

HOW TODAY'S FINAL GAME SQUADS SHAPE UP

WEALDSTONE ROYAL BLUE/WHITE/WHITE

FC HALIFAX TOWN BLACK/BLACK/BLACK

Archie MATTHEWS 1	1 Sam JOHNSON
Jack COOK 2	2 Jo CUMMINGS
Anthony GEORGIU 3	3 Ryan GALVIN
Deon WOODMAN 4	4 Festus ARTHUR
Alex DYER 5	5 Adam SENIOR
Mason BARRETT 6	6 Jack EVANS
Enzio BOLDEWIJN 7	7 Max WRIGHT
Craig EASTMOND 8	8 Daniel NKRUMAH
Sean ADARKWA 9	9 Luca THOMAS
Max KRETZSCHMAR 10	9 Aaron COSGRAVE
Mustapha CARAYOL 11	10 Jamie COOKE
Jeffrey SEKYERE 12	11 Angelo CAPPELLO
Jacob ADAMS 13	12 Nathaniel FORD
Micah OBIERO 14	14 Harvey SUTCLIFFE
Jedediah BROWN 15	15 Will SMITH
Will RANDALL-HURRAN 16	16 Josh EMMANUEL
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Adrian MARIAPPA © 19	19 Adan GEORGE
Kallum TRACEY-CESAY 21	20 Jack JENKINS
Alex REID 22	22 Dubem EZE
Jaydn MUNDLE-SMITH 23	23 Tom PUGH
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Tobi OMOLE 26	25 Ted LAVELLE
Joshua GRANT 27	26 Owen BRAY
Declan PHILLIPS 28	37 Adam ELIMI-ADETORO
Harrison SOHNA 29	28 Lewis LEIGH
James HILLSON 30	29 Sean TARIMA
Luca GUNTER 31	29 Billy WATERS
Tyler WALKER 34	30 Scott HIGH
Dante-Astor BAPTISTE 35	31 Toby SAVIN
Jamie POTTLE 37	32 Charlie HAYES-GREEN

Match officials To be announced

TODAY'S RESULT: WEALDSTONE ☐ FC HALIFAX T ☐

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It's been that sort of season: Alex Reid covers his face in anguish as we failed to capitalise on chances in the home draw with Maidenhead
PICTURE: JON TAFFEL

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FC HALIFAX TOWN - MONDAY 5TH MAY 2025



Good afternoon and a warm welcome back to Grosvenor Vale for our final fixture of the 2024/25 season against FC Halifax Town

As our fifth season at non leagues top table draws to a close this afternoon with our destination still in the balance and unfortunately no longer in our own hands.

Last Saturday at Southend the 364 travelling fans were simply on another level, the noise and passion was simply incredible even with the knowledge that things were very much going against us.

As supporters all we all we can do is replicate that togetherness and give our full support to our players for the full 90 minutes this afternoon.

The progress the club has made over the last 20+ years is simply staggering and regardless of our position in the pyramid at full time today the Wealdstone resilience will undoubtedly prevail. As many long term Stones supporters will know 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger'

Thanks to our board of directors who work tirelessly to enable us to exist as a football club.

Thanks also to our supporters club and our huge army of Volunteers, without who we simply could not operate.

Please keep an eye on the clubs social media channels over the summer for details of Season Tickets and Membership packages and please spend some time with family and friends and arrive back refreshed ready for the 2025/26 season.

Finally thanks to each every one of you, for believing and dreaming big every Saturday.

We hope you will join us in the club house at Full Time to celebrate Wealdstone Football Club

Written in Stone

BY MARK HYDE

THANKS

That's it, another season of programmes done. As always I need to thank Tim Parks, Martin Read and Martin Lacey for their the never-ending work and support over the season.

Thanks also to Sudhir Rawal, Jon Taffel, Roger Slater, Mick Fishman & Peter Worby who have provided (mostly) timely contributions. Thanks finally to you for continuing to support a physical programme, we look forward to seeing you all next season.

Mark

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Despite passing years, we continue to keep alive the memory of dear friends and supporters who have passed away. All the above mentioned are remembered by today's ball sponsors, all of whom we have stood with on the terraces over passed seasons. We grieved their passing but they are not forgotten, they are especially remembered today.

WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 2024/2025

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MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

Programme Editor Mark Hyde
Production Martin Read, Tim Parks, Martin Lacey
Printing People for Print Ltd.
www.peopleforprint.co.uk
wfcprogramme@gmail.com

COMMERCIAL/ MARKETING

IT Consultant Neil Rands
Commercial Emin Alibey, Richard Hopwood

CLUB PERSONNEL

Head of Media Will Beaman
Media Team Nicole Cho-Yee, Libby McElhinney
PA Announcer Michael Leckie
Commentators Tim Parks, Paul Franklin, Adam Hills
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GROUND REGULATIONS

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

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IN THE WORDS OF THE GAFFER: NEIL GIBSON'S VIEW



Taylor: Holds our hopes in his hands

'Our part of the bargain is to win... and hope Matty Taylor keeps his side of the deal'

NEIL GIBSON says he's spent the past week trying to change the players' mindset before today's do-or-die clash with Halifax.

"My team have always had togetherness, tenacity, spirit and belief and this group of players just cannot compete without it" said the Stones boss last Sunday.

"There's understandably a lot of uncertainty in the squad revolving around their futures, a lot of jeopardy with so many on loan and out of contract in the summer but they need to know they have an investment in this club after spending a period of time here.

"People want to know why our performances tailed off after the wins over Boston and Forest Green and I believe it's a combination of things, especially injuries and the fact that many are now running on empty having gone to the well so many times in the last month.

"We named a full bench at Southend but four of them were in no shape to take part. Josh Grant and Dom Hutchinson were prepared to play despite carrying injuries and Muzzy Caryol is on pain killers for his ankle.

"I'd ideally like to play two up front and there is a chance Tyler Walker will be able to play a part today; we've suffered not having anyone to play up front with Reidy. Mica Obiero has also been out injured though he came off the bench at Southend, while Enzo Boldewijn, who did so well playing up top with Alex against Maidenhead was effectively unavailable in that position at Southend as we didn't have another wing-back to step in.

"So we only had one fit striker at Roots Hall while Southend were able to start with two up front, and they had two more out-and-out strikers to come off the

bench. If only we had that luxury!

"We realised last week that, unbelievably, we have a full XI of players out injured at the moment: We could field Archie Matthews or Luca Gunter in goal; with Mason Barrett, Jaydn Mundle-Smith, Jack Cooke and Anthony Georgiou as a back four and Craig Eastmond, Will Randall, Dom Hutchinson and Josh Grant in midfield... while up front Sean Adarkwa and Tyler Walker would be great to have off the bench or starting.

"But it is what it is. We seem to have a default setting that means we cannot string more than two or three unbeaten games together, and when we lose it's often quite heavily. So we have to change that.

"These last few games have been huge and we've not managed the emotions; we have a lot of young players like Dom, Harrison, Deonne, Dante and Connor McAvoy for whom this pressure is new and they have to learn how to manage games.

"Against Barnet, for example, we couldn't set out to attack them as we'd have been caught on the counter and the game would have got away from us, so we prepped to defend and then come on strong in the second half, and that worked for us.

"I like my teams to be patient and then move the ball quickly through the thirds but in the last few games we've struggled to make more than two consecutive passes. We've seemed frightened when we have the ball but there are no second chances after today's game so we have to be brave in possession.

"Halifax have secured their place in the play-offs but every team wants to maintain their momentum and they will be no different. They won't lie down. They are a possession-based side with some good players, but we think we've identified a couple of areas where we can hurt them.

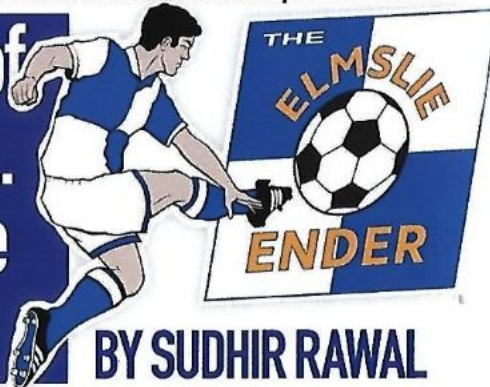
"We have just got to win and do our part - then it's down to Matty Taylor to keep his part of the bargain and make sure his Solihull side don't lose to Dagenham!"

