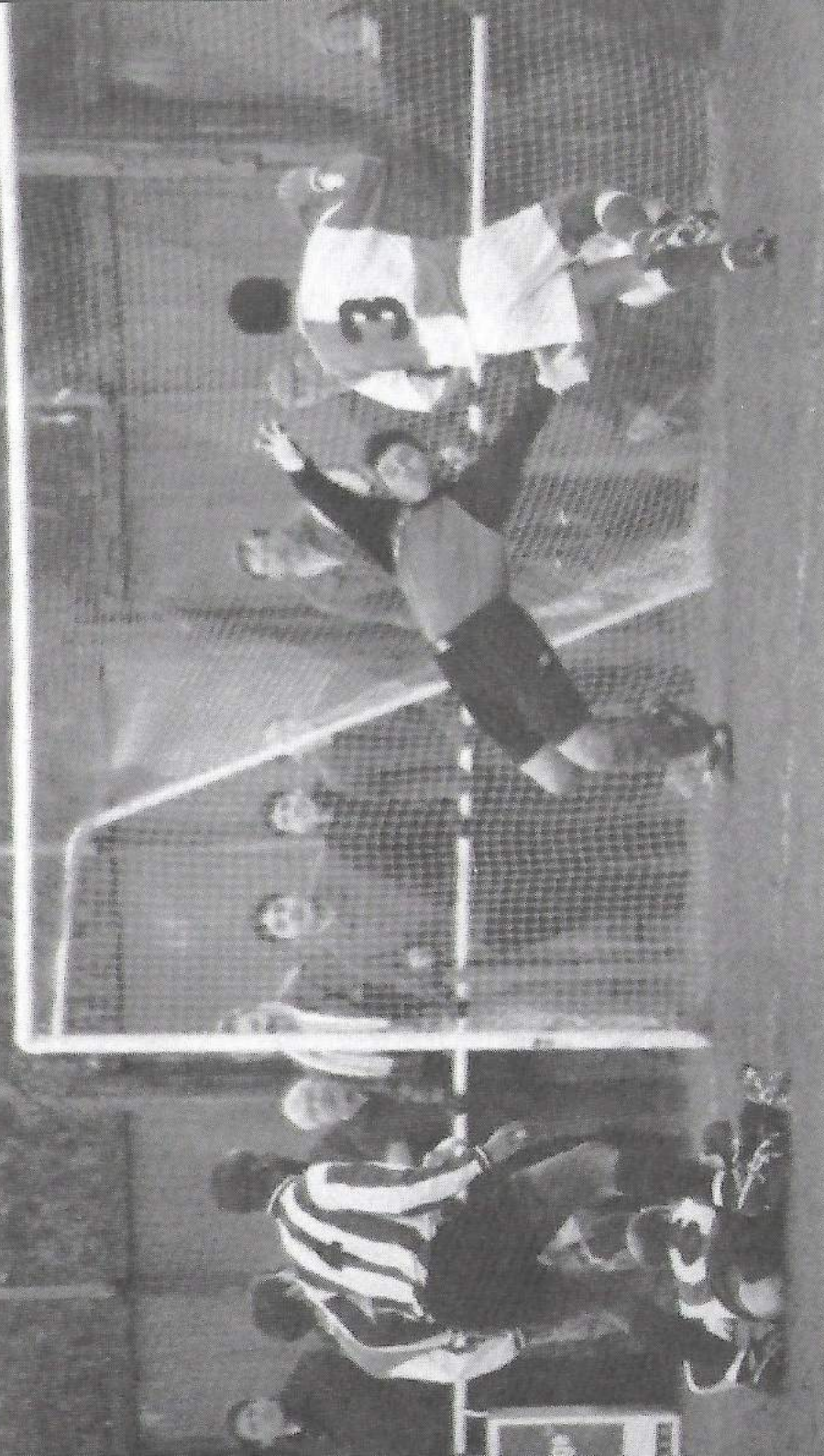
Walton, who had been poleaxed shortly earlier had to go off, and on swaggered Stewart Jones. He made an immediate impact, bursting (!) into the area onto a through ball. He knocked it down with his chest, and just as he, Hammatt and the keeper were converging on the ball, the Bracknell 2 saw his chance and poked it pass his team-mate, and the ball rolled slowly over the line.

The consolation goal came with 5 minutes to go, as Bonfield saved a shot diving to his right, and spilled the ball to the attacker's feet.

Herford Town 0 Wealdstone 2
IcIs 3 - 1st February 1997
Attendance: 245

Injury hit Stones introduced new boy Simon Garner today. Garner has come via Blackburn Rovers (when they were good), Wycombe (halfful of goals) and more latterly a short break in one of Her Maj's hotels. He certainly did enough on this awful pitch though, including setting up the vital first goal.

In a dreadful first half neither side coped with the



He's never going to get to that!

extremely bumpy surface, although Lee Walker made himself the best chance of the half as he pounced onto a through ball, nodded it past the keeper, but hit the side netting as he shot under pressure from a defender.

Hertford looked a lot more interested in the second half, and the Stones needed another classy Roy Marshall performance at the back to keep genuine chances to a minimum. Wealdstone were having problems controlling the ball in midfield, and once again missed the influence of Chris Waiton. It needed a moment of inspiration to produce something, and Garner showed some class with a fine ball through to Hibbert, who rode a tackle and was left with only Bozier in the Hertford goal to beat. His shot was well saved, but Lee Walker was once again on the spot to knock in the rebound.

Far from seeing the Stones capitalise though, this heralded Hertford's best spell of the game, and Bonfield was stranded as a long range volley hit the crossbar and went behind. Tony Smith came on and made a great run inside the box, but his cross was too weak to trouble Bozier. A great Lee Walker header had hit the bar before Sterling, playing well once more, cut inside from the left, and his right foot shot to the inside post left Bozier looking confused as the ball rolled past him into the net. There was no way back after this, which counts as a good win in difficult conditions. They say this sort of pitch is a great leveller, but you couldn't say the word "level" in any connection with this pitch.

Wealdstone 4 Met Police sponsored by McDonalds 2

Associate Members Trophy 3rd Round

6th February 1997

Attendance: 155

If only every time you slag off a player he turns in a performance like this, watching football would be so much easier. I must admit to not thinking much to the talents of Peter Green (although I did like Fleetwood Mac when he was there), but the first half of this game turned into the Peter Green showcase.

Green may have a fair run in the team, as we saw Lee Walker hobble into the ground on crutches, having broken a bone in his foot with the last kick of the game last Saturday. He'll be out for weeks, so a good chance for a big centre forward to stake a claim. Step forward Marco van Green. Before 10 minutes had been played, the ball was slipped to him just inside the box. With his back to

goal, his first touch knocked the ball up, and he swivelled past a defender, and as the ball dropped he volleyed the ball superbly into the back of the net. Several fans had to be treated for sore chins as their jaws dropped to the ground, but more was to come. Only a few minutes later Green received the ball just outside the box, and hit a great shot all along the ground which went in at the near post. The keeper did go down a bit slowly, but another fine goal. Still the boys in blue (er yellow actually) hadn't got near our goal, and after 25 minutes Green was there again. His shot from 25 yards out looked to me to be going well wide, but it struck the enormous number 5 (who had the mobility of a police traffic cone) and deflected in. To my eyes, a clear own goal, but maybe we should give Green his hat trick.

The game from then on looked to be just drifting on, but Stones had had several chances to score the fourth when with 20 minutes to go the Wealdstone defence failed to clear, and as Bonfield ran out to challenge, the ball broke free to the striker who scored into an empty net. The dangers of sitting back were obvious when a couple of minutes later a good move down the Stones left saw a shot well placed past Bonfield. The thought of extra time was all too much for Hammatt, as in the next Stones attack his skill in the penalty area took the ball away from a defender, who just clipped his heels. Hammatt scored the spot kick himself, and that was that.

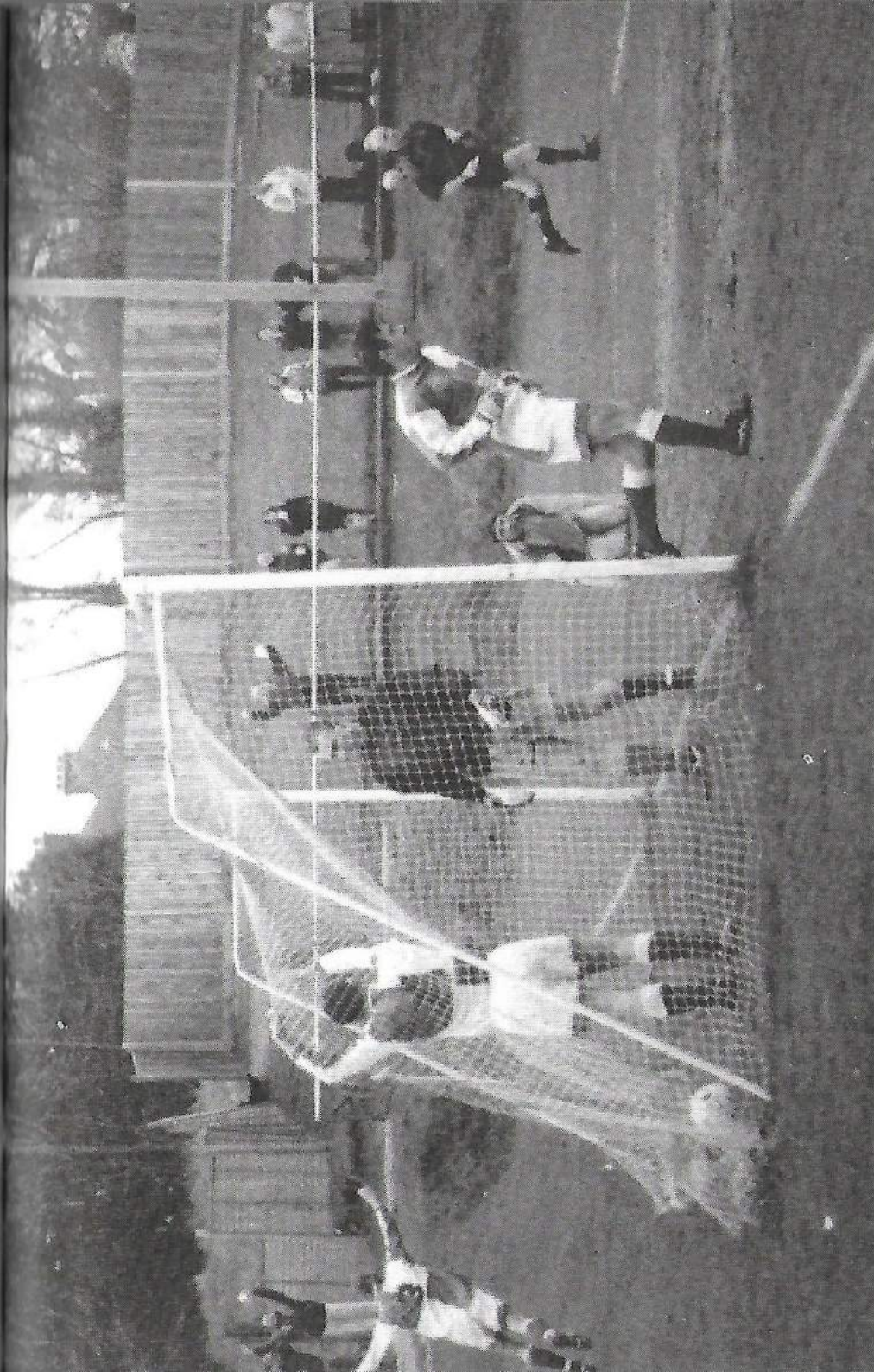
New player today at the back was Whelan who had a sound game. If this unusual strengthening of the squad continues we'll have to seriously consider promotion this year. It's bound to end in tears though - it always does. Also worth mentioning was the compliments from the Met's 3 who enjoyed a quick chant of "Burger King Burger King" as they are quite strangely sponsored by the Big Mac.

Wealdstone 7 Tring Town 0

Icis 3 - 8th February 1997

Attendance: 316

Tring Town have beaten Harlow and Braintree on their travels this season, but have lately run into financial problems. Paul Burgess is their new manager, and to say he has some way to go building a new team is an understatement. They were humbled today by rampant Wealdstone, who handed out a football lesson, and ended the game knocking the ball around whilst Tring chased like headless chickens. This was the Stones best performance so



Just another day at the office!

far this year, all the more satisfying given that Walker, Walton and Waugh were out with injuries.

Things looked promising as soon as we saw the Tring number 5, a man of enormous proportions who looked ready to burst out of his shorts at any moment. He also played like a man with house bricks instead of feet, and he wasn't the only one. 5 minutes gone, and the score should have been 2-0, as first Hibbert and then Green missed great chances set up by excellent crosses from Garner. Finally Hibbert ran at the defence, sliced through the box, and hit a fierce shot into the corner. A few minutes later Peter Green was played in, ran on and slotted past the keeper nicely. It was completely one-way traffic by now, and the score at half time should have been 6-0. We had to settle for 3-0, as a superb passing move saw Sterling release Moore on the left, and his cross was parried by the keeper straight onto Tony Smith's head and the ball rebounded into the net.

The second half saw the visitors lose any fight they might have had left, as chance after chance was created through a pedestrian defence. It was Bryan Hammatt who finally swept the ball home for the fourth, after a bit of Ping-Pong in the area. Hammatt also set up Green with some clever thinking - as Tring took a throw in a few yards from their goal-line, Hammatt nipped in and hooked the ball over the head of the defender, and it landed in the perfect place for Green to nod in. Unfortunately, despite being only 6 yards out, completely on his own, with a stranded goalkeeper, his header was feeble, and trickled onto the post and was cleared.

This was only a brief let off though, as the Tring goal was under siege, and it was finally Garner who tapped in after at least 3 shots had been blocked or scuffed. Terry Hibbert nearly scored a memorable goal as he ran from halfway, and faced with the last defender touched the ball one side and ran around the other, and his shot was clipped inches wide of the post. Dominic Sterling got on the score sheet again for number 6, and Hammatt rounded things off with a nice volley into the corner.

So a great game finished with everyone in blue smiling, and the four Tring supporters who made the trip and stood in misery for the whole game without even a chance to enjoy must hope for wholesale team changes if they're not to slip further down the league.

East Thurrock United 0 Wealdstone 1
Icis 3 - 15th February 1997
Attendance: 209

Over the last few years I've seen dozens of games like this. The teams largely cancel each other out, and this makes for a poor 90 minutes, with chances few and far between. So many times in the past the Stones have thrown it away at the end - this season it was the Stones, rather than the opposition who won the points right at the end.

The Essex club is without doubt one of the strongest in this league, and most of the game was spent battling in the midfield area. There were some fierce tackles flying around, and today's referee didn't exactly excel himself. Having praised the Thurrock defence, they didn't create one good chance up front, and Bonfield had little to do other than claim a few high crosses. It wasn't until well into the second half that Wealdstone finally started playing up to their league position, with Simon Garner at the centre of all the good moves. Hammatt, who was unusually subdued today, was played in by a glorious Garner pass, and he took the ball around the keeper only to shoot straight at a defender lying on the line. Green prodded the rebound over. After a period of 10 minutes of domination, the game looked to be heading for a scoreless draw. However Garner's class once more created a neat pass in the box, along the floor, and Hammatt stole a yard to lash a superb shot into the roof of the net.

Cue major celebrations from players and supporters alike, and in a reverse for the Stones, some players tried to invade the terraces. I was graced with a hug from Dominic Sterling, and I shan't wash for a week.

This grim place must breed middle-aged psychos. After last year's confrontation with Frank Butcher, this year it was Michael Caine's turn to stand at our end offering: "I'm here if you want me." Sad old bastards.

Wealdstone 6 Braintree Town 0
Icis 3 - 18th February 1997
Attendance: 411

Without a doubt the best Wealdstone performance I've seen for many years, and a night to savour for everyone who has stayed loyal to the blue & white quarters. The team from that nasty town in Essex came swearing and gesturing, and left as gutless, miserable creatures who just didn't have the stom-



ach for it.

To say that the Stones were "up for it" is putting it mildly, as we outclassed title pretenders Braintree in every area of the pitch. Wealdstone spirit was personified by captain Fergus Moore, a man who if cut, would bleed blue & white quarters.

A big and noisy crowd greeted the teams, but as soon as the game kicked off there was only one team in it. Stones were fierce in the tackle, and played some stunning football up front. The game really could have been 10-0, and before the first goal went in there had been 2 desperate goal-line clearances. Finally Bryan Hammatt pounced on a ball that had come via a bicycle kick into the box and finished clinically. Braintree had their first and last sniff at goal shortly after, but the offside flag spoiled the party.

