

REWIND SPECIAL: THE FIVE-WINS-IN-EIGHT-DAYS THAT WON WEALDSTONE THE CONFERENCE TITLE..

BY TIM PARKS Scanning by Martin Allen and Syl Knight
THE ANDY Graham article in the Newport programme had a lot of our older fans - and even a lot of the younger fans - looking back in wonder at that far-off double winning season, 27 years ago.

In many ways it was a bizarre season. The Stones won the Conference national - in those days called the Gola League despite losing 12 league games... almost certainly more than we will lose this campaign! The pioneering points system introduced that season - never tried before, and never tried since - of two for a home win and three on the road was ideally suited to Brian Hall's counter-attacking side.

And certainly our away record was far better than our record at Lower Mead, where a return of just eight wins and five defeats would have normally meant a final mid-table placing at best.

So let me take you back to mid-March 1985. The Stones had had a great start to the season until an Autumn hiccup that saw us fail to win in seven league games, and go out of the FA Cup to Grays Athletic (three levels below us in the Ryman Div One).

We climbed back to striking distance of leaders Altrincham with three successive wins - over Weymouth, Alty (crucially) and Frickley before another stutter

Boost for the title

WEALDSTONE 3 WEYMOUTH 2

IT DOESN'T SEEM to matter who puts on a Wealdstone shirt these days - they can still win.

On Saturday a much changed side missing Iles, Byatt, Wainwright and Alan Cordice still managed to get the better of Weymouth at Lower Mead.

However, it was the visitors who opened the scoring with a tenth minute goal from Bobby Shuntun.

Wealdstone had to wait until the 25th minute to

get back on level terms. Greenaway headed on a cross from the right for Johnson to convert.

The home side then entered their best period and struck again just before the break. A good move with Donnellan and Neil Cordice going the length of the field saw Cordice on the overlap blast home a shot into the far corner.

The second half saw some fluent football from the Stones but it was

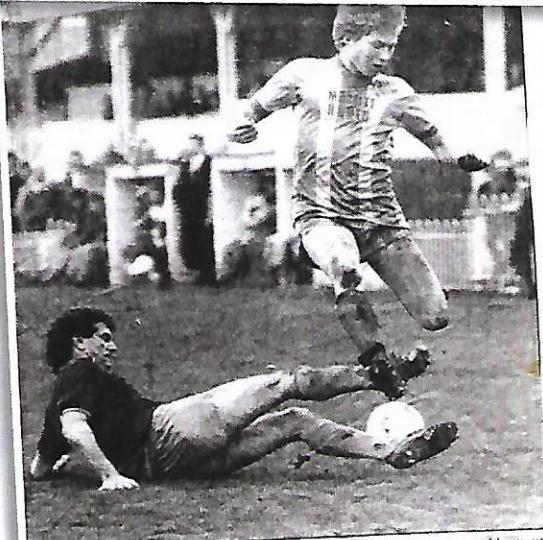
Weymouth that scored. Rogers beat three men before squaring to Borthwick who struck a low shot into the net.

But within three minutes Wealdstone restored their lead. Graham had an option to shoot but instead fed to Donnellan who accepted the task to send the ball past the keeper.

Bowgett and Neil Cordice both had later efforts that hit the woodwork but the single goal proved to be enough.

The only sad note for Wealdstone was the booking of Gary Donnellan, who will now miss the first FA Trophy semi final match with Infield.

▼ **IT STARTED WITH WEYMOUTH** local paper report of the 3-2 defeat of the Terras (great lazy headline word, 'boost') with the late Nigel Johnson to the fore..



WEALDSTONE'S Nigel Johnson jumps out of the way of a tackle from a Weymouth defender on Saturday.

Make or break week in championship bid

CONTD...

THE next week will make or break Wealdstone's assault on the Gola League title.

They face four league games, starting at home to Weymouth on Saturday, followed by trips to Altrincham and Gateshead and a home match with Runcorn.