Neil Gibson:
There are no second chances



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

The ups and downs of following the Stones.. as we all hope for the former at 5pm today



BY SUDHIR RAWAL

WRITING this article on a Sunday morning after a game (Southend away, 0-3) is probably helpful as it gives you time to reflect on the match rather than the knee-jerk emotional response on the day.

But it doesn't change the fact that with four games to go, and being five points clear of the relegation zone, we are now with one match left in the drop zone - a point behind Dagenham. We have been snookered and I am not sure I can see Ronnie O'Sullivan or Steve Davis coming over the hill to rescue us with a trick shot to pot the black.

Elsewhere in this programme Mick Fishman has written eloquently about how we have got here.

I am not going to repeat what he has written, but in summary it would be remiss not to mention the wrong person being appointed at the start of the season who by his own admission didn't know this league; poor recruitment in the playing staff; our terrible start to the season; an injury crisis that has not abated one bit all season; and frankly, when the chips have really been down,



not having the cojones to get across the line. **How can a side that took four points from FGR and Barnet two weeks ago, barely register a shot in the three games against Boston, Maidenhead and Southend?**

We find ourselves in the rather unenviable position on relying on a former manager (that most were happy to see go) getting three points on this last day against Dagenham.

The Daggers, despite the fiasco over their new investor who lasted just two days, fans revolting against their manager, and looking doomed, smashed play off chasers Altrincham 6-1, whilst we sat in the sun in Leigh on Sea. They have shown balls when it mattered.

Our fans have turned up. Nearly 300 at Boston United and we were two down inside twenty minutes and the game was gone; 2,000 at home to Maidenhead saw Stones go a goal down after just two minutes; and whilst we did manage to get a point in the second must-win game in four days, there didn't seem enough desire to go on and win the game. The 400 magnificent Stones fans at Southend in a crowd of over 9,500 were "rewarded" with not a single shot

A bit of floodlight porn at Southend last week with the huge travelling support pictured in the stand below



on target and just a couple wide and over the target. The 20-minute rendition of "Wealdstone FC" in the second half was spine-tingling. I appreciate though that we had players running on fumes, who probably aren't fit enough to play matches.

In my fifty-one years of watching Wealdstone, I have been lucky. I have seen promotions or titles in 1974, 1982, 1985, 1997, 1998, 2014 and 2020. The counter is that I have seen us relegated in 1981, 1988 and 1992... although we also finished in relegation places in 1976 and 1994 but received reprieves. There was also a play-off win in 2004 and a voluntary demotion in 1995.

Unless you support a team at the very top, that is the essence, the Yin and Yang of football supporting: you go up and you go down.

Some can be quite sanguine about it.

The Vale years have really been a succession of good times. We have had two titles and three play-off defeats, though two of those heartbreaks were followed by the title in the subsequent year.

We have seen crowds grow from 350-odd to 1,585, the highest in our professional years. If we do go down, it might be a blip (though I thought that in 1988 and it took us over 30 years to get back to the NL) or it could be very tough to return as the regional leagues and below are booming. Just look at the gates in those divisions. Sixty-two non-league sides now average more than 1,000 and that will only get bigger as people become more disillusioned with the professional game, priced out or even unable to get tickets as clubs veer more towards tourists who spend fortunes in their megastores over legacy supporters. **Chelsea's average season ticket holder is 571 As a youngster, how do you possibly get tickets?**

Adam Hills, from our Stonescast, guested on a Southend podcast last week where the host was rather condescending about how we have "struggled" in our five years in the NL, finishing between 13th-16th.

For Southend, every year that they stay in the NL is failure, for Wealdstone, survival was success, so finishing between 13th-16th was a huge achievement and Stuart Maynard and Matt Saunders were geniuses in keeping us comfortably clear of the



As Stones fan Clive Leaper captioned his picture on X: "Totally deflated after the Southend defeat but still able to applaud the players and management team at the end"

drop zone.

I do think we have the right people at the helm in Neil Gibson and Lee Jones, though they will have their work cut out in the summer - whichever division we find ourselves in - as they reshape the squad in their own identity. We need to return to the Wealdstone DNA. Young hungry players sprinkled with some experience that has worked so well for us over the last few years.

Football always brings perspective though. Whilst we concern ourselves with what division we will be in next season, the news earlier this year that WFC chairman Rory Fitzgerald was seriously ill brought to the fore what is really important. Rory has been a huge driving force in getting us to the National League and keeping us there with his leadership. We can only wish him well as he continues to undergo treatment.