This spurred the Stones on, and were well worth the goal that Marshall scored just before half time. As the ball came out from a corner, Bircham raced forward to cross with venom. About 8 players in the box jumped, but the ball soared over to the incoming Stones' centre back, who flew like an exocet to head in beyond the far post.

The third goal, a great touch from Terry Hibbert killed off any fight left in the men from Essex, and they simply gave up the ghost. Their players looked like kids on their first day in "big school" - frightened, lost sheep just wanting to run home to mummy.

Stones were running riot, and threatened to score every time they came forward. It was 4-0 when a long range drive from the possessed Fergus Moore was parried by the portly keeper, but Garner was on the spot to knock the ball in. A couple of good saves kept the score down until Hammatt jinked past defenders and pulled the ball across for Garner to tuck away. By this time the Braintree team was in disarray, desperate for the game to end, and second to every loose ball. Tony Smith made it six as he advanced unchallenged into the box and hit a shot through the crowd which the defender could only help into the net.

After the game, the Braintree travelling army climbed into the back of their Fiat Panda, and kangarooed off into the night.

It's worth running through today's team, heroes all:
Darren Bonfield - made one save from a header, but grateful for a quiet day

Tony Smith - beat players with ease, and looked interested throughout

Dominic Sterling - showed skill & commitment - a great signing

Ian Waugh - had a superb game at the back, tackling like his life depended on it

Fergus Moore - inspirational, tackling like his life and everyone else's depended on it

Roy Marshall - majestic at the back, breaking up attacks before they got going

Paul McKay - surely the find of the season. Ran the game from midfield

Terry Hibbert - ran rings around bewildered Braintree for 90 minutes

Simon Garner - always in the right place, and showed plenty of pace!

Bryan Hammatt - excellent game, linking up with Garner superbly

Steve Bircham - gets better every game, and central to the midfield domination

Aveley 1 Wealdstone 1

Icis 3 - 1st March 1997

Attendance: 174

Poor game, and yet another bad tempered one against this sporting town from the nicer part of Essex.

35 mins: Great Bircham run and goal

45 mins: Excellent Bonfield save

60 mins: Cynical kick from Aveley 5 on Hammatt off the ball goes unseen and unpunished by ref or assistants

70 mins: Good headed equaliser

75 mins: Absolutely clear penalty amazingly turned down by ref as McKay is clipped inside box

95 mins: Substitute Green should have wrapped the points up when through on goal, but shot saved by keeper

every 5 mins: fight breaks out on pitch

Wealdstone 2 Lewes 1

Icis 3 - 8th March 1997

Attendance: 306

An important 3 points, but this game will be remembered for a disgraceful performance from referee Mr N Roper. We can all accept that standards of referees in the ICIS 3rd won't be of Premier List quality, but we still expect a level of competence and consistency.

The visitors didn't look as bad as their league position suggests, but Stones looked comfortable early on as Simon Garner from 2 yards out opened the scoring. Shortly after Fergus Moore headed goalwards from close range, and the keeper could only flap it into the net. It was after this that late tackles



"Look at this girls!"

started flying around from the Lewes team, with the ref seemingly incapable or unwilling to take any action. Lewes got back into the game when a tussle on the centre circle ended with Massey on the floor and the Lewes player through on goal. His initial shot was saved, but he scored from the rebound.

Stones applied all the pressure in the second half, but some awful finishing made it a tense finish. Both Hammatt and Marshall should have scored from free headers but they both sailed over the bar. A Lewes attack saw Bonfield collect the ball, and the studs of the number 9 down his leg. He required lengthy treatment, but bravely carried on. The referee took no action for this Ian Wright-style challenge.

The Stones kept coming forward, and Paul McKay had chances to seal the game up - great control in the area opened up a shooting chance, but he fired wide. He nearly made amends with a great curling shot from outside the area, which came back off the crossbar.

However the game was to end in controversy, as after 10 minutes of injury time a final Wealdstone attack led to a cross from the left which Fergus Moore jumped for together with a Lewes defender. A small scuffle broke out, but was a classic "handbags at 10 paces". The referee, once again nowhere near the action, unbelievably booked Moore for the second time, and he was sent off. The Lewes player received no punishment. This was typical of Mr Roper's performance, and ensured him a well-deserved hostile reception as he left the field after the final whistle. (The WFC web site fully supports Danny Baker in his comments on referees - he should try watching ICIS football if he thinks the refs. he sees aren't up to much)

Bizarre fact of the day was Lee Walker wandering around the terraces, notebook in hand, asking everyone who their favourite Spice Girl was. Why? Answers on a postcard please.

Wingate & Finchley 0 Wealdstone 3
Icis 3 - 15th March 1997
Attendance: 550

For 60 of the Stones fans in the ground, the day had started early with a 9am meet at Harrow & Wealdstone station. As we set off on the same route as the walk to Fisher in 1992, the sun came out which made it a warm journey, unlike Fisher when there was ice underfoot. It took about 3 hours in all, with remarkably few people lost to pubs

en route. However Stones chairman Paul Rumens hasn't been seen since ducking into a cafe in Hendon. The warmth of the morning was matched by the reception from the officials at Wingate & Finchley, who applauded us into the ground, and insisted on taking pictures to commemorate the journey. I'd like to compliment our hosts for their warm hospitality, and hope we repaid it with our good behaviour and large amounts of money passing over the bar! This is in marked contrast to nasty little holes like Fisher or Harlow where the clubs are anything but welcoming, and it's no coincidence there has been trouble there in years gone by.

In the end today's score reflected the fact that Wealdstone were the superior team and won comfortably, although a penalty miss made the Wealdstone walkers sweat in more areas than just their aching feet. The first chance of the game was a lob hit sweetly by Sterling, which hit the crossbar with the jovial and rotund keeper grasping at thin air. Whilst Bonfield was rarely troubled in goal, Stones had difficulty penetrating a well organised defence.

However the game turned when Hammatt was clean through on goal after 30 minutes, but was tripped by the Wingate 5. The referee, perhaps a bit harshly, interpreted the law to the letter, and sent the offender off. Although Hammatt's penalty was weak and easily saved, Wealdstone's extra man was always going to trouble the home team.

As that 5th bottle of Bud was having its say, a cross shot from Hibbert was apparently helped into his own net by the Wingate number 8, and Stones went into the break one up. The second half saw the home team play a rigid offside trap, which Hammatt and Green got caught in time and again. Green, who wasn't playing well, made amends as he was on the near post to convert a cross with a firm header. As the game was drifting towards the end Hibbert conjured up one of the best goals I've seen at any level this season. Fergus Moore found himself deep in the Wingate box, he pulled the ball back to no-one in particular, and the ball was cleared. Hibbert picked up the ball about 35 yards from goal, glanced towards goal, flicked the ball up with his first touch and then hit a perfect looping volley high over the keeper into the far corner. Suddenly my feet ached less, the sun came out, and all was well with the world. Isn't this how football should be?



Egham Town 1 Wealdstone 2
Associate Members Trophy 4th Round
18th March 1997
Attendance: 140

Onwards into the semi-finals of the Associate Members Trophy, and it should have been a comfortable victory but the execution didn't match the vision. In the end, after yet another appalling refereeing display, it was a relief to hear the final whistle after an amazing 10 minutes of injury time. Where this time came from was just one of this evening's ref crazy decisions.

The home side came out strongly, and a tired looking Stones side were under pressure early on. This culminated in a sloppy clearance being returned to an unmarked defender, who slotted the ball under Bonfield. Wealdstone woke up after this, and completely dominated the rest of the half, outclassing their often clumsy division 2 rivals. Terry Hibbert, who once again stood out as our outstanding player, was at the centre of all Wealdstone attacks. His superb run from 40 yards out culminated in a fierce shot which deserved a goal, but came back off the post. However a nice ball back in from the rebound found Peter Green whose somewhat scuffed shot went in. Only a few minutes later defensive confusion gave Bryan Hammatt a simple header on the far post, which he not exactly confidently nodded past the keeper.

Greeny also had a fair penalty appeal turned down during the first half, as the Egham number 2, horribly confused for not the first time in the evening was trying to shepherd the ball back to the keeper but lost his way. Green nipped in and appeared to have been tripped by the keeper, but the ref gave a corner - maybe as consolation. Also worth noting this half was some stunning ball play from Roy Marshall, a magnificent centre back not exactly known for his close control. After another Stones attack he found himself chasing the ball out to the corner flag, and somehow managed to beat the defender and curl a superb cross in that beat the keeper, but was just cleared.

Although it looked like the game had more goals to come in the second half, the Stones were guilty of some criminal finishing, most especially Hibbert's header from 5 yards which he somehow put wide with the goal at his mercy. The home team certainly threatened with some excellent pacy corners, but the defence coped well with most of their attacks. Stones also had lots of corners in this peri-

od, but seemed to lack ideas and variation. The game should definitely been wrapped up with about 15 minutes to go when a cross saw Dominic Sterling go down after a clear shove in the back. This looked to me, and 90% of the rest of the crowd an obvious penalty, but neither ref nor his "ass" saw it. Where do they find them? This was one of many odd decisions interspersed through the second half. One of his other howlers saw Sterling on a fine run just breaking past the last tackle, in great position, only to get hauled back so wonder-ref could book one of the Egham players for one of the earlier, innocuous-looking challenges. So instead of a player through on goal we had a free kick 40 yards from goal. Great advantage ref!

For the last 5 minutes (+ that 10 minutes of added time) the ball was just hoofed from one end to the other, and it put us out of the misery of potential extra time when the ref's watch finally caught up with GMT.

Oh just a special mention for the Egham number 2, a player who obviously wanted to be anywhere but on a football pitch last night. It's been a while since I've seen a semi-pro quite so pissed off with life as he was. OK so he wasn't much good, but why make him captain?

Wealdstone 4 East Thurrock United 1
IcIs 3 - 25th March 1997
Attendance: 302

Jimmy Greaves had it right. Football really IS a game of two halves. If tonight's first half had gone on until sunrise, the Stones wouldn't have scored. Devoid of ideas and lacking in passion, crosses from deep were consistently dealt with by a Thurrock defence who looked as big and capable as they had several weeks earlier. Stones had the majority of possession, and the visitors didn't really threaten much. As the crowd, such as it was, was beginning to doze, Stones conceded a farcical own goal. As the ball bounced up deep in the box, Bonfield clearly shouted for it. Marshall, the closest defender directed a header back towards goal into the area Bonfield had just left, and the ball rolled slowly into the net. In the absence of any supporters, a lone howling rang out from the Thurrock bench. The half time team talk must have been an interesting one, with phrases including fingers and arses, but it seemed to do the job. Stones started playing some football, and Garner was an increasing influence. With the pressure mounting, Hammatt was tripped in the box, and missed his



That's what happens when you let kids in for free!

second penalty in 10 days. It was struck firmly, but right at the keeper who did well to prevent a rebound. However Wealdstone weren't to be denied as a great move down the right saw Garner get into the box and draw the keeper just before poking the ball across to Hammatt to score into the empty net.

The next attack saw a Moore header from a corner saved, and his follow-up shot was scrambled from the line by what looked like the arm of a defender. However shortly afterwards Stones took the lead, when for what was once a quality deep cross caught the defence out, and Hammatt drifted in at the far post. He still had a lot of work to do, but his side-footed volley into the ground went past the keeper into the opposite corner of the goal. By now the blue & white quarters were unstoppable, and the fight oozed out of the Thurrock men. A left wing cross found the head of Terry Hibbert - his first effort was saved, but he managed to prod the ball in from the rebound.

With a couple of minutes left Hammatt bundled into the box, and the ball ran loose to the well placed Paul McKay. He continued his rehabilitation from scummer to Stone as he notched his first goal with a neat shot off in off the post.

If we play like this again I'll be expecting a refund for half the entrance fee.

Wealdstone 0 Harlow Town 2

Ic1s 3 - 5th April 1997

Attendance: 474

Once again Wealdstone managed to lower their game against Dennis Greene's men, and were outplayed for large parts of this match. A glaring error from 6' 4" Bonfield in goal after only 2 minutes saw a hopeful free kick sail in above his head.

After this the Stones were always struggling to get back on terms, and any real hope of a comeback was effectively ended when Waugh was sent off after 25 minutes in controversial circumstances. Waugh had just been booked, probably for dissent, when his challenge on the halfway line saw the Harlow 11 launch himself into a treble salko with pike. As the Harlow player writhed around in agony and the rotund Harlow bench jumped up and down on the pitch, the ref felt another yellow card was deserved. The fact that he'd been conned was evident as soon as Waugh received his red card, as the 11 miraculously got up and jogged away.

Stewart Miller, making his debut after signing from

Epsom & Ewell had a superb chance to score when Garner played him through. He'd taken the ball around the keeper but managed to blast the ball onto the crossbar with the goal at his mercy.

The second half saw Stones struggle to play any cohesive football, and manager Bartlett will be asking questions about the attitude of several players. McKay got caught in possession on the edge of the Wealdstone area, and a neat move resulted in a nice volley to put the visitors two up. There was no way back today, and the one point needed for promotion now becomes three points, as Harlow move into a challenging position.

Another pitiful showing of away support for a supposedly "big" club at the top of the league. You'd think they'd appreciate the chance to get out of Harlow for an afternoon.

Wealdstone 0 Northwood 2

Ic1s 3 - 8th April 1997

Attendance: 456

Another horribly nervous performance against well motivated opposition saw the Stones lose deservedly. For every short Northwood pass Wealdstone hit a fairly aimless ball in a tactic which failed to generate a really good chance all evening. It's not too late for us to throw the league title and even promotion away, and hardened Stones fans have seen this sort of thing before - hence the lack of "going up" songs in the last few months.

The opening exchanges were fairly even until after 20 minutes Waugh, who had a nightmare game, gave Northwood 9 Halbert too much time. As Bonfield raced off his line, the attacker neatly lobbed it over Bonfield's head. Wealdstone had most of the possession for the rest of the game, but the Northwood number 6 will have a sore head the number of times he headed a high ball away from danger. Even some superb vocal support failed to spur the blue & white quarters to recover in the second half - it was one of those games where every loose ball seemed to run to an opposition player.

As Stones pushed forward late in the half, a through ball left one defender to cover 2 strikers. Although there were eventually 2 players on the goalline, no-one bothered to attack the player with the ball, who was left with all the time in the world to choose his spot and wrap the points up.

Stones, you are a tease.



Kingsbury Town 0 Wealdstone 0
IcIs 3 - 12th April 1997
Attendance: 320

Today's match report comes from an inebriated Rob Harries as I was out celebrating and losing my shirt at Ascot.

The first match after our promotion was confirmed saw a visibly more relaxed Stones side fail to beat a very average Kingsbury. In the first half, the Stones put several chances just wide or over the bar as we pressured the home side, but we just couldn't score. The second half followed in the same vein, with a small ruckus on the pitch towards the end, after a Kingsbury player lashed out at Bonfield.

Luckily, Braintree only managed a goalless draw against Camberley, which keeps us one point clear with one game in hand, but we haven't scored in the last three games now. If we want to win the title, we'll have to pull our fingers out and win the last four games.

Leatherhead 0 Wealdstone 0 aet
Associate Members Trophy semi-final
17th April 1997
Attendance: 276

Chances went begging in tonight's semi-final, which should have been easily won by the Stones. There were at least 5 excellent opportunities, but at the moment it looks like Wealdstone just can't score (it's been 4 games).

One of the best chances was in the first few minutes when a simple shot from deep in the area was scuffed wide by Hammatt when it looked easier to score. Chances also fell to McKay, whose shot was well saved, and another Hammatt shot also parried by the goalkeeper. Tony Smith was in great form, and his run and inevitable hacking down left the Stones with a one man advantage on the field, although for large parts of the remaining 90 minutes you couldn't tell.

The home side only had one really good chance after Moore slipped to leave an easy scoring chance, but the Leatherhead player blazed over the bar. The game was generally very open, played on what must be one of the biggest pitches in football, but Stones will be kicking themselves for not winning it in extra time. Encouraged by very noisy, if not entirely sober, away support, Hammatt and then Walker should have won it. First a great cross to the far post found the head of a diving Hammatt, but the ball sailed over. As the home

team looked to come back into it, Walker ran onto a through ball all alone. Although it looked simple to just clip the ball over the advancing keeper, Walker was easily tackled by the Leatherhead number 1.

All in all quite disappointing, but overall Stones more than matched the team at the top of the ICIS 2nd, and there will be another chance for Trophy success in the replay next Tuesday.