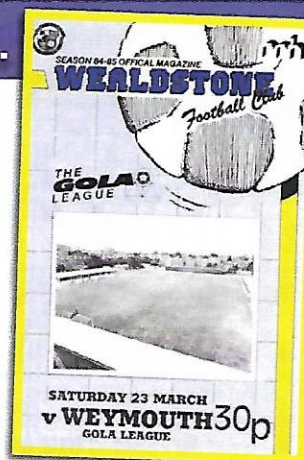
"These are the crunch games," said manager Brian Hall. "They will give me a more realistic view of what our chances are going to be."

"After that we can stand back and see if we are still in the championship running. Then we may

start concentrating on the Trophy. "It would be nice to do the double, but personally I would settle for one or the other."

"I would take the Trophy as it would be fantastic for everyone at the club, but the league means more to me as a manager because it is a greater test of our true ability."

Steve Perkins, with a stomach bug, and Bob Iles, who was still suffering with a hand injury, both missed the match with Yeovil, but are expected to be back on Saturday.



over the New Year period saw us progress in the FA Trophy but drop points left, right and centre.

Fortunately, though, so did our main rivals. Altrincham, Dartford, Kidderminster, Bath and Enfield all topped the table at different times... but the Es, probably the best team of that era somehow managed to go six games without

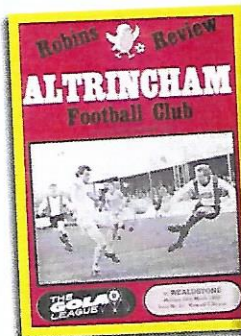
a win leading up to the Trophy semi-final against ourselves!

So, against this backdrop of the Stones' rivals lining up to shoot themselves in the foot, Hall's side embarked on a make-or-break spell of five games in eight days: Weymouth at home on Saturday March 23; Altrincham away on Monday March 25; Gateshead away on Wednesday March 27;

followed by Runcorn at home on Saturday March 30... and then, remarkably, Scarborough at home the following morning, on Sunday March 31st!

Martin Allen's Archive comes to the fore with his cuttings illuminating all five games... undoubtedly the most important week in the history of Wealdstone FC.

▼ **...THEN THE LEADERS**
Goals from Andy Graham and Alan Cordice won the vital clash at Moss Lane, giving Stones a league double over the current leaders Altrincham... faithfully reported by the Harrow Observer (right)



Cordice strikes to sink Altrincham 'Stones close the gap

Altrincham 1, Wealdstone 2
WEALDSTONE manager Brian Hall was not looking forward to Monday night's trip to Altrincham.

But his side turned in a performance worthy of champions to beat the Gola League leaders and close the gap at the top of the table.

"It was the crunch game and I did not really fancy our chances up there," admitted the Stones boss.

"Altrincham are no mugs. They are a good side and it was always going to be a hard, physical game. But my players were magnificent."

"It seems that the tougher the opposition the tougher we become and the better we play. It was a superb win and it has given the boys their confidence back again. They now realise they can beat the best."

For the first 20 minutes of Monday's match Wealdstone, and in particular Alan Cordice, were continuously caught in the Altrincham offside trap.

When Wealdstone did eventually master the offside trap, the chances started to flow.

Alan Cordice shot straight at the 'keeper from a Vince Jones corner. Gary Donnellan saw an effort held by the 'keeper and Lee Holmes blasted wide from a Cordice cross.

It took Wealdstone just 30 seconds of the second half to take the lead. And it



ALAN CORDICE — hit the precious winner.

was Andy Graham who was on the mark again.

Cordice latched on to the ball on the right, headed for the bye line, beat two players and fired in a cross which Graham met with a thunderous near post header that flew into the roof of the net.

The goal spurred Altrincham into action and they mounted a series of attacks on the Wealdstone goal.

Their pressure was rewarded after 54 minutes when Ronnie Ellis stabbed the ball home after a corner had been flicked on at the near post.