Could they sing without a drum? Yes, the Shrimpers fans could actually, although I'm sure they appreciated the Stones' fans' excellent on Trustpilot subtle irony



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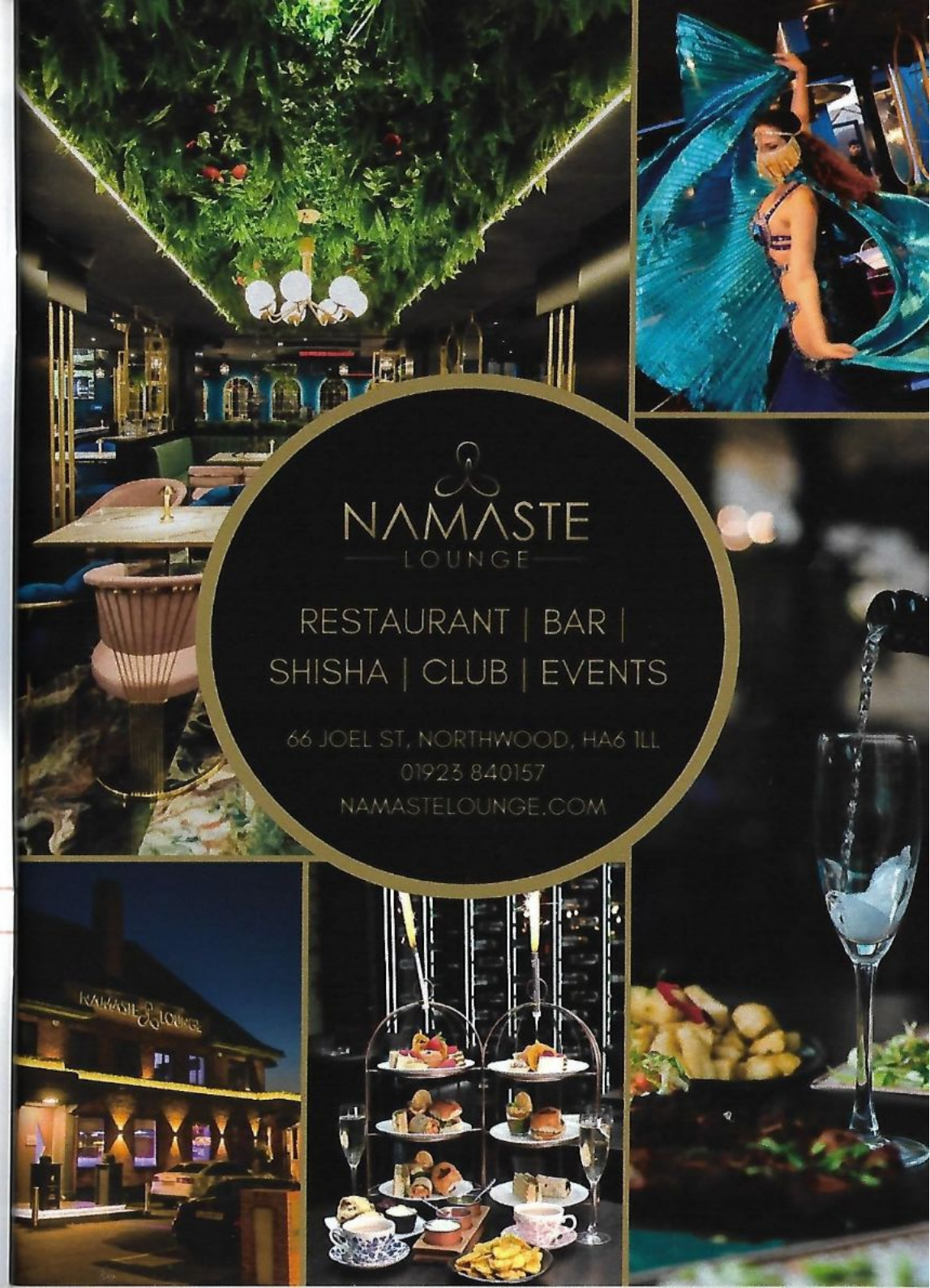


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Meet the Keepers TO ROUND OFF THE SEASON THE

'My biggest strength is to make big saves in big moments..that's why I love being a goalkeeper'

I believe you've been at Tottenham since the age of 12. Were there any clubs before this?