Wealdstone 2 Epsom & Ewell 1
IcIs 3 - 19th April 1997
Attendance: 630

Such is the life of a Wealdstone supporter that in our most successful season for ages, and for a large part miles clear at the top of the league, the end should come down to a nail-biting couple of games. Although already promoted, the team deserve some silverware this season, and as Braintree keep winning, this 3 points was vital.

For the first hour it was business as usual recently with a host of chances going begging and the visitors were content to get men behind the ball and have the occasional break. These tactics looked pretty sound in a strong wind, with the ineffectual Stuart Miller up front failing to impress against his former team. Weedon had a shaky game at the centre of defence, but he was to make amends later.

Most of those first half chances fell to Dominic Sterling who looked most likely to score, but couldn't quite get a clean strike on goal. To their credit the visitors passed the ball around neatly and never looked a team down at the wrong end of the table. Bonfield was forced into a good save from a free kick in the first half, and it wasn't much of a surprise when one of their breaks paid off early in the second. Bonfield made a good save but the rebound fell nicely to an incoming Epsom player who finished easily.

Wealdstone finally started playing some football to impress a big crowd swollen with local schoolkids. The turning point was when Hammatt came on for Miller, and instantly looked threatening. It was Hammatt himself who was shoved over challenging for a cross that earned Stones a penalty. The last 2 penalties we've had have both been saved at the same end, but Steve Bircham continued his good form today by slotting it away coolly. There was now only one team in it as Epsom fired playing into the wind. Step forward Lee Walker, on as a late substitute once more to grab the victory. Mark

Weedon intercepted a through ball, and lumbered upfield to play a superb pass releasing Garner down the right wing. He accelerated towards the box, cut inside and hit a fierce shot that finally forced the visiting keeper into a save. However the ball was only parried as far as Walker, who hooked it in.

From then on, despite the 8 minutes of injury time, Wealdstone were never in trouble. Walker could, and should, have scored again when Garner put in a great cross from the left. Walker leapt unchallenged to head firmly, but just over the bar. Stones are now left with difficult trips to Harlow and Northwood as well as Clapton where the finishing must improve to stay top of the league right to the end.

Wealdstone 3 Leatherhead 1
Associate Members Trophy semi-final Replay
22nd April 1997
Attendance: 198

Superb. Tonight Wealdstone humiliated sad Leatherhead, with the final scoreline not reflecting the dominance of the Stones over the ICIS div. 2 champions elect. This was even more impressive given the lack of Marshall at the back - at some points during the game the defence was Massey, Walton and McKay - all the wrong side of 5'8". However they played like giants, and the visitors were reduced to just a couple of chances during the whole game.

By the end, the Leatherhead team had lost all their composure, and only seemed interested in answering the crowd back and kicking our players up in the air. The visitor's 9 got his just desserts though.

Right from the kick off the Stones looked dangerous, with John Massey getting forward down the wing time and again. This looked likely to change after 10 minutes when Simon Garner pulled a muscle and had to limp off. This was the first chance for many to see Lawrence Yaku, making his debut in a senior game, and he can hardly have played better considering. He immediately showed great pace running onto a Hibbert pass, and he even looked up and played a great ball across the area which Hammatt volleyed just over. Next he was on the end of a cross, and with the ball bouncing near the goal Smith somehow failed to connect hard enough to finish. Soon afterwards he made another long run into the penalty area, and just when he appeared to have lost control Hammatt stepped in and swung a boot at the ball. The ball took a great

deflection off a defender to go in, leaving the keeper rooted to the spot. This particular goalie must like this "don't bother me now" position, as it's one he was caught in constantly tonight.

Corners were always likely to trouble the vertically-challenged Stones team, but Bonfield was in the right place to keep out a firm header from the Leatherhead 4 from one. The second goal, shortly into the second half, came as a result of some great Hammatt skill. He turned the defender inside out before crossing low along the goalline. The keeper flapped, but Yaku was on hand to blast the ball home from 5 yards.

A mistake by Fergus just afterwards gave the ball away, and the resulting pass found a Leatherhead player alone on the edge of the box. His attempted cross sailed over Bonfield (do I write this phrase every week?) into the far corner. Stones just came forward again, and it was Hammatt cutting inside this time to hit a shot right into the corner to leave the keeper dazed and confused.

Wealdstone were now content to play out the rest of the game, but the visitors weren't prepared to take their defeat with good grace. First the 3 made a terrible lunge at Smith which put him out the game. Unbelievably, considering he'd just been booked for kicking the ball away, he didn't get booked again.

The Leatherhead manager subbed him immediately. However the number 9 took it all very badly, in the manner of bad losers, lunging at Hammatt in the corner of the ground now surrounded by Stones fans ready to applaud the team off. His booking and hostile reception at this led to lots of abuse flying around between their players and Stones fans, and it was obvious that they had "lost it". Not 30 seconds after the first lunge, Hammatt was again on the ball in the corner when the 9 dived in again, and with fans screaming he had to go. It was a lonely walk off for him but tremendous pleasure for the Stones fans.

So a great win, with the final on May 7th against Leighton Town at Hitchin Town. A quick word on the massed ranks of Leatherhead fans: is 4 sorry characters all you could manage??

Clapton 0 Wealdstone 1
IcIs 3 - 26th April 1997
Attendance: 214

The Stones took one step closer to the championship on Saturday when they beat a poor Clapton side 1-0, in a match we had to win. The

match was played on a pitch that looked more like a beach than a playing field - rain and over-use meant it was mostly sand down the centre and in each penalty area.

The referee (a Mr J. Beadle - really!) booked several players in what was a pretty clean game, mostly for dissent and time wasting, with the Clapton number 5 unluckily being sent off for doing both. Dominic Sterling was lucky to only be booked after doing a Gary Donellan-esque two footed lunge from 5 yards away.

In the first half Wealdstone had all the chances, but couldn't get enough power on their shots to trouble the Mickey-Mouse soundalike keeper. Although over 6 foot tall, he had a voice high enough to disturb dogs in the next borough.

In the second half, Stones continued to pressure Clapton, until Hammatt was up-ended on the edge of the box for a penalty. Lee Walker slotted the ball home, to our great relief.

With Braintree and Northwood also winning, I believe Harlow now need a miracle to go up. Shame.

A special mention goes to my mate John, who travelled 200 miles from York to see his first game of football.

Match report courtesy of Rob Harries

Harlow Town 2 Wealdstone 1

IcIs 3 - 30th April 1997

Attendance: 207

Another bitterly disappointing night for the Stones, who now need to win at Northwood to be sure of the title. Unlike previous games against our Isthmian bogey team though, Wealdstone made enough chances to have won easily, and the blame for defeat can be laid squarely at the hands of Darren Bonfield in the Stones goal. His two blunders saw Harlow score from just about their only chances.

The grim and open surroundings of the Harlow stadium seemed to unsettle many in the Stones team, with Bryan Hammatt and Terry Hibbert especially missing easy chances. A free kick midway through the first half from just about the same position Bonfield got lobbed from in the home game, saw a firm but straight shot at the Wealdstone goal. Bonfield got right behind it, but stupidly spilled the ball from his grasp allowing an easy tap in. Worse was to follow afterwards when ever-popular Dennis Greene hit a soft shot towards the near post. It looked to everyone like Bonfield had claimed it easily, but the ball somehow went under his body

and rolled slowly in.

One of the most moronic sendings-off of the season followed to reduce the 'arlow to 10 men when the number 6 failed to retreat for a free kick. Moronic because this sad case had been booked only 1 minute before for kicking the ball away.

The 10 men proved too much to overcome, although Stones looked lively in the second half and Hibbert should have made more of his two one-on-ones in a minute which the Harlow keeper saved both times. It was far too late by the time Hammatt reached a flick-on into the box to score, and now what looked a season all over bar the shouting a few weeks ago will go right down to the last game at Northwood, who still need the points to be sure of promotion.

Typical Wealdstone?

Northwood 1 Wealdstone 3

IcIs 3 - 3rd May 1997

Attendance: 700

It was alright on the night for Wealdstone, and in the end there were joyous scenes on the pitch to celebrate the first silverware for 12 long years. No-one was expecting Northwood to hand over their unbeaten home record without a fight, and this was a nailbiter right up until the last few minutes.

A noisy Stones following of around 600 got behind the team from the beginning, but for the first half it looked like being another one of those days where chances were created but not converted. Notably a great cross from Garner which Hammatt would have surely headed in but for a fingertip flick from the big-haired Woods keeper. Said keeper seemed reluctant to come out for crosses, and was made to pay later in the game. Bonfield showed he's not completely forgotten the art of goalkeeping, with a good save from a cross shot 20 yards out.

Early in the second half, just as we were wondering if we'd score again this season, Garner found Hammatt with a fine pass in the area, and he beat a defender, rounded the keeper and slotted home in style to the joy of most of the crowd. This lasted about 60 seconds as a free kick humped into the Stones box saw Bonfield leave it to the defence, the defence leave it to Bonfield, and the Northwood 6 say thank-you-very-much for the free header.

For the next 20 minutes, the home side dominated without causing any real problems, but the Stones were looking nervous. Manager Gordon Bartlett made 3 substitutions in quick succession - Smith,



Some people are on the piss... they think it's all over..

Walker and Green came on, and the match changed shape. Later on in the evening, Roy Marshall was to receive a stack of awards at the end of season dinner, and as if he hadn't done enough in defence this season, he scored the vital second goal. A corner from the left saw Marshall jump to the ball through a mass of bodies like his life depended on it, bundling the ball into the net. After a nervous glance at the ref - mayhem. Players in the crowd, the crowd on the pitch, and Northwood knew they were beaten.

Even the Northwood keeper, who had been time-wasting right from the very first goalkick was suddenly in a hurry, but the game and championship were made safe soon afterwards. Another corner was floated over, and Garner's header was flicked into the net by Hammatt. At the final whistle the long-suffering Stones fans enjoyed a celebration on the pitch with the players, and the trophy was presented to captain and club inspiration Fergus "Eat it!" Moore.

The party continued at the bar afterwards (including a streaking Lee Walker) and long into the night at Wasps RFC, the location of the Supporters Club dinner. It was nice to see so many of the players out together, with a team spirit sadly lacking in years gone by. Speeches from Gordon and club chairman Paul Rumens both paid tribute to the players and fans, and we all know that despite a marvellous year, the real party will be to celebrate a new home for the club. I'd like to pay tribute to the quietest man at this dinner, who lets his football do the talking, Roy Marshall, undoubtedly the player of the year.

Here's to some glamorous trips in the ICIS 2nd next year.

Leighton Town 1 Wealdstone 0
Associate Members Trophy Final at Hitchin Town 6th
May 1997
Attendance: 347 (About 320 'Stones fans!!!)

Disappointing, but not the end of the world to lose this one. At least we won the important one on Saturday.

In fact Wealdstone looked the more likely to score throughout this game, but in the end succumbed to a scrambled goal with practically the last kick of the ball. In the first half the Stones looked strong, but the teams largely cancelled each other out in midfield. However the good chances were all coming from the blue & white quarters, and Hammatt so nearly opened the scoring. Garner

noddled the ball into his path, and Hammatt made the right choice to lob the rapidly advancing keeper. The ball fell just wide of the post.

The second half saw Leighton have a lot more possession, but rarely penetrated into Wealdstone territory. It was with only 10 minutes to go that Hammatt should have scored. A long ball down the middle found Garner in the clear, and his pass found Hammatt all alone 5 yards out. His shot with his left foot was weak and flew over the bar.

Things looked ominous 5 minutes later when Roy Marshall had to come off injured, leaving the defence short at the back in more ways than one. In the last minute a Leighton corner was scrambled towards goal, and although the ball was eventually hacked away, the linesman said it had crossed the line, and the Stones had lost to an awful goal.

At least the trophy presentation gave us a good laugh, as when the Leighton captain raised the cup aloft, there was an eerie silence around the Hitchin ground (Shooting Stars, anyone?). Now according to my map, Leighton is about 10 miles from Hitchin. They ought to be ashamed of this pitiful support.



ONE! Bryan Hammatt slides the ball in from an acute angle to put Wealdstone ahead

TWO! Roy Marshall caps a fine season with the crucial second goal



THREE! Hammatt again and the celebrations can start

CHAMPIONS!





THE FACTS

WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB

1996/97 SEASON FIXTURES, RESULTS AND LINE-UPS

DATE	OPPONENTS	COMP	RES	ATT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	15
Sat Aug 17	CAMBERLEY TOWN	IL	W3-1	271	Bonfield	Smart												
Sat Aug 24	Flackwell Heath	IL	L0-4	190	Bonfield	Smart	Smart	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Hibbert	Hall	Hamnett	Sheldrick	Bircham	Ross	Tekell	Walker
Tue Aug 27	KINGSBURY TOWN	GIP	W1-0	172	Bonfield	Massey	Massey	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Hamnett	Sheldrick	Bircham	Ross	Walker	Tekell
Sat Aug 31	Shoreham	FACF	W1-0	214	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Hall	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Ross	Sheldrick	Hamnett
Sun Sep 8	KEMPSTON ROVERS	FAV1Q	W4-0	241	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Ross	Hall	Smith
Wed Sep 11	HORSHAM	GIC1	W4-2*	156	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Hall	McBride	Smith
Sat Sep 14	Horsham	FAC1Q	L0-1	361	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Smith	Sheldrick	McBride
Tue Sep 17	HERTFORD TOWN	IL	W5-1	274	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Smith	Waugh
Sat Sep 21	Tring Town	IL	W3-0	172	Bonfield	Massey	Hibbert	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Smith	Fraser
Tue Sep 24	Viking Sports	MSCP	W2-0	170	Bonfield	Massey	Fraser	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Tekell	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	McBride	Jones	Bush
Sat Oct 5	HODDESDON TOWN	FAV2Q	W1-0	258	Bonfield	Smith	Hibbert	Moore	Croac	Waugh	Walton	Jones	McBride	Fraser	Bircham	Walker	Tekell	Hamnett
Sat Oct 12	AVELEY	IL	W1-0	286	Bonfield	Massey	London	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Jones	Hamnett	Fraser	Bircham	Tekell	Massey	Fraser
Sat Oct 19	Lewes	IL	W1-0	160	Bonfield	Massey	London	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Fraser	Bircham	Hamnett	Jones	Smith
Tue Oct 22	WINGATE AND FINCHLEY	IL	W3-2	333	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Fraser	Bircham	Hamnett	Jones	Croac
Sat Nov 2	Camberley Town	IL	W3-0	156	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Fraser	Bircham	Hamnett	Croac	Jones
Sat Nov 9	Spalding United	FAV1	D1-1*	271	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Jones	Sheldrick	Zefi
Tue Nov 5	SPALDING UNITED	FAV1R	L1-2*	239	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Jones	Zefi
Sat Nov 9	Hornchurch	IL	W3-0	202	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Jones	Zefi
Tue Nov 12	Edgware Town	MCC2	L1-2	212	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Jones	Zefi	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Knight	London
Thu Nov 14	Hendon	MSC1	L1-3*	163	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Jones	Zefi	Hamnett	Bircham	Knight	Williams	Sterling
Sat Nov 16	SOUTHALL	IL	W1-0	276	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Croac	Waugh	Knight	Hibbert	Zefi	Sheldrick	Bircham	Keen	London	Williams
Sat Nov 23	HORNCHURCH	IL	W2-0	243	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Jones	Zefi	Hamnett	Hibbert	Knight	Green	Williams
Tue Nov 26	Banstead Athletic	GIC2	L0-6	72	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Walton	Jones	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	Hibbert	Massey
Sat Nov 30	KINGSBURY TOWN	IL	W5-0	313	Bonfield	Massey	London	Moore	Croac	Marshall	Sheldrick	Jones	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Massey	Walton	Hibbert
Sat Dec 7	Epsom and Ewell	IL	W3-2	129	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	McDaid	Jones	Sheldrick
Sat Dec 14	CLAPTON	IL	W2-0	254	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	McDaid	Jones	Walker
Tue Dec 17	Dorking	AMT1	W7-0	74	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	McDaid	Walker	Jones
Sat Dec 21	Brainree Town	IL	L0-2	394	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Jones	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Sterling	Green	Sheldrick	Massey
Sat Jan 25	FLACKWELL HEATH	IL	W3-0	324	Bonfield	McDaid	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Walker	McDaid	Jones
Tue Jan 28	BRACKNELL TOWN	AMT2	W3-1	120	Bonfield	Massey	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	McKay	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Massey	Green	Jones
Sat Feb 1	Hertford Town	IL	W2-0	245	Bonfield	Massey	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	McKay	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Green	McDaid	Jones
Thu Feb 6	METROPOLITAN POLICE	AMT3	W4-2	155	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walker	Hamnett	Bircham	Smith	Hamnett	Jones
Sat Feb 8	TRING TOWN	IL	W7-0	316	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Weedon	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Sheldrick	McDaid	Jones
Sat Feb 15	East Thurrock United	IL	W1-0	209	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Keen	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Garner	Hamnett	Massey	Weedon	McDaid
Tue Feb 18	BRAINTREE TOWN	IL	W6-0	411	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Garner	Hamnett	McDaid	Massey	Weedon
Sat Mar 1	Aveley	IL	D1-1	174	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Garner	Hamnett	Bircham	Green	Massey	Weedon
Sat Mar 8	LEWES	IL	W2-1	306	Bonfield	Massey	Green	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Garner	Hamnett	Bircham	Green	Massey	Weedon
Sat Mar 15	Wingate and Finchley	IL	W3-0	550	Bonfield	Smith	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Bircham	Garner	Hamnett	Walton	Weedon	Kelly
Tue Mar 18	Egham Town	AMT4	W2-1	140	Bonfield	Kelly	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Massey	Weedon	Kelly
Sat Mar 22	Southall	IL	D1-1	177	Bonfield	Massey	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Bircham	Massey	Sheldrick	Weedon
Tue Mar 25	EAST THURROCK UTD.	IL	W4-1	302	Bonfield	Kelly	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Kelly	McKay	Hibbert	Green	Hamnett	Smith	Garner	Walton	Weedon
Sat Apr 5	HARLOW TOWN	IL	L0-2	474	Bonfield	McKay	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Walton	Garner	Hamnett	Keen	Weedon	Sheldrick
Tue Apr 8	NORTHWOOD	IL	L0-2	456	Bonfield	Smith	McKay	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Miller	Garner	Bircham	Smith	Walker	Sheldrick
Sat Apr 12	Kingsbury Town	IL	D0-0	305	Bonfield	McKay	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hammatt	Miller	Garner	Bircham	Walker	Sheldrick	Massey
Thu Apr 17	Leatherhead	AMT5	D0-0*	272	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Garner	Hamnett	Massey	Smith	Miller	Miller
Sat Apr 19	EPSOM AND EWELL	IL	W2-1	630	Bonfield	Massey	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	McKay	Bircham	Garner	Hamnett	Walker	Sterling	Sheldrick
Tue Apr 22	LEATHERHEAD	AMT6	W3-1	198	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Weedon	Marshall	Walton	McKay	Miller	Garner	Bircham	Walker	Hamnett	Keen
Sat Apr 26	Clapton	IL	W1-0	214	Bonfield	Massey	Smith	Moore	Sterling	McKay	Walton	Hibbert	Hamnett	Garner	Bircham	Keen	Sheldrick	Yaku
Wed Apr 30	Harlow Town	IL	L1-2	207	Bonfield	McKay	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	McKay	Walton	Hibbert	Yaku	Hamnett	Bircham	Walker	Miller	Keen
Sat May 3	Northwood	IL	W3-1	700	Bonfield	McKay	Massey	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	Yaku	Hamnett	Bircham	Walker	Garner	Miller
Tue May 6	Leighton Town*	AMT7	L0-1	347	Bonfield	Massey	Sterling	Moore	Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	McKay	Garner	Hamnett	Walker	Smith	Green
									Waugh	Marshall	Walton	Hibbert	McKay	Garner	Hamnett	Walker	Smith	Yaku