Two minutes later Cordice looked set to restore Wealdstone's lead, but he was pulled down from behind by Jeff Johnson as he raced for goal, a challenge which brought a booking for the Altrincham defender.

Cordice was again stopped on his way to goal in the 65th minute, this time in the penalty area. All he got was an indirect free kick, which Holmes tapped to Paul Bowgett but his chip was deflected over.

Ten minutes later Altrincham brought on Graham Bennett and the substitute almost scored with his first touch, a dipping cross-cum shot from the left.

Wealdstone struck what proved to be the winner 11 minutes from time.

Steve McCargo pushed the ball forward for Cordice, who left his marker for dead and sprinted through to beat the advancing 'keeper with a venomous shot.

Altrincham put Wealdstone under the cosh for the last 10 minutes, but the Stones held out thanks to a combination of true grit and a little luck.

Wealdstone: Iles, Perkins, McCargo, Byatt, Bowgett, Wainwright, Jones, Holmes, Cordice, Graham, Donnellan (Johnson, 47).

AND CONTINUED....

Gateshead

FOOTBALL CLUB



Season
1984-5

THE GOLA
LEAGUE

20p



OFFICIAL MATCH DAY PROGRAMME

Gateshead

Wednesday
27th March
1985

Kick 7-30p.m.
Off

V
wealdstone

at
GATESHEAD INTERNATIONAL STADIUM

▼ **NEXT UP.. GATESHEAD AWAY** Just two days after the epic win at Altrincham, Stones were again in action in the far North-East. The team stayed two nights in the North (chairman David Morritt showing exceptional generosity, and the players all somehow getting two days off work) and the team's spirit came to the fore with a third successive victory at the International Stadium. This is the meagre programme (left) while the Harry O managed to squeeze a few lines on the game into its Stop Press column (below). Alan Cordice was the hero at Altrincham; this time it was his brother Neil who took the plaudits with a brace...

Late extra

Wealdstone beat Gateshead by two goals to one at the International Stadium on Wednesday night in the Gola League. Gateshead took the lead in the sixth minute after Bowjett's back-pass was intercepted and stabbed home by Donaldson.

However a goal either side of half-time by Neil Cordice gave Wealdstone the points.

▼ **AND THEN IT WAS BACK TO LOWER MEAD** After a long (!) two-and-a-half-day break, Stones found themselves facing another tough test as title challengers Runcorn travelled South. But Alan Cordice won the day, yet again, with a superb goal to keep our hopes bubbling along, as reported by the Harry Observer once more. Just one more game to go....

Super strike sinks Runcorn

Wealdstone 1, Runcorn 0

A SUPERB goal from Alan Cordice was enough to give Wealdstone two points against Runcorn on Saturday and maintain Stone's push for the title.

Cordice struck after 27 minutes, robbing Runcorn full back Brian Kettle and then skipping past Bobby Fraser and Mick Roberts before hammering the ball past advancing keeper Ray McBride.

The first chance in a match that turned out to be a disappointing affair slogged out on a muddy Lower Mead pitch, fell to Runcorn's new signing Steve Crompton.

A Ray Woods free kick in the first minute fell to Crompton in front of goal, but the striker stabbed the ball wide.

More misery followed for Crompton, making his debut after signing from Worcester, when he was booked in the second half for aiming a kick at Steve McCargo.

Wealdstone were almost gifted an eighth minute lead by a bizarre own goal by Runcorn keeper McBride. Attempting to check a quick throw out, the ball flew out of his hands, but hit the foot of a post and was scrambled clear.

It was only Cordice's goal that brightened up a dull first half. And the second half turned into a similar poor spectacle.

Gary Donnellan livened things up briefly with a drive that McBride turned on to the bar and referee Emerson Griffiths caused a heart-stopping moment in the Wealdstone defence when he allowed

ed Crompton to streak through and hit a shot just wide, with Mark Carter standing offside.