Yes well I started out playing grassroots football like most kids, got picked up at 10 years old by QPR and was there for two years before Tottenham came in. I've been there ever since.

Whereabouts were you brought up? Have you always lived there?

I grew up in Winchmore Hill in North London and have lived here my whole life. Obviously when I moved to Tottenham at 12 it was a massive bonus not just for me but for my parents who didn't have to drive me so far to get to training at QPR - I am forever grateful to Rangers but now I am playing at a club very close to home.

Do any of your family play football, or other professional sport?

I actually come from quite a sporty household, both my parents and brothers have played sport their whole life and my dad Peter was a professional squash player for many years and still plays to a decent level.

Have you always played in goal, or have you tried playing outfield? I don't think there are many kids who go straight into being a goalkeeper - I used to play anywhere on the pitch to be honest, wherever I could get on the ball, but at my grassroots club we would change who played in goal each week and when it was my turn I was quite good and I fell in love with it so ended up staying there and never looked back.

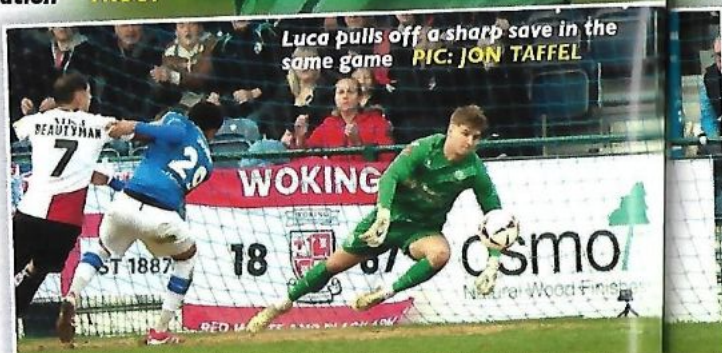
How do you rate yourself in the pecking order at Spurs? Do they have a reputation for promoting young home-grown keepers?

At Tottenham right now there's a great group of goalkeepers in the first team with a bundle of quality and experience which is perfect for any young goalkeeper to learn from. I'll always back myself and feel as if I'm not far off and can compete with them at that level but I know especially at a club like Tottenham I'm competing with some of the best goalkeepers there are - there are so many

Luca Gunter
applauds
the crowd
after his first
home clean
sheet at the
Vale against
Woking
PIC: SEAN
TROUP



Luca pulls off a sharp save in the same game
PIC: JON TAFFEL



SPOTLIGHT IS ON OUR GLOVEMEN...FIRST UP IT'S LUCA GUNTER

areas for me to grow and develop as a player and a person which is ultimately what I think about. I don't see it as a 'pecking order' to be honest, I only see myself and what I'm going to do to achieve my potential and have success in my career. Where I end up in my career will take care of itself. If it means I become Tottenham's No.1 that would be a dream come true for me because ever since I started

playing football all I've wanted to do was to play on the biggest stages.

I'd say the club likes to promote any player from the academy if they have proved themselves and deserve to be there. There's two goalkeepers in the first team squad now who have come through the academy so there is a pathway for it especially now with lots of the goalies in the academy getting out on loan and experiencing men's football.

Who had been your goalkeeper 'mentor' in your youth? I wouldn't be able to name just one to be honest, there's quite a few people at the club that have guided me in the right way. When I first came into Tottenham I worked a lot with Perry Suckling who has helped me massively growing up both on and off the pitch, while in recent years Dean Brill has had a big impact on my development.

What do you think are your strengths as a keeper? Are there areas of your game that you think have been improved since coming to the Stones? I'd say my biggest strength is being able to make big saves in big moments. Which is the best thing about being a goalkeeper and why I love it. Also I'd say playing with the ball at my feet is a strength of mine which I enjoy doing as



Luca is pictured with the England under-16 side at the 2018 San Pellegrino international tournament... where he won the Golden Gloves award

well. Since coming to Wealdstone I'd say I've improved and got better at dealing with crosses into the box: you get a lot of them each game so it is an important aspect to be switched on to in this league. There's still things I'm picking up and learning while I'm playing each game as it's a lot different to what I'm used to, but I'm enjoying every minute.

Who is your goalkeeping hero? To be honest I've never really had a big goalkeeping hero but I've watched a lot of Thibaut Courtois growing up and still to this day. So I'd say him he's one of the best in the world - you always learn from watching him.