IL Iolo League Division Three
 FAC F A Cup
 FAV F A Vase
 GIC Guardian Insurance Cup
 AMT Associate Members Trophy
 MSC Middlesex Senior Cup
 MCC Middlesex Charly Cup
 * After extra time
 * Match played at Hitchin Town F.C.

ICIS FOOTBALL LEAGUE - DIVISION THREE Final Table - 1996/97 Season

	P	W	HOME				A	W	AWAY				Pts	Wealdstone result	
			D	L	F	A			D	L	F	A		Home	Away
WEALDSTONE	32	14	0	2	46	11	10	3	3	26	13	75			
Braintree Town	32	13	2	1	59	10	10	3	3	40	19	74	W6-0	L0-2	
Northwood	32	11	4	1	40	16	7	6	3	20	15	64	L0-2	W3-1	
Harlow Town	32	10	1	5	34	24	9	3	4	26	17	61	L0-2	L1-2	
Aveley	32	8	4	4	32	19	9	2	5	32	20	57	W1-0	D1-1	
East Thurrock United	32	10	3	3	34	15	6	3	72	43	6	54	W4-1	W1-0	
Camberley Town	32	8	2	6	29	21	7	4	5	26	23	51	W3-1	W3-0	
Wingate and Finchley	32	7	4	5	28	28	4	3	9	24	35	40	W3-2	W3-0	
Hornchurch	32	5	4	7	17	23	6	2	8	18	28	39	W2-0	W3-0	
Clapton	32	3	4	9	13	26	8	2	6	18	23	39	W2-0	W1-0	
Lewes	32	6	6	4	30	20	4	2	10	15	33	38	W2-1	W1-0	
Kingsbury Town	32	6	2	8	22	22	5	2	9	19	32	37	W5-0	D0-0	
Hertford Town	32	6	3	7	28	21	4	3	9	27	44	36	W5-1	W2-0	
Epsom and Ewell	32	4	2	10	34	43	4	3	9	28	35	29	W2-1	W3-2	
Flackwell Heath	32	6	3	7	21	26	2	2	12	15	45	29	W3-0	L0-4	
Tring Town	32	3	1	12	13	30	4	2	10	20	44	24	W7-0	W3-0	
Southall	32	3	2	11	17	34	3	2	11	11	35	22	W1-0	D1-1	

ICIS DIVISION THREE ATTENDANCES 1996-1997 SEASON

CLUB	PLAYED	TOTAL	AVERAGE 1997	AVERAGE 1996	% CHANGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST	v. Stones
WEALDSTONE	16	5,469	342	295	16%	630 v Epsom and Ewell	243 v Hornchurch	
BRAINTREE TOWN	16	3,699	231			394 v Wealdstone	163 v Kingsbury Town	394 (1st)
HARLOW TOWN	16	3,145	197	57	245%	561 v Hertford Town	50 v Aveley	207 (4th)
NORTHWOOD	16	2,565	160	115	39%	700 v Wealdstone	84 v Hornchurch	700 (1st)
WINGATE AND FINCHLEY	16	2,548	159	123	29%	550 v Wealdstone	88 v Braintree Town	550 (1st)
EAST THURROCK UNITED	16	1,549	97	92	5%	209 v Wealdstone	60 v Kingsbury Town	209 (1st)
HERTFORD TOWN	16	1,417	89	71	25%	245 v Wealdstone	45 v Clapton	245 (1st)
AVELEY	16	1,410	88	103	-14%	174 v Wealdstone	53 v Kingsbury Town	174 (1st)
FLACKWELL HEATH	16	1,266	79	67	18%	190 v Wealdstone	60 v 4 times	190 (1st)
CAMBERLEY TOWN	16	1,263	79	86	-8%	156 v Wealdstone	64 v Clapton	156 (1st)
HORNCHURCH	16	1,149	72	76	-6%	207 v Wealdstone	36 v Kingsbury Town	207 (1st)
CLAPTON	16	1,053	66	48	37%	214 v Wealdstone	36 v East Thurrock United	214 (1st)
EPSOM AND EWELL	16	927	58	61	-5%	129 v Wealdstone	28 v Wingate and Finchley	129 (1st)
TRING TOWN	16	815	51	68	-25%	172 v Wealdstone	30 v 3 times	172 (1st)
KINGSBURY TOWN	16	801	50	59	-15%	305 v Wealdstone	20 v Flackwell Heath & Tring	305 (1st)
LEWES	16	757	47	48	-1%	160 v Wealdstone	22 v Kingsbury Town	160 (1st)
SOUTHALL	16	571	36	30	19%	177 v Wealdstone	13 v Lewes	177 (1st)
TOTALS	272	30,404	112					

WEALDSTONE APPEARANCES 1996/97 SEASON

(All Matches excluding friendlies)

Substitutes who actually played are shown in brackets

	IL	GIC	AMT	FAC	FAV	MSC	MCC	TOTAL	WFC Career
Max Possible	32	3	7	2	4	2	1	51	
Darren Bonfield	32	3	7	2	4	2	1	51	51
Fergus Moore	31	3	7	2	4	2	1	50	105
Roy Marshall	28	3	5	2	4	-	1	43	68
Steve Bircham	26	3	4	2	4	2	1	42	52
Bryan Hammatt	25(6)	2	7	2	4	(-1)	1	41(7)	48
Terry Hibbert	27	1(1)	6	2	4	1	-	41(1)	68
Chris Walton	23(1)	2	5	2	4	1	1	38(1)	92
Ian Waugh	27	-	4	(-1)	3	2	1	37(1)	67
Tony Smith	21(5)	(-1)	5(1)	(-1)	3(1)	2	1	32(9)	80
John Massey	17(5)	2(1)	5(1)	2	3(1)	1	-	30(8)	38
Paul McKay	17	-	6	-	-	-	-	23	23
Lee Walker	8(10)	2	2(2)	2	4	(-1)	-	18(13)	60
Dominic Sterling	12	-	5(1)	-	-	1	(-1)	18(2)	20
Simon Garner	12(2)	-	3	-	-	-	-	15(2)	17
Peter Green	10(5)	1	2(2)	-	-	-	-	13(7)	20
Steve Croad	3(1)	3	-	2	1	2	-	11(1)	59
Stewart Jones	3(5)	1	1(2)	-	1(2)	1	1	8(9)	17
Patrick McDaid	4(3)	1	1(1)	-	-	-	1	7(4)	11
Lee Tekell	2(2)	2	-	2	1(1)	-	-	7(3)	60
Steve Fraser	4(1)	-	-	-	(-1)	1	-	5(2)	43
Paul Sheldrick	2(5)	1(2)	(-3)	(-1)	(-1)	1	-	4(12)	67
Ardian Zefi	2(1)	-	-	-	(-1)	1	1	4(3)	7
Stuart Miller	3(3)	-	-	-	(-2)	-	-	3(3)	6
Steve Kelly	2(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3(1)	4
Paul London	2	1	-	-	-	(-1)	-	3(1)	4
James Keen	2(1)	-	(-1)	-	-	(-1)	-	2(3)	5
Darren McBride	1(1)	(-1)	-	-	-	1	-	2(3)	5
Mark Weedon	1(2)	-	1	-	(-1)	-	-	2(2)	4
Rudi Hall	1	1	-	-	(-1)	-	-	2(1)	3
Lawrence Yaku	2	-	(-1)	-	-	-	-	2(1)	3
Lee Smart	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	33
David Ross	(-2)	1	-	(-1)	-	-	-	1(3)	8
Tony Knight	(-1)	-	-	-	-	1	(-1)	1(2)	20
Omar Williams	(-1)	-	-	-	-	(-1)	(-1)	(-3)	3

WEALDSTONE GOALSCORERS 1996/97 SEASON

(All Matches including friendlies)

Penalties scored are shown in brackets

	IL	GIC	AMT	FAC	FAV	MSC	MCC	FR	TOTAL	WFC Career
Bryan Hammatt	13(1)	-	7(1)	-	3	1	-	4	28(2)	28(2)
Terry Hibbert	13	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	17	19
Lee Walker	9(2)	-	2	-	3(2)	-	-	3	17(4)	35(8)
Paul Sheldrick	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	8(1)	10(1)	46(3)
Steve Bircham	7(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2(1)	9(2)	9(2)
Peter Green	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	8	8
Fergus Moore	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	7	12
Tony Smith	4	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	6	14
Lawrence Yaku	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	6	6
Steve Fraser	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	21(2)
Simon Garner	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Roy Marshall	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	6
Dominic Sterling	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	4	4
Ardian Zefi	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	4
Marco Leite	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3
Lee Tekell	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	14
Chris Walton	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Omar Williams	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	2
James Antill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Lee Earle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Rudi Hall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1(1)	1(1)	1(1)
Stewart Jones	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Darren McBride	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Patrick McDaid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Paul McKay	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
John Massey	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
David Ross	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Boysie Wise	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Own Goals	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	
TOTALS	72(4)	5	19(1)	1	7(2)	3	1	41(3)	149(10)	

THE FEATURES...

Q&A WITH GORDON BARTLETT



I KNOW THAT WINNING THE FA VASE WAS YOUR BEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR AS A MANAGER, BUT HOW DOES LAST SEASON RATE IN YOUR LIST OF HONOURS?

I spoke at the dinner and said that it ranked as my second best footballing moment. The final whistle at Elland Road was a fantastic feeling but the crucial third goal at Northwood certainly ran it very close. As for where it stands in my list of honours...well, it was only division three so not that high but you can't ask for more than winning

the league you are in and we had to start the roll somewhere.

IS IT MORE SATISFYING THAT YOU HAVE NOW WON AN HONOUR AT A "BIG CLUB"?

The satisfaction comes from being able to share your success with the fans. The support we have received has been superb and that is the major reason people still regard Wealdstone as a big club.

The difference between last season and the honours I have won before, is that everybody expects to win at Wealdstone, elsewhere it was more of a pleasant surprise to a handful of people.

AS OUR LEAD WAS BEING WHITTLED AWAY DID YOU FEEL, AS MANY SUPPORTERS, THAT WE HAD BLOWN IT?

No! I always had faith in the players ability to pull it off. It obviously got hard-

er as the games drifted by and doubts creep into your thoughts especially when you wake up in the middle of the night but overall I was confident we had patience and application to see the job through. Anyway, after twelve years, we thought we would make it a bit more exciting and leave it until the last ten minutes.

WHAT DID YOU SAY TO THE PLAYERS BEFORE THE GAME AT NORTHWOOD? DID YOU APPROACH IT IN A DIFFERENT MANNER TO NORMAL?

I can never remember the exact words but I do recall saying something like you have run out of chances, it's today or nothing! Everybody has worked very hard to get to this position but we've underachieved in the last few games. Put it right today and enjoy the success it will bring. Don't chase the game, keep it tight and if we have to, we will gamble near the end.

WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND DURING THE GAME?

I went in quite happy at half-time because we were always in control and they never looked like scoring.

I thought we had won it once Bryan had scored, but for fifteen minutes after their equaliser I struggled to see how we could lift the players and go on to win. We had to make changes in order to change the mental attitude on the park as well as the technical side. It worked, and the rest is history.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE SCENES AT THE END?

Brilliant!

I've got the video at home and apart

from the goals I could sit and watch the celebrations over and over again.

Here's to a repeat in 1998.....or is that wishing for too much?

I SUPPOSE YOU MUST HAVE LEARNT A LOT ABOUT THE CHARACTER, (OR LACK OF), OF A NUMBER OF PLAYERS? DID ANY OF THE PLAYERS SURPRISE YOU ONE WAY OR ANOTHER?

Not really. I think we knew most of the qualities (or lack of them) when we signed the players. Therefore nothing came as too much of a surprise as far as character was concerned.

HAVE YOU, AND TO THAT MATTER THE PLAYERS, FELT UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO DELIVER SUCCESS AT THE CLUB?

There is always pressure at a big club with plenty of supporters who have been starved of success for so long. Couple that with our transfer to ICIS 3, and I think everybody expected us to win something. That is bound to transmit itself to both the players and management, and obviously pressure can build up especially if you hit a poor run of form (which you will every season). On a personal point of view, I expected to win the league last year so I tended to put pressure on myself but tried not to do the same to the players.

AS THE SEASON WORE ON, DID THE CROWD HELP OR HINDER THE TEAM?

Majority of the time the crowd are a great help but, obviously, when the team are performing poorly the negatives comments directed at some players certainly add further problems to individual performances.

WHILST I DIDN'T THINK WE WOULD WIN

AT HARLOW, I WAS PRETTY CONFIDENT OF WINNING AT NORTHWOOD. I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT SO WERE THE MANAGEMENT TEAM?

Yes, you are totally right! My criticism of the side last year was that we were not physically strong enough so it is obvious when you play sides like Harlow you know it's going to be very difficult. We felt Northwood were more comparable with ourselves as a footballing side, and especially after letting ourselves down at home against them, we were confident we would complete the job on the best pitch in the league.

WHICH PLAYERS IMPRESSED YOU LAST SEASON?

Roy Marshall had an outstanding season where he stayed free from injury mainly due to Roy's sensible approach to training. He was a bit like Paul McGarh - just save him for the games.