It was referee Griffiths who was the busiest man on the field, putting four names in his book.

Joining Crompton were Steve McCargo, for kicking the ball away at a free kick, and Fraser and Andy Brockbank, both for clattering Cordice to the ground.

Stones manager Brian Hall said after the match: "It was not a very exciting game, but it was never going to be.

"We had a very hard week, with trips to Altrincham and Gateshead. The players did really well considering and I have no complaints."

Wealdstone: Hes, Perkins, McCargo, Byatt, Bowgett, Wainwright, Jones, N. Cordice, A. Cordice (Johnson, 55), Graham (Graves, 67), Donnellan.

AND CONTINUED....

THE TURNING POINT

by Colin Pope

TUESDAY March 26th could well go down in our history as the turning point of the 1984/85 season, and if we are destined to win the Gola League, then that night could be the clincher. It wasn't just the fact that we beat league leaders Altrincham 2-1; rather it was the manner in which we did it and we really justified the appreciative comments from the 1,400 home crowd.

But a special word to our Supporters. Chairman David Morritt told me on Tuesday that he found it difficult to find words which would adequately convey his delight, and appreciation at that vociferous band at Altrincham on Tuesday who, although naturally greatly out-numbered, played a tremendous part in our great victory, with their enthusiastic vocal support.

I can tell you that, from my travels around the country, it is very apparent that Wealdstone Supporters are rather a special breed, and that every single club in the Gola League is aware that we have an away following, particularly, which is the envy of them all.

And another goodly number of them made the exceptionally long trek to the North East on Wednesday night to rally the lads at Gateshead, returning home on the 1.10 am train, travelling all night to get to Kings Cross soon after dawn and for a lot of them, going straight to work! These Supporters really do deserve something, be it the FA Trophy or the League Championship, and we'd be a much poorer outfit without them and their mind-boggling enthusiasm. Lads (and Lasses) the Chairman is proud of you, and thanks you immensely.

It was always going to be difficult at Gateshead, with its unique lack of atmosphere, and in the event, and on a bitterly cold night, the result could easily have gone against us as Gateshead cracked a free kick against our bar in the closing stages. But three more away points puts us in a tremendous position.

I've mentioned these grand supporters of ours earlier. It is with a lot of pride that we give the names of those who made the trek to Gateshead and by the time we have played Scarborough on Sunday, many of them will have spent out £50 in a week watching the 'Stones'.

Steve Field, Tony Hayes, Gordon Mackay, Tony Maidment, Paul Walsh, Paul Fruin, Trevor Davies, Martin Allen, Phil Jeffreson, Michael Kane, S. Khanna, Dave Parish, George Pinkney, Mick Ferguson, Mark Stewart, Martin Lacey, Chris Ashton, Jim Bartrick, Matthew Gloor, Tom Wiseman, Steve Marshall. And of all things, long-standing supporter Ron More drove there and back, a distance of almost 600 miles! Accompanying Ron were old faithfuls Val Shearer, Tony Drew and Jim Minehane. With supporters like these we must be the luckiest club in Non-League football. Space prevents me from also listing those who went to Altrincham on Monday, but they included spritely George Clayton, aged an astonishing 84!!

All these supporters named above are asked to contact David Free, who is in charge of the gates, in the club office when convenient when they will hear something to their advantage!!

Scarborough here on Sunday

FOR the first time ever, we have competitive soccer here tomorrow, Sunday! As most of you know, Scarborough will be our visitors, kick-off 11 am. It was at first thought that admission would be by programme only, but it is, in fact, pay at the gate, as usual, although you will be given a team sheet as you enter the ground. We're totally in the dark as to the sort of support a Sunday morning match will attract, but we've been wanting to find out for some time, so let's see!

Incidentally, today's match programme for the Runcorn game will also include pen pictures of Scarborough, so it will be as well to bring this programme with you tomorrow.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find vital information regarding the FA Trophy semi-final, second leg, here on Saturday April 13th, 3 pm. So please go through the programme!