How does National League football compare to Under-23 football? It's a completely different game, the style of football and the physical side of it is so different. I think the biggest difference is just how real it feels in terms of the importance of three points every game... you are playing in front of crowds with fans who care a lot about the club and winning games of football. I think it's important for any young player in youth football to get out and experience it. Every game matters.

Have you been close to the 1st XI squad at all at Spurs, or been involved in 1st XI training? Yes, for the first six months of the season before I came to the Stones, I had the opportunity to train with them every week and I made my debut in pre-season,

coming on for a few minutes against Hearts and then - a bit of a full circle moment - I came on for the second half against QPR in our last friendly before we went on tour to Japan and South Korea. I came away from the game with a clean sheet. So it was a special moment for me and

my family.
What has been the highlight in your loan spell at Wealdstone? I'm enjoying my time so much at the club at the moment, I'd probably say my main highlight so far would be my first clean sheet against Altrincham and then following it up on the weekend with another against Woking when we scored in the last minute to win.
Did you know anything about the club before you joined? Even the location? I've always heard about the club but to be honest I never really watched much of non league, before I came I had only watched a few games here and there. I can say now that I will be watching the National League a lot more.

Were you involved in the decision to come here on loan? Yes of course, when it came to January I was pushing for a loan move because I wanted and needed to experience men's football. When Wealdstone came up I looked into the club more and decided it was a good fit for where I was at and what I needed for my career. So after a couple of conversations with the club and coaches we all agreed to do it. I'm glad it worked out.

Is there more emphasis on competency with your feet? To be fair ever since I joined Tottenham at 12 there was always an emphasis on playing out from the back and the goalie being good
Continued overpage>>

Meet the KeepersAND NOW IT'S THE TURN

From previous page

with their feet. I'd say there is a bit more emphasis on it now because all the teams from first team to all the youth teams play the same way and all try to build from the back and be a forward attacking team.

You are probably aware that we've had EIGHT goalkeepers signed on this season due to injury and unavailability. Happily the curse seemed to end with you... have you spoken to the other keepers about this? I know I heard about this when I joined, and I've spoken with a few of them about it. I trained with Dante every session as he's obviously fit now and I've been speaking with Archie and Jacob as they work their way back to being fit.

There's a good group of goalkeepers here and I'm enjoying working with them all.

Which football team do you support/follow, if any? Is this a family tradition? To be honest I don't really support a team, I just enjoy watching and playing. Funnily enough my dad and brother are Arsenal supporters so there's a bit of a divide when Spurs and Arsenal are playing!

What's the last match you paid to watch? It would have been a Leyton Orient game because two of my mates from Spurs are on loan there so every now and then I will go have a watch.

What's your favourite holiday destination? My favourite holiday was when I went to Koh Tao, an island in Thailand, last summer. It's a very nice place.

And what's your favourite restaurant for a celebration? I like quite a few places to be fair - I can't pick one and I'm not fussy with my food so any nice restaurant in central London I'd be happy with.

And finally...who would you say has had the biggest influence on your career? My family have had the biggest influence 100%; they've supported me and sacrificed a lot in their lives just so I can have a chance in the game. It's paid off up to this day, but I hope I can prove even more to them that it was worth it for everything they did for me as I was growing up.

Patience is a virtue for Stones' new No.1 Dante, goalkeeping gem who came out from the cold



Main image: Dante bosses his box on his NL debut against Boston and (right) is springheeled as he defies Rhys Browne in the draw at Barnet
Pictures: Jon Taffel

OF DANTE BAPTISTE WHO WAITED 2 YEARS FOR HIS CHANCE

DANTE Astor Baptiste must have the patience of a particularly patient saint.

The 23-year-old keeper joined the Stones from our Championship neighbours Watford in 2022 and - until his spectacular National League debut in the 1-0 win over Boston United less than a month ago - had played in just two County Cup games in almost three years. Apart from coming on as sub against Brighton & Hove Albion in the National League Cup back in November.

So how richly did he deserve that first start against Boston? "Well you can't beat a clean sheet!" he laughed when I caught up with the West Londoner before the trip to Southend.

"To be fair I've had a shoulder injury which kept me out for almost a year. The National League Cup game was the first I'd

played this season so yes, I was a bit nervous before the Boston game. I didn't find out I was playing until that afternoon but it was a good one to ease yourself back in. They had a few chances but the defending that night was so good I didn't have a lot to do".