Fergie was his typical whole hearted self and a superb example to others around him especially when he played with painful injuries.

Steve Bircham and Bryan Hammatt also had very consistent seasons but overall I was delighted by the improvement of the dedication and team spirit shown by the squad throughout.

WHO DISAPPOINTED YOU OR FAILED TO LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

Obviously those people who departed failed to perform upto the standards we expected but otherwise virtually everybody had a dip in form throughout the season. I still maintain that certain individuals can produce more than they did last season and show more consistency. Tony Smith, Ian Waugh,

Bomber, Terry Hibbert, Dominic, Peter Green and Stuart Miller can all set their targets a little higher this season. I have no doubt about the ability of any of them but they all need to think and work harder to achieve the standards they are capable of.

MOVING ONTO THE COMING SEASON, WHAT AREAS OF THE TEAM DO YOU THINK NEED STRENGTHENING?

Physically and mentally! I want to sign a couple of stronger players to balance the side a bit more. I felt we were too pretty last year and we will not get away with it this season. We lacked height in the side which obviously caused us problems on dead ball situations, so that is one area which we will consider when signing players. However, if the players have a strong determined character, and he will benefit the team, I don't mind how big he is but we must get the balance right. We need characters who can dig deep to grind out results even when things are going badly.

IT MUST BE QUITE WORRYING TO SEE OUR LACK OF DEPTH UP FRONT, ESPECIALLY WITH HAMMATT MOVING TO HAYES, WALKER STILL INJURED, NEW SIGNING DENNIS GREENE NOT JOINING UNTIL OCTOBER LEAVING ONLY SIMON GARNER AS A QUALITY STRIKER?

This question has been set in early July and I can understand your concern. Ask me again in August because a lot can happen in six weeks. Dennis was a disappointment when we heard about his extended contract in Finland but I have spoken to three or four proven strikers who I hope will be prepared to play in Division two this season. However, you should not overlook Stuart Miller and Peter Green who per-

formed well below their own standards last season and are keen and hungry to rectify the position this year. You also have a quick and developing Lawrence Yaku who may surprise a few people this year.

DO YOU FEEL BRYAN HAMMATT HAS THE ABILITY TO SUCCEED AT HAYES? IT DOES SEEM A BIT DOUBTFUL.

Bryan has matured a lot since he arrived last August and he is a worker who is prepared to listen and learn. I feel he will struggle to adapt in the early days because of the huge difference in standards but if Hayes are doing quite well and Bryan scores some early goals his confidence will carry him through. I hope he does succeed but if not, I'm sure we wouldn't mind seeing him playing in blue and white again.

WHAT ABOUT SOME OF OUR OTHER YOUNG PUPS LIKE TERRY HIBBERT? HOW MUCH HIGHER CAN THEY GO?

Terry can be a class act but.....I have had a long chat with him and set him a few personal targets. At the time of writing Terry is struggling with an injury which has hampered his pre-season. Once he gets himself in shape and works harder at his game he can certainly play at a higher level. I expect more consistency from him this year rather than the occasional flashes of brilliance we have witnessed over the last two seasons. Its now down to Terry....I think he can do it! Time will tell.

HOW DO YOU THINK WE WILL FARE IN DIVISION TWO? THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF TEAMS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF MOUNTING A CHALLENGE.

I would prefer to answer this question just prior to the kick off in August once I

know exactly how the squad is shaping up!

At present I think we are good enough to be in the top eight. Every addition to the squad will help our cause so I suppose that's not a bad predication for mid July. That's assuming all last year's players agree new terms and re-sign (and that's far from certain at the moment).

I think up to ten teams could be mounting a challenge this season and we will not have the easy pickings of last year against some of the lesser sides. I think a team can be promoted losing ten games this season such is the general standard. At the moment I am not prepared to predict my three promotion teams though!

WHICH SIDES DO YOU THINK WILL FIGURE IN THE PROMOTION RACE?

Braintree, Horsham, Canvey Island, Marlow and Wealdstone.

IS IT EASIER TO ATTRACT PLAYERS NOW TO WEALDSTONE?

No! Division two equals Division three.

HOW DO YOU SELL WEALDSTONE TO PROSPECTIVE PLAYERS?

Professional outlook
Big club
Crowd
Ambitious
Try to play good football
Honest management

WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES?

No ground and division two.

HAVE YOU EVER SIGNED A PLAYER AS

BAD AS STUART JONES BEFORE?

I have made poor signings before and I will again! The difference is, my gambles will not cost the club money. I think Stuart failed to come close to his own or my expectations as a player. It was disappointing signing in the end but one I don't regret. He showed great commitment during his time here and I was hoping he would fill either the centre half or centre midfield position we were looking for at the start of last season. The budget always has something to do with signings as well - You normally get what you pay for. Anyone got some extra money to spare every week??

WHAT ARE THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM?

Frank takes most of the training although I tend to do dead balls, pattern of play, and anything specific that I feel is going wrong during games.

Leo is Mr Organised. He does most of the paperwork and the match day arrangements with players. I pick the team (after a chat with the other two), sign the players, chat to other managers and try to keep the chairman happy!

HOW HIGH DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU CAN TAKE THE CLUB?

If we can secure a ground I think it would be possible to go into the Conference but it would obviously take time getting the foundations and structure right to achieve that ambition.

ARE YOUR OWN AMBITIONS WITH THE CLUB DEPENDENT ON BUILDING A NEW GROUND?

Yes, because without that we are limited to what we can achieve. Two years is probably maximum with getting a ground. If we do find a home, the most important aspect regarding the football will be setting up a quality youth scheme and a reserve team in order to produce and develop our own crop of young players.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEALDSTONE TO AN OUTSIDER?

I think that is a similar situation to trying to attract a new player which I mentioned earlier. I'm sure a reference to 'sleeping giant' would come into the description somewhere and the excellent administrative back up along with the other points I said earlier. Once again the main talking point would be the fantastic support!

ANYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT LIKE TO ADD?

Our aim at the start will be to build a solid foundation (18 points from 30) and gradually pick up things up as the season progresses. Anything above that in the first ten games will be a bonus - anything below and I will be a worried man!

I would ask the supporters to get behind us again this year and if you watch other games or hear of players elsewhere please give Frank, Leo or myself any details that may help our cause. We follow everything up!

I hope we all have an enjoyable and successful season.

THE DOUBLE

Layne Patterson, then Supporters Club Secretary, now Commercial Director, reminds us that Wealdstone were the first - and the only current non-league club - to achieve non-league's ultimate triumph.

The 1984/85 campaign, was without doubt the most successful season in the 91 year history of Wealdstone Football Club, or indeed that of any other non-league football club in the history of the game.

It saw the unique achievement of the non-league double, when the Gola League (now the G M Vauxhall Conference) was won, followed shortly after by the F. A. Trophy, the latter being won at Wembley in front of 20,775 spectators.

It was an even more remarkable achievement, when one remembers that the league was won with a shoestring squad of just sixteen players, and no reserve team to fall back on. Paul Bowgett and Dennis Byatt, both provided a formidable task for any opposing forwards, and the centre back partnership probably enjoyed its most successful season, with Byatt, in particular showing great character and commitment to bounce back from the tragedy of losing his wife in a car accident.

Alan Cordice also had his best ever season for the club, a fact that was recorded when he was voted both non-league player of the year, and supporters' club player of the year. Of course, everybody in the Wealdstone squad were heroes, and all have earned a place in

the history books, but as unlikely a hero as you will ever see was Andy Graham, a quiet spoken school teacher who popped up time and time again, with many important goals to become a "folk hero" at Lower Mead, and one who is still referred to as "God".

The early season signs were encouraging with all four pre-season friendlies being won, and fourteen goals being scored in the process, with a notable 3-0 victory over a strong Reading side being probably the high spot. The league campaign began with the long trip up north to Northwich Victoria, and 1,015 people saw Stones begin with a 2-0 victory, goals coming from Graves and Holmes.

The next twelve league outings saw seven victories, including the unforgettable 5-2 win at home to Kidderminster, with Graves claiming his first of two hat tricks that season.

By mid-October Stones' were already being mentioned as possible championship contenders, and with an amazing 10-0 victory over Brentford in the Capital League, everything in the proverbial garden looked rosy.

However, the next seven league and cup games bought Wealdstone back down to earth with an almighty bump when only one victory could be managed, that being a slim 3-2 win over local



Andy Graham



Captain Paul Bowgett with the FA Trophy

It was announced that the opponents for the first round of the F A Trophy were to be Harlow Town, most people expected a safe passage into the next round. However in the vast openness of the sports stadium that the Essex club calls home, the meagre crowd watching the oft postponed game saw Stones manage just three attempts on goal. The local press branded it as one of the most boring games seen at the ground ever, and with Stones team being brand-

ed as a bunch of "highly paid stars".

Stones boss, Brian Hall was clearly angry with the result and in the resultant replay a more palatable 5-0 victory was gained. Stones scoring three times in the opening fifteen minutes. Opponents for the 2nd round were Wycombe; it was a game in which Stones did not play particularly well, but when Donnellan was upended in the area a penalty was awarded and from then on Stones never looked like losing. The Wycombe press, however, saw it differently claiming

Stones' "kick and rush" tactics were "boring". This biased reporter's frustration was highlighted when he moaned that the only success available to the Bucks side now was that of the Hitachi Cup. This game came half way through a run of seven matches, only one of which was a league match, that being a defeat away to Barrow. Probably the highlight for the fans, though, was the victory over local rivals Harrow Borough in the semi-final of the Middlesex Senior Cup watched by 1,000 Stones' fans at Earlsmead, which lined up a final tie against Enfield.

Midway through March Stones found themselves involved in the fourth round of the F. A. Trophy, against Frickley Athletic. Two goals from Alan Cordice helped Stones assure safe passage into the semis (one of which took him just 16 seconds to score). And it was then that first mention began to be made about the "double", and the prediction by Chairman David Morritt that this was going to be Wealdstone's year suddenly didn't seem so silly.

It was soon after this that the club began to make its serious assault on the championship with a run of five straight victories in eight days - including midweek games at Altrincham and Gateshead - from where the Supporters' train didn't arrive back into London until six in the morning - leading up to the two-legged F.A. Trophy semi-final against Enfield.

The first leg was away, and the Stones faced a very hungry Enfield side but a lead of 2-0 thanks to Neil Cordice and terrace messiah Andy Graham, were enough to have the 800 Stones' followers tunefully pronouncing "We're going to Wembley - you're not". The return leg the following Saturday saw an official crowd of 2,009 fill Lower Mead to the rafters, and such was the demand for momentoes of this memorable part in the club's history that the video cameras were called in to catch the action. Enfield ran out winners by the lone goal, in a match

that was to say the least "ill-tempered" and when Alan Cordice looked like increasing the humiliation over the Middlesex neighbours in the 88th minute, the Enfield keeper ran a full 25 yards to pull off one of the crudest fouls ever seen anywhere. Jacobs was promptly sent off and Stones were on their way to Wembley. A fact that was naturally celebrated in the correct manner, and even Enfield boss Eddie McCluskey's claims that the "inferior side was going to Wembley" could not take anything away from what was a fantastic achievement.

This effectively ended the season for Enfield who lost their way dramatically in the league. Stones however were spurred on to greater success and were able to briefly concentrate on the league campaign again, and seven days before Wealdstone's date with Boston United at Wembley they were given the opportunity, whereby a draw away to Kettering Town would secure the Gola League championship. Alan Clifton had secretly persuaded Conference secretary, Peter Hunter, to let him take the championship trophy with him to Rockingham Road.

Andy Graham (who else) scored the goal that gave Wealdstone the title and the 700 jubilant Stones fans saw suspended skipper Paul Bowgett receive the first piece of silverware of the season.

Following the match an official from the midlands club boarded one of the supporters' club coaches to say that they had been a credit to Wealdstone and wished the club luck for the following Saturday at Wembley.

In the days leading up to the final, Harrow, for so long a stop en-route for many supporters on their way to Wembley, had at last caught Wembley fever itself with good luck messages in the windows of many shops, and scarves just about everywhere.

rivals, Rayners Lane in the 2nd round of the Middlesex Senior Cup watched by a record Lucas Avenue crowd; this period also saw two defeats within the space of four days at the hands of arch rivals Enfield, the first being a 2-1 reverse in the Bob Lord Trophy, followed soon after by a 2-0 defeat away in the Gola League.

Stones then remained unbeaten until the end of the year, with a fine away victory at Weymouth of particular note. The new year started with a disappointing 1-0 defeat at the hands of Barnet and when

David Morrith was proclaiming this as the start of bigger things to come, with a new purpose built "Morrith Stadium" very much on the horizon. The day of the actual final came with many Boston United fans travelling down from Lincolnshire, but they were easily outnumbered by Wealdstone supporters in the 20,775 crowd. Brian Hall led his out his team who were back in the traditional royal blue strip after briefly flirting with the

opponents, and the scenes of joy were on the faces of the club from Middlesex and not Lincolnshire. A mass party followed at the club's Lower Mead headquarters, with a special party and even a beer tent on the pitch, Harrow launched itself into full scale celebrations.

Although one wonders what the celebrations would have been liked if a similar achievement had been made by a



It's on the way... Andy Graham's second minute strike

yellow and blue Shrewsbury style, much to the annoyance of the Wealdstone faithful. The game itself began at a blistering pace which saw Stones go into an early lead after just two minutes, when a Brian Greenaway corner was superbly hit over his head by Graham. In the 20th minute Stones were awarded a penalty for handball, which was taken by Byatt and although hit well was met by an even better save.

Stones were in control for the majority of the first half, with Lee Holmes heading them in to a 2-0 lead at half time. Five minutes into the second half Cook replied for Boston, however Stones held on after some intense pressure from their

club whose local council were behind the club, and perhaps in retrospect more should have been done by them to recognise such a fine and unique event in not only the club's, but the town's history.

The now famous "double" was made the "treble" when Stones defeated Enfield in the final of the Middlesex Senior Cup, a match which was held over to the beginning of the following season.

1984-85 was the most memorable time in my years of supporting the club, and something nobody can or will ever take away from us.

THE ELMSLIE ENDER SURVEY 1997

The Supporters' verdict on the season

The response was superb, even eclipsing last year's record breaking effort. So without further ado off we go.....

man's a cool dude as well.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON

ROY MARSHALL 45%
 Bryan Hammatt 18%
 Terry Hibbert 18%
 Other votes: Fergus Moore, Steve Bircham, Lee Walker, Ian Waugh.

The winner was a foregone conclusion from early in the season and the rest of the vote mirrored the supporters' club award.

IDIOT OF THE SEASON

TONY BOOTH 15%
 The Greene Brothers (votes for both
 Dennis - sorry - and David) 14%
 Les Hobbs 10%

Other votes: Adrian Zefi, Mike Vincent, Stuart Miller, Stuart Jones, Mr Roper (Ref v Lewes), Attic man, Lee Smart, Darren Bonfield, Tony Maidment at Shoreham, Neale Harvey, Leatherhead's No 9, Anyone who didn't go to Harlow, Man behind the wall at Clapton, Friend who supports the oppo for a laugh, the whole of Harlow.

For one moment, it seemed that our new signing Dennis Greene was going to win this coveted award. But Tony "Festerling Fungus" Booth, despite being relatively quite this season, stormed up on the blindside to win the award.

MOST IMPROVED PLAYER

STEVE BIRCHAM 35%
 Roy Marshall 19%
 Terry Hibbert 16%
 Other votes: Fergus Moore, Bryan Hammatt, Dominic Sterling, Tony Smith, Lawrence Yaku, John Massey

Last season he would have been bottom of the popularity stakes, but this year he's been crucial to our success. As was seen at Braintree, we just didn't function as a team without him. His old

WORST PLAYER

STUART JONES 60%
 David Ross 10%
 Peter Green 5%

Other votes: John Massey, Adrian Zefi, Simon Garner, Stuart Miller, Darren Bonfield, Chris Walton, Egham's No 2, Leatherhead's player who was sent-off.

Every manager signs a player that haunts him for ever and a day. Jones was truly rubbish. He couldn't pass, shot, and ran around like a constipated donkey.

MATCH OF THE SEASON

BRAINTREE (H) ICIS 3 84%
 Wingate and Finchley (A) ICIS 3 9%
 Northwood (A) ICIS 3 7%

Other votes: No other votes!!

It is not often that the match that sees you win the title doesn't win this type of award, but the annihilation of Braintree has gone down in many people's "top five matches of all time". That night saw a truly awesome performance by Wealdstone.