▲ **PRAISE IN THE PROGRAMME** As the amazing week drew to a close there was a nice touch in the Stones prog, as Editor Colin Pope drew notice to the loyal fans who had travelled the length and breadth of the country to follow the blues....

Cordice goal blasts Stones back to the top

Wealdstone 1, Scarborough 0

ALAN Cordice shot Wealdstone to the top of the Gola League with his second goal of the weekend at Lower Mead on Sunday.

He struck with the vital goal after 32 minutes to knock the wind out of a Scarborough side that was still buzzing from a splendid victory at Enfield the previous day.

It was Wealdstone's first Sunday fixture since March 1974 when a crowd of 1,300 watched them beat Poole Town 3-2 in their Southern League Championship season.

Scarborough's visit attracted a gate of 903 — well above Wealdstone's average — but two games in as many days had clearly put a strain on the players.

This Sunday experiment failed to produce a classic on the field, but cock a hoop Wealdstone won't worry too much about that.

In the end, Scarborough could do little to prevent Wealdstone opening up a two point lead at the top of the table.

Boro started brightly enough with David Bowman shooting just wide, and John Hannah finding space in the Wealdstone box, only to see that ball hooked off his feet for a corner.

Scarborough had a narrow escape after 12 minutes. A cross from Brian Greenaway found Neil Cordice and he sent a powerful header into the back of the net, only to see the effort disallowed for offside.

There was no reprieve in the 32nd minute. Andy Graham touched the ball

through to Alan Cordice who galloped clear of his marker, went round keeper Graeme Crawford and planted his shot into an empty net.

Indeed, it was Alan Cordice who proved to be the thorn in Scarborough's side. Harry Dunn, Graham Hartley and Kenny Dennis was all booked for fouls on the Wealdstone striker as Scarborough's frustration became more evident.

Hannah did manage to get the ball into the Wealdstone net during the first half but the whistle had blown long before for offside.

Scarborough, who won just two first half corners and only one after the interval, posed few threats to the Wealdstone defence.

Skipper Paul Bowgett was missing with flu, but Steve Perkins coped well at the centre of the back four.

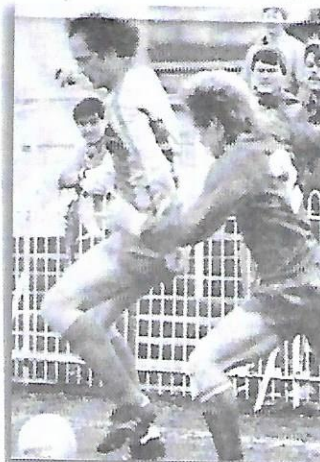
Scarborough's best, indeed only, chance of the second half came in the 68th minute. A cross from Nigel Rose was met by Bowman but his effort was headed off the line by Roy Davies.

Wealdstone broke immediately and the ball was worked to Mark Graves — a 52nd minute replacement for Andy Graham. Graves looked up and hit a fierce drive that beat Crawford but dipped just over the bar.

Wealdstone should really have scored a second. Graves, twice, and Nigel Johnson both wasted chances, but the game had already drifted well away from Scarborough.

Wealdstone: Iles, Davies, McCargo, Bvatt, Perkins, Wainwright, Greenaway, N. Cordice, A. Cordice, Graham (Graves 52), Johnson.

AND CONTINUED....



ALAN CORDICE put the ball past Crawford the Scarborough keeper to score Wealdstone's goal on Sunday morning.

▲ A FITTING END TO A GLORIOUS WEEK

A crowd of just under 1,000 turned out on Sunday morning March 31 to watch the Stones complete their wonderful sequence with a single-goal victory over Scarborough... who had themselves harboured an outside chance of the title until Alan Cordice struck with the decisive goal (right).

On the next pages we hear from rabid fan Martin Allen, who was one of those who saw EVERY game in the sequence