WORST MATCH OF THE SEASON

HARLOW TOWN (H) ICIS 3 35%
 Southall (A) ICIS 3 15%
 Banstead Athletic (A) GIC 14%

Other votes: Braintree (A) ICIS 3, Harlow (A) ICIS 3, Spalding (H) FAV, Flackwell Heath (A) ICIS 3, Hendon (A) MSC, Lewes (H) ICIS 3, Me and my wife, Northwood (H) ICIS 3, Southall (H) ICIS 3,

This was typical Wealdstone. Needing a point to win promotion, Stones were one down in three minutes thanks to a bloomer by Bonfield, then Hibbert went off injured, Waugh was sent off and Miller missed an open goal. All that just in the first half!!

BEST AWAY TRIP

SPALDING UNITED (FAV)	30%
Northwood (IcIs 3)	23%
Wingate and Finchley (IcIs 3)	20%
Other votes: Braintree IcIs 3, Leatherhead AMT, Shoreham FAC, Marmaris, Turkey 96.	

The booze train trip finished just ahead of the title win and the sponsored walk. Three great trips, any of them could have won.

WORST AWAY TRIP

HARLOW TOWN (ICIS 3)	42%
Banstead Athletic (GIC)	19%
Braintree (IcIs 3)	19%
Other votes: Flackwell Heath IcIs 3, Horsham FAC, Clapton IcIs 3, Kingsbury Town IcIs 3, Postponed game at Egham, Hornchurch IcIs 3, Aveley IcIs 3, East Thurrock United IcIs 3	

Most of the votes came BEFORE the game in the Essex hellhole! Says a lot about the place.

TACKLE AND FOUL OF THE SEASON

BRYAN HAMMATT V SHOREHAM	17%
Paul London v Lewes	14%
All of Ian Waugh's	13%
Other votes: Any against a Scummer, Various by Roy Marshall, Les Hobbs v Lewes, Leatherhead player v Smith, Hertford player v Lee Walker, Sterling v Clapton, Perkins v Hammatt, Walker in the bar at Northwood, Waugh two footed challenge v Harlow	

Hammatt's unfortunate fall on Dove came out on top, just ahead of London's even more ill-fated tackle that saw the Lewes player break his leg.

GOAL OF THE SEASON

TERRY HIBBERT V CAMBERLEY (H) ICIS 3	33%
Terry Hibbert v Wingate and Finchley (A) IcIs 3	32%
Roy Marshall v Braintree (H) IcIs 3	9%
Other votes: Terry Hibbert v Epsom (A) IcIs 3, Peter Green v Met Police (h) AMT, All the goals at Northwood, Hammatt v East Thurrock United (A) IcIs 3, Roy Marshall v Horsham (H) GIC, Hammatt v Northwood (A) IcIs 3, The Terry Hibbert collection	

A mere hair's breath separated two of Hibbert's goals. The goal on the opening day of the season

which a run from inside his own half past failing Camberley players and then past the 'keeper finished just ahead of his brilliant volley at Wingate.

MISS OF THE SEASON

STUART MILLER V HARLOW (H) ICIS 3	39%
Steve Frazer v Hoddesdon Town (H) FAV	28%
Peter Green v Met Police (H) AMT	17%
Other votes: Peter Green v Tring (A) IcIs 3, Green various, Hibbert v Harlow (A) IcIs 3, Roy Marshall v Spalding (H) FAV, Ms Lori Gale.	

Miller was a great disappointment since he signed last season, but it could have all been different had he not missed this open goal on his debut. Surely, though, Frazer's miss was worse. A gaping open goal from two yards out. And what about Peter Green, when wasn't he missing an easy chance?

BEST VISTING FANS

WERE THERE ANY?/WHO?/DON'T BE STUPID	37%
Harlow Town	33%
Wingate and Finchley	12%
Other votes: Northwood, Wealdstone	

The usual winner. And even when there are some away supporters they are juveniles like Harlow.

MOST PATHETIC SUPPORTERS

HARLOW TOWN	39%
Braintree Town	33%
Leighton Town	12%
Other votes: Leatherhead, Southall, Scummers, Met Police, Spalding, too many to mention.	

It is not often there are three worthy candidates for this award, but each, in their own way, deserved to win. Third were Leighton, whose turnout for the AMT final was truly pathetic. I have never seen support in a final so one-sided, outnumbered 10:1. They were just a joke. Second were Braintree who barely managed 20 for the top-of-the-table clash at the White Lion. How many did we have for the match in Essex? 200! But, the winners are the one and only Harlow!!! At the White Lion, they did at least bring some supporters. Only for the fact that they are juvenile twats who should be in nursery school having their bottoms wiped. But what happened to them at the Hellhole in Essex. Sorry it was an evening

game and they had to be in bed early for school the next day.

BEST MOMENT OF THE SEASON

WINNING AT NORTHWOOD/THE GOALS/3RD GOAL	43%
Final whistle/beating Braintree	30%
Walk to Wingate	11%
Other votes: Harlow losing and Stones going up, Leatherhead No 9 being sent off, Braintree's keeper pulling a face, Every goal v Braintree.	

There was never going to be any other winner. The fact that the Braintree game came as close as did shows was a truly memorable match it was.

WORST MOMENT OF THE SEASON

LOSING TO HARLOW HOME AND AWAY	28%
Losing to Harlow and Northwood in the same week	15%
Losing to Spalding	13%
Other votes: Seeing Bonfield in goal, Losing at Braintree, Boro's return to form, Losing to Flackwell, Losing the final v Leighton, Kingsbury away, Girlfriend's cat dying, Greene's goal at Harlow, Bid for stadium falling through.	

Losing to them once when you need a point to win promotion is bad enough, but having to go to the ski-slope needing a win for the title and losing again is just too much to take. Do I hate that place! Second comes that fateful week when we just needed a point first and then a win to go up, only for us to lose twice at home.

BEST OPPONENTS

NORTHWOOD	37%
Spalding United	32%
Braintree Town	10%
Other votes: Harlow Town, Southall, Wingate and Finchley, Banstead Athletic, Horsham	

Spalding were by far and away the best team we played. How on earth Northwood won is beyond belief. All they did was defend against us at the White Lion and hit us on the break, and we pissed all over them at Chestnut Avenue.

WORST OPPONENTS

TRING TOWN	39%
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Dorking	25%
Edgware Town	5%
Other votes: Clapton, Braintree, Kingsbury, Harlow, Southall, Banstead, Too many, Kempton Rovers, Lewes, Hornchurch	

Just so many to choose from.

BEST GROUND

WINGATE-FINCHLEY	36%
Edgware Town	14%
Lower Mead	11%
Other votes: Braintree Town, Northwood, Lewes, Egham Town, Horsham, Spalding United, All crap, East Thurrock United, Kingsbury Town	

Whether it is the ground or the welcome, but the Bill Summers Stadium always does well.

WORST GROUND

HARLOW TOWN	56%
Clapton	15%
Tring Town	7%
Other votes: Leatherhead, Hertford Town, Camberley, Dorking, All of them, Hornchurch, Hitchin Town	

Guess what? Most people voted for the dump before we even played there!

BEST PROGRAMME

WEALDSTONE	57%
Northwood	35%
Wingate and Finchley	5%
Other votes: Topless darts	

After last season when Northwood were the first team to win the award apart from Wealdstone, Stones regained the title. 'Woods programme is brilliant but the content is dull and there are no general football articles.

MOST HATED TEAM

SCUM	84%
Harlow Town	15%
Manchester United	9%
Other votes: Horsham, Watford, Enfield, Millwall	

Scum are Scum are Scum are Scum etc. etc. etc.

THE TONY BOOTH AWARD FOR THE MOST DISLIKED FOOTBALLING PERSONALITY

TONY BOOTH	64%
Dennis Greene	8%
All at Enfield and Scum	6%

Other votes: Mick Robinson, Megaphone Mick, Any Scummer, Justin "Albatross" Daly, Mark Dunk - Horsham's manager, Graham Roberts, Harlow Town, Russell Grant

Who else but our mate, Festering himself!

WORST REFEREE

MR ROPER V LEWES	46%
Mr Culot v Spalding	21%
99% of them	10%

Other votes: Mick Robinson, Steve Hibberd, Mr Dodge, Mr Ebbage, P Dunn, Referee v Harlow (h)

The man that nearly started a riot at the White Lion by sending off Fergus Moore for no reason and then playing nearly ten minutes of injury time should be thrown off the list along with that plank up at Spalding.

ALL TIME FAVOURITE PLAYER

ALAN CORDICE	30%
George Duck	21%
Stuart Pearce	12%

Other votes: Hugh Lindsey, Dave Venables, Lee Walker, Tony Blair, Tim Buzaglio, Fergus Moore,

AT WHAT LEVEL OF FOOTBALL DO YOU THINK WEALDSTONE WILL BE PLAYING AT IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

Response in year	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991
ISTHMIAN* PREMIER	54%	31%	50%	55%	48%	29%	15%
ISTHMIAN* ONE	36%	49%	30%	4%	13%	-%	-%
CONFERENCE	7%	5%	9%	40%	13%	17%	47%
ISTHMIAN TWO	2%	4%	-%	-%	-%	-%	-%
MERGED WITH EDGWARE	-	4%	-%	-%	-%	-%	-%
F A PREMIERSHIP	-	1%	-%	-%	8%	-%	-%
MARATHON LEAGUE	-	-%	3%	-%	4%	8%	-%
SPARTAN LEAGUE	-	-%	-%	-%	-%	4%	11%
DEFUNCT	-	1%	-%	-%	2%	17%	9%

* or Southern

Between 1991 & 1993 no respondents to this survey made the correct prediction!

Tony Lynch, George Best, Steve Perkins, Robin Wainwright, Chris Lightfoot, Hughie Dowd,

Same top three, just second and third the other way round from last season.

MOST MEMORABLE MATCH

BOSTON UNITED - F A TROPHY FINAL 1985	41%
Kettering Town - Gola League 1985	12%
Braintree Town - IcIs 3 1997	12%

Other votes: Cambridge City (h) BHL 1991, Northwood (a) I3 1997, Stevenage Ath (h) FAC 1965, Windsor (a) I3 1996, Tony Blair, Dover (h) BHL 1991, Leatherhead (h) AMT 1997, Swansea (h) FAC 1986

Braintree sneaks into third, even ahead of the last game at Lower Mead and the title win at Northwood. Top two as expected.

WORST MATCH EVER

AP LEAMINGTON APL 1981	14%
Scum FAT 1990	13%
Any Scum defeat	13%

Other votes: Chesham United FAAC 1967, Scum FAC 1981, Northwood (h) I3 1996, Cambridge BHL 1991, Any game at Tring/Southall, Any in 1993/94, Poole at Watford, WBA v Plymouth Argyle early 1990s, Grays FAC 1984, Bangor (a) 0-0, Reading (a) FAC 1986, Ruistip Manor (a) FAC, Newport (IOW) (h), CAV (h) MSC 1964, South Bank (a) FAT 1986, Gravesend (h) BHL 1992

Was it the worst match ever or the catalyst for the double. A bit of both.

SIMON GARNER

Wealdstone's first genuine star since....err...John McCormick? Terry Dyson?... talks to Mike Vincent



I met Simon for lunch, beer and a chat at the Royal Oak in Abbots Langley on the 16th July, and this came about through a mutual friend (and a work colleague of mine) called Steve Hayes, who suggested the idea in the first place. The following questions and answers took place, and I hope that those reading this will find it a fascinating insight into the life and times of Blackburn Rovers record goalscorer with 171 goals (eat your heart out Alan Shearer!) and Wealdstone's star striker.

Q Simon, first of all, many congratulations on helping Wealdstone win the ICIS League Division Three title, but initially how was it that you came to join Wealdstone?

A I joined Wealdstone after being released by Woking when Gordon Bartlett phoned and asked if I would like to go and train with them, and I went training, enjoyed the set up so signed for them. Up until then I hadn't spoken to Gordon previously, and after speaking to him I rang a few people who told me that he is a very good manager, and that he had done well in the past, so I decided to give it a try.

Q Had you heard of Wealdstone Football Club prior

to this, and were you aware that they were the first team to win the Non League double way back in 1985?

A I had heard of Wealdstone before, but I didn't know where they played or what division they are in, and when I looked in the newspapers I must admit that I was looking in the ICIS Premier League for them! In relation to the other part of the question I can remember Wealdstone from their days in the Vauxhall Conference, and was aware of their past achievements, especially as I was born in Boston, (Lincolnshire not America!).

Q What is your opinion of the current set of players and management that we now have at the club?

A The management team is very good and the set of players that won the title last season was a very good team, and I thought we were by far and away the best team in the division, and I think that we will do very well again this season, especially as Gordon is looking to strengthen the squad.

Q Moving on from that question, do you think that promotion from ICIS Division Two is a realistic possibility next season?

A Definitely, as Gordon knows what he needs to get out of the second division, and he is looking to go straight up and I think we'll do it again.

Q Under the current management team of Gordon Frank and Leo, how far do you expect this club to progress in the next five years ?

A The three of them work well together, and the way Gordon knows his local and Non League football, in five years time I would expect Wealdstone to be playing in the ICIS Premier League, at least. In the short time that I've known Gordon, I know that he isn't a man to stand still, and I think he will know what players he will want to enable Wealdstone to get out of each division.

Q Considering that Wealdstone were a club in the ICIS Division Three, were you surprised at the level of support that they got ?

A Very much so, as on leaving Woking I had the chance to join Wealdstone or Fleet, and I went to watch Fleet play and there were hardly any supporters there, and I spoke to Gordon, who seemed a lot more involved in his job, knew what he wanted and where he was going, and when I played a game I couldn't believe the level of support here, it's very good and also a laugh. I was used to playing in front of larger crowds where you don't tend to hear individuals, so when you play in front of a smaller crowd you can hear everything that is being said, and it is very, very funny, I must admit.

Q You left for a short period of time to join Dagenham And Redbridge, but what was the main reason for coming back, and do you have any regrets about not playing in the FA Trophy Final this season ?

A I had a mate who played for Dagenham called Glyn Creaser, who told me that they were still in the FA Trophy and that they were looking for a striker, so I said that I'd go. I spoke to Gordon who was very good about it, and when I joined Wealdstone he said that if a club from a higher division came in I could talk to them. I went to Dagenham and played in one league game and was substitute in another, realised I had made a big mistake, as they weren't playing a patch on the type of football being played at Wealdstone, as it was much more kick and rush. I told their manager then spoke to Gordon who was very happy to take me back. About regrets, no, as I've played at Wembley Stadium four times and been a winner every time, so my 100% record is still intact!

Q Moving onto more general questions, who would you say is the best opponent that you have come

up against ?

A The best opponent was definitely Alan Hansen, he was very tough to play against, and I played against him three or four times in cup competitions. As a team that Liverpool team was the hardest that I've played against. Since being at Wealdstone there is no opponent that springs to mind as being particularly difficult to play against. Braintree were supposed to be the best other team in that division and we beat them six nil, so up until now touch wood I haven't had any particular problems.

Q What is the best goal that you have ever scored, and what is the best goal that you have seen someone else score ?

A The best goal I scored was for Blackburn against Wolves from forty two and a half yards exactly, because I measured it, no I didn't really!, but that was the best goal. To be honest I enjoy all the goals that I score, whether it's from forty yards or from under one yard it is still a good goal for me, I don't care how they go in. As for the best goal by someone else there are so many to choose from. I suppose the one that springs to mind is David Beckham's from the halfway line last season as that was a good opportunist goal, though that's not necessarily the best I've seen. I've been involved in football for such a long time that it is difficult to pick out one particular goal.

Q What has been the funniest moment that you have experienced in your career ?

A I once played in a team when a lad got cramp as he was running up to take a penalty and he fell over and knocked the ball gently which dribbled slowly into the goalkeepers arms, I think that one has been on T.V. on 'What happened next' His name was Pete Devine and it was in extra time. Since being at Wealdstone it has to be the fans, as you can hear every remark when they take the mickey out of the opposition, and when Stuart Miller rounded the goalkeeper last year and missed from two yards and hit the bar a bit like Ronny Rosenthal for Liverpool against Villa a few seasons back. I can say that Stuart's miss was funny now that the season is over and we won the league!

Q Who is the best striking partner that you've had and also the best manager you have played for ?

A The best striking partner is difficult as I've had such a long career, but certainly at the beginning it would have been John Radford who was famous for playing for Arsenal. At that time I was just starting in the game and he helped me a lot as did Duncan McKenzie. Now I'm older I look for the younger players to do the running around for me! Also David

Speedie was a very good player to play alongside as he took a lot of weight off you. Oh and I mustn't forget Lee Walker! As for the best manager, at Blackburn it would have to be a guy called Bobby Saxton, as at that time there was no money at the club, and he got us into the play offs on numerous occasions without spending any money. On the other hand you've got Kenny Dalglish who of course has had the money to spend, but he is still a good manager. Also one of the best managers I had was Martin O'Neill at Wycombe, as he is such a great motivator of players.

Q What is your best memory from playing at Blackburn ?

A That has to be breaking their scoring record, when I scored a hat trick against Manchester City and we won five nil or five one. I didn't really win any honours with them apart from winning the Simod Cup (Full Members, Zenith Data Systems etc.) after beating Charlton one nil, and that was my first appearance at Wembley, that was a happy memory.

Q You left Blackburn just before they hit the big time as such, so do you have any regrets that this happened or were you genuinely pleased for them and their fans when they won the Premiership ?

A I was very pleased for them, they are certainly the first team whose results I look for. The place has changed since I left, as money was only just coming into the club, as Dalglish arrived in the January and they won the Play Offs at the end of the season. My view is good luck to them, although I wish I was ten years younger and earning the money they earn! There is no point in crying over spilt milk as I had some great times there and after all those years in the old Second Division it was about time their fans saw some success.

Q You've mentioned the highlights, but what would you say was the lowest point in your career ?

A That has to be relegation in my first season at Blackburn when we were relegated from Division Two to Division Three, and also getting released from Wycombe under the management of Alan Smith, which were very strange times let's say. That was very upsetting at the time as I didn't think that I deserved to be released. Besides that I've not had many bad memories, as I've been very lucky during my career.

Q Now changing tack, as I want to ask some questions that the Wealdstone fans really want to know, like how did you lose your teeth ?

A They were knocked out playing for WBA against Plymouth Argyle when Peter Shilton came out for the ball. It was a bit like the Maradona incident, only I headed the ball and put the ball in the net and Shilton punched my teeth out! The main thing was I still scored!

Q Did you buy an ICIS Division Three Champions badge from Toby Jackson and if yes do you wear it ?

A He gave all the players a badge after the Northwood game, and I wear it every day of course!

Q Tell us something about Lee Walker that he wouldn't want us to know ?

A He can't pull a woman, he thinks that he's Gods gift to women but he can't pull, or at least that's how the rumour goes!

Q Talking about Lee he recently did a survey amongst Wealdstone staff, players and supporters asking them who is their favourite Spice Girl. What would your answer be ?

A I can't really answer that as they are all too young for me, I mean they are all young enough to be my daughters, I suppose you'd be better off asking who my favourite Supreme is, and then I'd pick Diana Ross! If I had to pick a Spice Girl it would have to be the posh one, you know, the one that is going out with Beckham (I assume you mean Victoria, just in case any High Court judge is reading this who doesn't know who posh spice is). But really I'm not into the Spice Girls.

Q Finally thank you for your time, and I'd like to wish you all the best for the coming season and the future in general, but I'd like to end with a serious question that you might need some time to think about before answering, considering that this interview will hopefully be published in the Wealdstone fanzine the Elmslie Ender. That question is do you hate Harrow Borough ?

A Yes I hate Harrow Borough, is that what I'm meant to say? Yes I hate Harrow Borough, I don't know them at all but I hate them!

And that's all folks as they say. Take your hats off to Simon Garner, a good footballer, a good bloke, a good laugh and someone else who now hates the Scummers!

Mike Vincent

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WEALDSTONE?

It's a question asked from Gateshead to Weymouth. Martin Lacey attempts to trace the labyrinthine events which brought a once famous football club to its knees.

Back in the seventies, before the invention of realism, any non-league club chairman worth his gin & tonic would tell you with the utmost sincerity that his club were destined for the Football League within ten years. Wealdstone were no exception. The stumbling block, as anyone could see, was the state of Lower Mead, so for as long as I can remember there was always at least a vague plan to rebuild, initially at Lower Mead itself, turning the pitch through 90 degrees and building on surrounding land. I don't know exactly when Wealdstone got into debt, presumably not long after joining the Southern League in 1971. Traditionalists have often suggested that the decision to abandon the amateur ranks was Wealdstone's downfall, but amateur status was abolished a few years later anyway. True, Wycombe and Enfield, who clung to the Isthmian code to the end, have thrived. But other, traditionally bigger, clubs than Wealdstone such as Hendon, Dulwich and Tooting have been through as many traumas as us with none of the silverware. By joining the nominally 'professional' ranks Wealdstone got themselves on the grid for the formation of the Alliance Premier League and enjoyed a run of - relative - FA Cup success that had previously eluded them. However, once the club were in debt, for whatever reason, Lower Mead was doomed. The obvious solution was to sell the ground, which had been surrounded by fields when it opened in 1922 but was now a prime town centre development site, and build

on a cheaper location. Little did anyone suspect how hard that location would be to find.

The arrival of David Morrill at the start of the eighties seemed to bring the dream a step closer. Certainly things took a turn for the better on the field, and nobody can doubt that without Morrill's money Wealdstone's achievements of the 80s would not have happened, nor that, for a time, Morrill took real pleasure in the club's success and was as enthusiastic as the most loyal supporter. But his pleasure came not from serving the supporters or the wider community; Wealdstone was Morrill's plaything, and though he longed to be seen as a man of the people his actions rarely supported this aim. He always referred to Wealdstone as "my club" and treated it accordingly, rarely listened to suggestions or criticism, however constructive, while his off aired enthusiasm for a future merger with Harrow Borough - not shared by anyone else at either club - showed how out of touch he really was. So while the club's fortunes on the pitch soared, PR went out of the window. The failure to identify Wealdstone FC with the people of Harrow was total. An average gate of around 800 the year Wealdstone won the double was testament to this.

It needs to be borne in mind also that most, if not all, Morrill's investment in the club was in the form of loans, which, with the freehold of Lower Mead as security, were as safe as the proverbial houses.

After the double Wealdstone's fortunes on the pitch declined sharply. Within two years Brian Hall had resigned, citing lack of money to rebuild a team that was arguably already past its peak when they won at Wembley and was now sinking in a division which was becoming rapidly more competitive with the carrot of automatic promotion to the Football League dangling on the horizon. Supporters had perhaps never fully been convinced of Hall's abilities and there were not the rumblings of discontent that might have been expected. However, Hall's replacement, Colin Meldrum, proved much worse, and Wealdstone's footballing status went into a ten year decline of disaster movie proportions.

By the midpoint of 1987-88 Wealdstone were heading for relegation and Morrill's popularity was in terminal decline. Firstly he insisted that Wealdstone would have to leave Lower Mead at the end of the season regardless of whether there was a new ground in the pipeline, because in the wake of the Bradford fire three years earlier the authorities were demanding extensive improvements to the ground which he was unwilling to finance when the club was going to move anyway. A temporary groundshare, possibly with Barnet, was suggested. However, rumours circulated that Morrill was exaggerating the cost of the necessary improvements and was simply desperate to call in his loans. Worse for Morrill, the papers broke a story that he had tried to buy Watford from Elton John. This far fetched plan involved using the money from the sale of Lower Mead to buy Watford, whereupon Morrill would become the Hornets' chairman and Wealdstone would move in to share at Vicarage Road. In theory,

this would have made Wealdstone Watford's landlords, but with Morrill chairman of Watford and Wealdstone's money gone it is ludicrous to suppose that Wealdstone could have survived long before, at best, a merger in which Wealdstone's identity would have vanished. The plan had been turned down flat by Watford long before it was in the papers, but it was another nail in the coffin of Morrill's career at Lower Mead.

This ludicrous scheme was seen as further evidence of Morrill's lack of commitment to Wealdstone and by way of reward he was effectively run out of the club, a case of *Et Tu, Brute*, as it was his deputy, Alan Clifton who lead the backstabbing. Clifton won support by promising to spend money on the team, keep Lower Mead open until its replacement was ready, and announce concrete plans for a new ground within a year. It sounded too good to be true and of course it was!

Clifton kept one of his promises: to spend on the team. It was hardly his fault that managers who couldn't manage spent badly on players who couldn't play. After relegation in 1988 Wealdstone spent three years toiling in the midtable mediocrity of the Southern League Premier, making no impression in the cups, while supporters continued to drift away. However, the inevitable consequence was an ever-accelerating debt which made the sale of Lower Mead an increasingly urgent necessity.

Backing Wealdstone financially now fell to Harrovian Estates, a local property company, with the long mooted plan to turn Lower Mead into a supermarket increasingly aired in the open.

Barely eighteen months after taking over

- In the summer of 1989 - Clifton announced that he would do exactly what Morriff had been driven out of the club for threatening: sell Lower Mead and move into a temporary home while the search for a new ground was pursued. Worse still, the temporary home was to be a desolate athletics stadium at Willesden, devoid of atmosphere and largely inaccessible from the club's traditional territory.

But by the end of the year there had been a reprieve. Harrovian had reportedly stepped in with a further finance package, designed to support the club at Lower Mead for up to four years, in return for Wealdstone eventually selling the ground at the 1989 price: £8 million. Smiles all round. Unfortunately it was a short four years! Late in 1990 yet another new plan was hatched. Wealdstone were to move to a rebuilt Willesden Stadium in 1992, groundsharing for a year with Harrow Borough while the work was carried out. Although geographically far from ideal, this did appear to at least offer the prospect of financial security and a ground to be proud of.

At this point, the history of Wealdstone FC descends into a murky combination of tragedy and farce. Unbeknown to the supporters, Wealdstone and Harrovian had committed themselves to selling Lower Mead and the surrounding property to Tesco for £12.1 million - to be split 50-50 despite the fact that Wealdstone's share of the property had been valued at anything up to £10 million - before confirming the availability of the Willesden site. Once the local NIMBY tendency got wind of the plan Brent Council, who had up to this point been filled with glee at the prospect of 'stealing' Wealdstone from Harrow, did an about face and promptly declared the

new ground a non-starter.

By February even the groundshare with Harrow Borough had been withdrawn from the negotiating table. The Harrow Observer reported that this was because the Isthmian League would not sanction an indefinite groundsharing arrangement between one of its clubs and one from a different league. I have since been informed that this was, not to put too fine a point on it, bollocks. Indeed, in 1993 Wealdstone moved in with Yeading under exactly the same conditions. With only weeks remaining to the end of the 1990/91 season Wealdstone faced homelessness and extinction.

Enter a knight in shining armour, though some might now consider him to be more of a court jester. David Pollock, a Wealdstone supporting estate agent who happened to be friends with a Watford FC director, approached the Wealdstone board with an audacious plan designed to save Wealdstone, benefit Watford and put a few quid in his own pocket by way of commission. For £2.5 million Wealdstone would get a 50% share in Vicarage Road and move in with Watford not as tenants but equal partners.

Once the disbelief had died down supporters were forced to admit this looked like a masterstroke. Reservations about the travelling and atmosphere apart, Wealdstone had acquired a ground which had recently graced the First Division, and after paying off existing debts would have a cool £2.5 million left in the bank with which to build a team to fill Vicarage Road and pass rapidly through the Conference en route to the Football League. So what went wrong?

Answer: everything. Even as fans bade a

drunken farewell to Lower Mead rumours spread that the Watford deal was falling apart. Indeed it was. Though Wealdstone were, in theory, receiving £6.05 million for Lower Mead around half of this sum was being paid directly to Harrovian in return for building the stadium-that-wasn't at Willesden, reputedly as a legal but risky tax avoidance measure. Wealdstone signed the deal with Watford on the assumption that

afford. To pull out would have meant, inevitably, being sued by Watford; to go through with it was equally suicidal if the missing cash was not recovered. Frantic renegotiations ensued. In the end Wealdstone paid Watford £2 million and agreed to owe them the rest. Season 1991/92 kicked off on schedule at Vicarage Road.

Wealdstone had now made three cata-



Wilderness years: Stones attack at an empty Vicarage Road

Harrovian were about to hand the money back. But with the property boom of the 80s well and truly over, Harrovian were on the fast track to bankruptcy and other creditors were at the front of the queue for Wealdstone's cash. Wealdstone had signed a deal with Watford that they could no longer

strophic decisions in the space of a year: (1) to sell Lower Mead without having anywhere else to go; (2) to pledge cash to Harrovian to build a ground without any guarantee that it would actually get built and (3) agreeing to buy a 50% share in Vicarage Road without being certain they had the money to pay for it.

Clifton resigned shortly after the start of the season claiming - astonishingly in the light of subsequent revelations - that he was proud to be leaving the club in such a healthy financial state! David Pollock ascended the hotseat after a meteoric rise from the terrace to the chairmanship in six months. Still little was done to inform the supporters what had happened and boardroom heads appeared to be buried firmly in the sand when it came to facing the impending crisis.

The supporters had only rumour and hearsay to go by, and were at this time little aware of how desperate the club's situation was. Stones owed Watford £500,000 from the original purchase, plus a mounting bill for interest and ground maintenance costs. Harrovian were gone for good, and since it appeared that the deal between Wealdstone and Harrovian had been perfectly legitimate, so was Wealdstone's money. Wealdstone's only course of redress was now to sue the solicitors who had advised on the deal, but since this was certain to be a long, complicated and expensive process, with no guarantee of success and the probability that even if the case was won the payout would be severely restricted by the extent of the solicitors' insurance cover, the future looked bleak.

Just as bleak on the pitch, where Brian Hall, back for a second spell in charge, was failing to cope with the demands of the Southern League Premier. Hall was subsequently sacked as an economy measure, allowing him to come back for a payout when the club's finances were straightened out; whether it would have worked out cheaper we can't say, but most supporters would gladly have seen him dismissed simply for being a crap

manager. Wealdstone ended the season with a new sort of double: relegation and going into administration!

At first the administrator - David Buchler - suggested that his role was merely to protect Wealdstone from its creditors and the existing board could go on running the club largely unhindered. Within weeks he'd done an about-face, claiming he'd been unaware of the true extent of Wealdstone's losses and that if the deficit could not be cut immediately the club would close, to re-form if and when there was a satisfactory outcome to the legal proceedings. This initiated a frantic period of fundraising including the expansion of the Blue Ribbon lottery and the famous sponsored walk to Fisher Athletic. Even so there was a real fear that every game might be the last.

On the playing side, with their backs to the wall the team responded positively at last; there was a brief revival under Dennis Byatt's reluctant managership; promotion seemed within reach for a while, but results slumped in the second half of the season and midtable beckoned.

The administrators saw Vicarage Road as a millstone and set about negotiating to sell it back to Watford. The eventual agreement saw Watford buy Wealdstone's 50% back for £500,000 and agree to delay receipt of the outstanding interest and maintenance arrears. Since Wealdstone still owed Watford £500,000 no money actually changed hands. When Stones finally settled their debts they had effectively paid Watford £2.137 million for two years of ground-sharing. Watford's new stand went up at the Vicarage Road end, and when they sought possible names for the new structure there were more than a few letters

from the Harrow area suggesting "The Wealdstone Memorial Stand".

For 1993-94 Wealdstone moved in to share with Yeading at The Warren, a poor ground, lacking in atmosphere, eight miles from Wealdstone and inaccessible by public transport. On top of that, with cash for the team constantly being cut, Wealdstone had their worst season in memory avoiding being thrown out of the Southern League only because there was no suitable replacement. Crowds not surprisingly slumped to record lows. However, there was one piece of bright news during Stones' two years at Yeading: an out of court settlement of the outstanding legal cases from the sale of Lower Mead. This was a watershed: Wealdstone accepted that the millions were gone for ever, but the club were finally able to pay all their debts and, solvent if no longer rich, contemplate the search for a ground of their own once more. With the club at its lowest ebb David Pollock stepped down and another new chairman, Paul Rumens, a longstanding supporter with an appetite for the battles ahead, took over.

The second season at Yeading saw an improvement in playing fortunes, but by mid-season Wealdstone's league position was irrelevant as the club had agreed to switch to the Isthmian League, meaning a voluntary relegation of two divisions. The board sold the plan to the membership on the basis that it would save money and bring success, albeit at a lower level, and it was accepted, reluctantly, because of the consensus that nothing was more important than saving money towards the holy grail of a new home for the club.

The nomadic trail continued to the White

Lion Ground, Edgware, where Wealdstone kicked off the 1995-96 season back in the Borough of Harrow. The public had not forgotten the club: a crowd of over 500 for the first home fixture was bigger than for some of Wealdstone's last Conference games at Lower Mead. However, the team neglected to deliver the goods, and failing to win promotion at the first attempt in such a poor competition was a bitter pill. Moreover, Wealdstone soon appeared to be falling out with their new landlords, and hopes for construction of a new ground at The Ridgeway were dashed after hopes had been high and much money spent on preliminary work.

1996-97 finally saw progress on the field, Stones leading the table almost from start to finish and winning promotion from ICIS League Division Three as champions after coming good on the final day. Even then the achievement was overshadowed by the nagging possibility that this might turn out to be the club's last ever trophy.

The viability of any non-league club depends on generating revenue from off-field activities and facilities and it has long been recognised that for Wealdstone to have any future they must build their own ground. Plans and proposals are still in the air, but with dwindling funds the last chance is surely not far away. Could 1997-98 be the season when the long-term future of Wealdstone FC is secured? It's been a long road down but we all hope the first step has now been taken on the way back.

SUDHIR SAYS

Elmslie Ender editor Sudhir Rawal gets to grips with prospects for the new season

It was a very small step indeed, but a significant one.

Twelve long years, mainly shrouded in controversy, deepening crisis and lacklustre performances on the football field, had elapsed since Wealdstone had last won a championship. That was the Gola League (Conference), and twelve years later after three demotions (one self imposed) it may have been only the Isthmian League Division three, but a championship it was.

In typical Wealdstone style, it was left to the very end of the very last game of the season. Having gone thirteen points clear in February, Wealdstone should have coasted to the title but we spluttered towards the end of the season and it was left to the final ten minutes of the season to score the vital goals to secure the championship. I suppose it made winning the championship even sweeter and the celebrations probably that much better. And boy, did the celebrations go on all night. Who can ever forget the pictures of the pitch invasions in the local press after the third goal, especially Jes Albert's beaming face as he went to hug Bryan Hammatt?

Without any doubt Wealdstone deserved to win the title. Not only were we the most consistent side in the division, but our annihilation of Braintree at the White Lion Ground deserved the championship on its own. It was the most complete performance by any Wealdstone side that I can remember. The fact it was only six was down to a combination of good goal-keeping, poor finishing and sheer bad luck. We deserved double figures that night and have the crowd's chants of "What's it like to be outclassed" ever

been sung by Wealdstone fans with greater conviction?

Obviously the title wasn't won by that one performance only. Our consistency was primarily down to a miserly defence. Both Roy Marshall and Fergus Moore were superb and the confidence that they exuded permeated the rest of the side. The midfield saw solid performances from Steve Bircham and Paul McKay, with fitful brilliance from Terry Hibbert. It was up front, however, where we struggled. This may appear strange, but our 'goals for' total for champions was pitiful. Our goals came from a number of sources; we failed to have one single big scorer and our forwards had indifferent seasons in hitting the back of the net. Bryan Hammatt finished top of the tree but he didn't score that regularly, being a provider as much as a finisher. Lee Walker spent much of the season on the injury list and, but for any cameo role he may play, he is not the answer to our goalscoring problems. Peter Green missed far, far more than he scored. Paul Sheldrick never re-created the form of the previous season when he finished as top goalscorer and Steve Fraser was just his usual self. Even Simon Garner, though superb at creating chances for everyone else, did not score enough goals.

There were some wonderful moments and some exceptional performances. I have already mentioned the Braintree match, but we shouldn't forget the Associate Member Trophy semi-final against Leatherhead, Wingate and Finchley both home and away, the title decider at Northwood, or the trip to Spalding to name a few.

Our detractors will also say that we should

have won the title, observing the size of the club, support and resources at our disposal. Whilst we were not throwing money around as under previous regimes, you can not disagree with this statement. It should not be forgotten, though, that Braintree, definitely, and Harlow, possibly, spent a lot more money than we did and still didn't win the title, and in Harlow's case failed to even go up. You can only win the division your in, and we failed last season under similar circumstances.

The season was also vital to the management team. They were acutely aware, as everyone else, that promotion was expected in their first season, let alone last season. The lack of success creates a pressure cooker which builds and builds until it finally blows. The management's greatest feat was to never allow the pressure to get out of hand or get to the team. The magazine, along with the vast majority of our support, has always felt that Gordon Bartlett, Leo Morris and Frank O'Brien are the right people at the right club. It is a perfect partnership that if allowed to develop, and this is more down to external factors rather than internal, can go from strength to strength. Has a manager a safer job in non-league football?

The main disappointments were the FA competitions: the Challenge Cup and the Vase. Our continued poor performance in the F A Cup proves to be a great waste of potential publicity. However last season we were in a difficult group, so it was no great surprise when we fell at the second hurdle when we have failed in much easier groups in the past. It might be pertinent to note that the last time that we reached the first round proper was 1986. In the Vase, while it seemed disappointing at the time to have failed in a competition that we were amongst the favourites to win, in hindsight a sustained run in the Vase can only lead to a backlog of fix-

tures with little financial compensation. Of course losing to Spalding in the replay was unexpected. We should have won the first match in Lincolnshire and would have but for an incompetent referee.

As testament to how good the season was a number of previous records - since we turned professional - were either equalled or bettered. We beat the record for the fewest league goals conceded in a season, the most consecutive games without a draw at home, the most consecutive league wins, home and away, the most consecutive league wins at home, the fewest drawn league matches, and equalled the record for fewest defeats, and the most consecutive wins, home and away combined.

The coming season could prove a watershed for the club. The majority of supporters seem to have taken a realistic view of our chances for promotion. There are a number of teams that can mount a challenge. We are certainly not the big fish in the small pond anymore. I would suggest that last season's side would not win promotion at the first attempt and the crucial pre-season signings will determine how well we do.

As any manager will say, the spine of a team is fundamentally important and in the context of Wealdstone changes may need to be made in this area. Darren Bonfield was certainly more consistent than his predecessor but crucial mistakes in vital games will ensure that he is under a lot of scrutiny this season. Football is about having the "bottle" to compete. Roy Marshall needs a more consistent playing partner alongside him. Far too often, he and Fergus Moore held the defence together. The midfield performed well last season, particularly McKay and Bircham, but someone like Chris Walton will be looking for a much better season and Terry Hibbert should be seeking more consistency.

Up front is where the most radical surgery is needed. Simon Garner is simply a class performer and in the pre-season friendlies is already looking sharper and leaner but who will play alongside him? Bryan Hammatt's departure to Hayes has left a void. Of the present incumbents, Lee Walker seems past his best both ravaged by injury and the challenge of better newcomers. Stuart Miller was a great disappointment last season. He failed to live up to the promise he showed in the pre-season friendlies. How his season may have progressed if he had not missed that open goal against Harlow we will never know. Peter Green, though not as big a disappointment as Miller, may have scored the odd spectacular goal but missed some real sitters. A vital season looms for both Miller and Green in how their so far very disappointing Wealdstone careers will fare. So who next...

Lawrence Yaku only played a couple of goals last season, notable the semi-final replay verses Leatherhead, and has potential but it will be down to the management and the player himself to bring the best out of him. The most encouraging news up front is the signing of Dennis Greene from Harlow Town. There are some that will be filled with dread with the news but he's an excellent acquisition. He's the type of player that we haven't had for many years. A nasty, cocky character on the field who is a proven goalscorer. The only downside is that he will be playing in Finland until the end of September and, therefore, missing a quarter of the season. Another possible acquisition is Keith Boreham. Many will recall that Boreham trained with us two years ago, then decided to play for Windsor where he finished as their leading scorer when they went up from the third, then last season he moved to Wembley and finished as their top scorer as they were promoted from the second. A forward line of Garner, Greene and

Boreham looks very good on paper, and can only enhance our promotion chances.

The last two seasons we have predicted the three teams that filled the promotion spots accurately. This season it is far too close to call, too many potential challengers and we can only hope that Wealdstone are in there at the end.

Any football club, especially one that has fallen so far, needs to create a bandwagon effect before it can start its long journey back. Winning the title has gone some way towards that goal.

Obviously, a new ground will allow that effect to continue and for that matter alone, August 1997 will be possibly the most crucial month in the Football Club's history. A number of vital meetings involving all the relevant parties are probably going on as this publication goes to press. A positive outcome, and I am crossing everything possible whilst writing this, could mean that within two years a new Lower Mead may finally take shape at the Prince Edward Playing Fields. As Gordon Bartlett mentions in his interview, the Club can not continue to live a nomadic existence. The Club must take root, build solid foundations and prosper in its own stadium. Prince Edward seems to be our last hope whatever other options are available. Whatever your political persuasion, there is no doubt that the new MP for Harrow East, Tony McNulty, has played a prominent role in the move towards the new ground. It just goes to show that if the political will is there, then mountains can be moved. We are probably closer than we have ever been before, but by the same token it does not have to be said that should Prince Edward fail, so will our chance for a ground in Harrow and probably the Club's future go with it.

Not only was last season good on the

football field but many positive aspects took place off the field as well. The Football Club opened a new shop in central Harrow. I remember on a trip to Runcorn when I saw the Linnets shop in their town centre, I thought then what a good local focal point it seemed to be. So it has proved with the Lowlands Road shop in Harrow. Not only is it a presence in the town centre, a focal point, but Layne Patterson has utilised the shop space to the full. It is now down to Layne to ensure that the Shop becomes a commercial as well promotional success that it is now.

Further success of the field has been the re-emergence of the Supporters' Club committee. A previous issue of the Elmslie Ender had carried a scathing attack on the committee. The committee has grown to its largest number in quite a while, mostly consisting of the under 30s and is moving forward in a number of areas. A previous bug bear of mine has always been the woeful way that the Junior Stones has been handled in recent years. More progress has been made in the close season by Paul Fruin, than in the previous five years. But the most startling achievement of the committee was the Walk to Wingate. The previous sponsored walk, the Walk to Fisher, occurred under dramatically different circumstances. Then the club was looking oblivion squarely in the eye, and raising funds quickly was a question of life and death for club. The Wingate walk just did not have same urgency and I, for one, was amazed at the number of participants. Maybe the *coup de grace* was donating 25% to charity which not only raised considerably more money but also allowed the Supporters' Club to earn valuable publicity. Again, Paul Fruin, this time assisted by Graham Jones, was involved. As has been continually said, success on the field will breed success off the field for the Supporters' Club.

Another vital step in the right direction has been the self promotion of the Club through the distribution of free tickets to schools. This resulted in our best league crowd in six years against Epsom. Indeed the crowd would have been considerably higher had a succession of poor results not led to a number of regular supporters not attending. The phrase 'told you so' comes to mind. It is something that this magazine has advocated for years. At last the Club is using various stunts and gimmicks to restore our reputation as the biggest Club in the Borough. The pub team from South Harrow could try the same venture, and indeed has done so, but cannot and will not attract the support we can.

Talking of support, our home crowds showed a healthy increase on the previous season and were nearly 50% higher than the Scummers. This with us still three divisions below them and without the aid of away supporters who considerably increase their crowds. Our away support has been excellent as ever and some of the numbers travelling to away games has been amazing. A number of games saw heady atmospheres not heard /seen since Lower Mead. Obviously, Braintree at home, Spalding away, Northwood at home in the second half and away at Northwood, Harlow at home and Leatherhead away spring to mind, but crucially two games - home to Wingate and East Thurrock - turned thanks to the support from the terraces. Predictably the championship decider at Northwood would always attract our best away support of the season, but the 600 that made the short trip up the A404 continues to show the true potential that we have. Continued success on the field and a new ground can only enhance that.

The taste of success after twelve lean years was sweet indeed, a sensation I don't want to wait that many years again to enjoy.

WALK TO WINGATE

Five years on from the 'Walk to Fisher' which was at least partially responsible for saving the club, Howard Kraiss reports on an attempt to recreate the Spirit of '92



Last year was a great year. The championship, the last day, the Supporters Club dinner - possibly the best club function ever - and also, very memorably, the walk to Wingate.

Travel back to last October, and on the morning of the away game at Camberley, I received a phone call telling me that the Supporters Club shop had been burned down. Our immediate hopes of raising some substantial money through the best range of souvenirs since leaving Lower Mead had gone literally up in smoke. It was a devastating blow, both for the

Supporters Club collectively and me personally. There are times when you ask yourself if performing such a role, purely a voluntary one, remember, is worth it; and this was certainly one of those times.

However, life carried on and we believed it was important for the Supporters Club not only to recover strongly, but also be seen to recover strongly. A well supported blanket collection, the new year raffle and the annual quiz night made some much needed money and raised spirits but, together with Graham Jones and Fingers Fruin, we began to plan an altogether big-

ger event.

We first considered the merits of a sponsored pub crawl. But lets face it, however much fun it would be, who was going to donate that much money?

It was about Christmas time that we thought of a "walk". It was five years since the Fisher walk, and if that set standards for football club survival, the sights for this event were set somewhat lower. The fixture list was consulted and the date was set; we would walk to Wingate and Finchley, just short of 10 miles from Harrow, on Saturday 15 March.

To maximise the PR potential we agreed on linking up with a local charity; the St. Luke's Hospice appeal, being one of the highest profile in Harrow, seemed a perfect match, particularly with established Wealdstone connections such as committee member Dan Helen, who helps at a St. Luke's day centre and Layne Patterson's mother running a St. Luke's shop. When we contacted the charity I don't think they expected too much, at first. Just a local football club doing some fundraising. I think that they probably expected we might raise £250 for them, and after all, any money was welcome.

As plans progressed, Fingers did a great job sussing out the route and ensuring that the Wingate club were fully aware and supportive of what we were doing. In fact he was attending so many of their committee meetings I thought he was going to be co-opted! Grim was signing up people, even Lee Walker (injured of course) was rumoured to be joining.

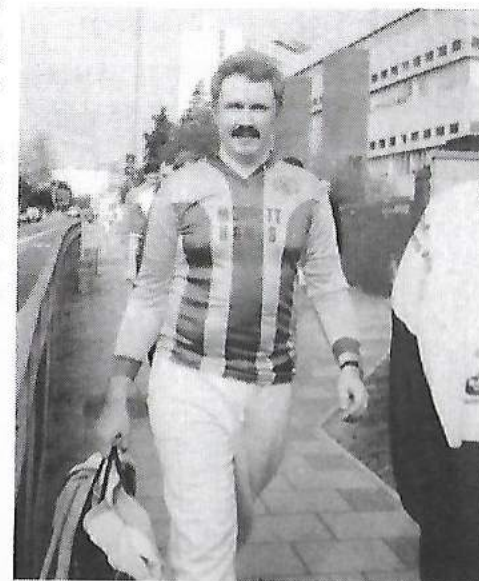
The numbers were growing all the time. I was hoping we might get up to sixty walkers and raise at a push £2500. By the time the day came round it was all beginning to seem quite exciting.

In fact there were seventy-two walkers who turned up at Harrow and Wealdstone

station early on the Saturday morning. Photographers from both the Harrow Observer and the Harrow Times captured the moment and we were also waved off by two St. Lukes representatives. Lee Walker's leg was not good enough to walk, so he didn't make it, but Frank O'Brien, Leo Morris, and Alan Wharton all did.

The route took us from Harrow and Wealdstone through Queensbury, Kingsbury, Hendon, across the Great North Road and through Finchley to Summers Lane. The one constant for the whole walk was that Roger Slater led throughout - competitive bugger! At times the party were spread almost a mile apart and it must have taken half an hour for the whole field to catch up before the final push into the ground.

We made it by about 11.30, about three and a half hours after leaving. Having missed the Fisher walk (due to holiday) I wasn't sure how it would feel physically and it was fine for the first seven miles, but



1985 shirts don't change their shape...
1985 fans do!

leaving Hendon I began to feel the pain rising from my soles upwards. But I wasn't in anything like as bad shape as Jeremy Albert. He had started the walk as official coat handler, and got worse throughout. He was really struggling come the end, no pitch invasion that afternoon!

Wingate and Finchley had laid on an excellent buffet, free drinks and cheap ground admission for us. I kept wondering why it was so strange to find another club who actually seem to like us!

That afternoon we won 3-0, my nine month old daughter enjoying seeing Terry Hibbert at his best. It was an excellent day.

And how much did we raise? Not £2500, but just short of £7000, quite an unbelievable sum. At the Epsom home game we presented St. Luke's with a cheque for £1500 and also made a similar donation to the football club. And the Supporters Club

now has a sum of money put away for when the new ground is built, which might ensure a roof on a stand, or a new shop of our own once again.

If in October I had felt like quitting the Supporters Club chair, the events of March 15 (and also May 3) make me feel quite the opposite. I was so proud of our supporters that day, and proud of the people who had helped me make the day such an incredible success, chiefly Fingers and Grim.

It just shows what can be done with a will to make things happen. How do we follow it? Well, watch this space (or at least the programme). What we can do - week after week - is continue to prove that Wealdstone FC has unequivocally the best supporters in non-league football.