Dante conceded his first NL goal four days later in the 2-1 win over Forest Green and it still rankles! "The guy hit the shot early but the ball deflected off Deon's shin and changed direction. I couldn't get across to it."

In five NL games (before Southend) he had conceded just five goals and has impressed everyone with his speed around the six-yard box, his decisiveness when coming for crosses... and his ability to kick long and accurately with either foot.



Dante takes the plaudits from goalkeeping coach Jason Scannell after the Boston clean sheet

"It looked like you were going to get an assist in the Maidenhead game when your 50-yard drop kick was perfect for Alex Reid to run onto" I told him.

"Yeah, it should have been a goal assist! But I think the defender got across to cover at the last moment".

He certainly seems to call the shots in his own penalty box. "I like to be in charge, dominate things and affect everything in my goal area" said the No.1 who grew up in Ladbroke Grove but was educated in the Norwich City Academy from the age of 11 to 16.

"I moved up there for my schooling, but when I was released I spent four years at Watford" said Dante. "The goalkeeping coach Graham Stack was my mentor there; he was like a father figure to me and he was definitely the most influential figure in my career so far."

Dante went out on loan to Potters Bar, Hendon and Farnborough while he was a Hornet, but was also highly rated by Chesham when he went to The Meadow on loan in 2022-23 after he'd signed for the Stones.

It really does seem that we didn't know what a gem we had in the agile shotstopper.

And in fact, when I was looking through past programmes to work out when his other Wealdstone appearances were, even the highly-trained operatives at Programme Towers let him down. I know he played twice

for the Stones in the Middlesex Charity Cup (in the days that we bothered to enter) back in 2022-23 and we beat the mighty Edgware & Kingsbury in the first round before exiting 3-2 to Brentford's "B" team. But although Dante is listed in the names at the top of the centre-

spread appearances panel, curiously his number does not appear to show that he played in the game. But he did, because there was no other Wealdstone goalkeeper on the pitch!

And he was a star in the penalty-shoot-out win over Edgware & Kingsbury, as the members of the 73-strong crowd will attest. He saved two penalties and watched two sail wide... while, when previously on loan to Hendon, he had saved FOUR penalties in a County Cup shoot-out win for the Greens!

Now he's revelling in playing on the big stages, with a 10,000 full-house on the horizon at Southend and the biggest Grosvenor Vale crowd of the season today against Halifax.

"I had goosebumps coming out onto the pitch for the Barnet game" he admitted, "but I couldn't wait for it to start. The Wealdstone fans were brilliant and kept us believing".

His ambition now is to help keep the club in the National League, and then hopefully remain a part of Neil Gibson's plans next season. That would be a dream.

Dante had always wanted to be a goalkeeper, right from his earliest days. "It was the first position I really played in and I loved it. I played out on the field a few times but I just didn't feel at home there. Goalkeeping is my passion and I thrive on the pressure and the responsibility".

Interviews by Tim Parks

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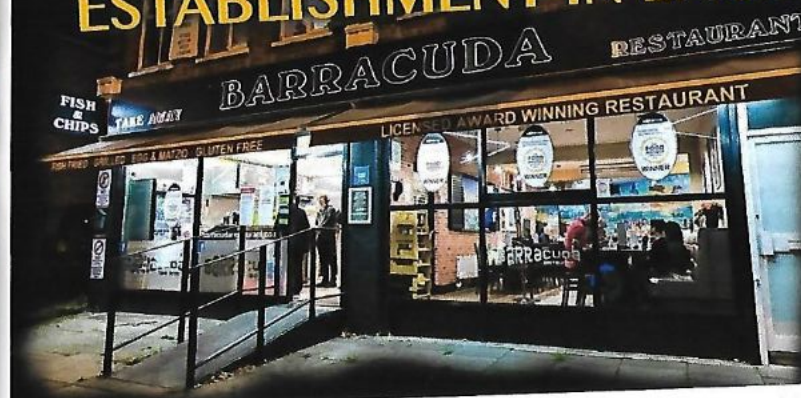
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It's gone to the wire WE TAKE A FORENSIC

How has it come to this? The historic reasons behind today's do or die afternoon at the Vale

BY MICK FISHMAN

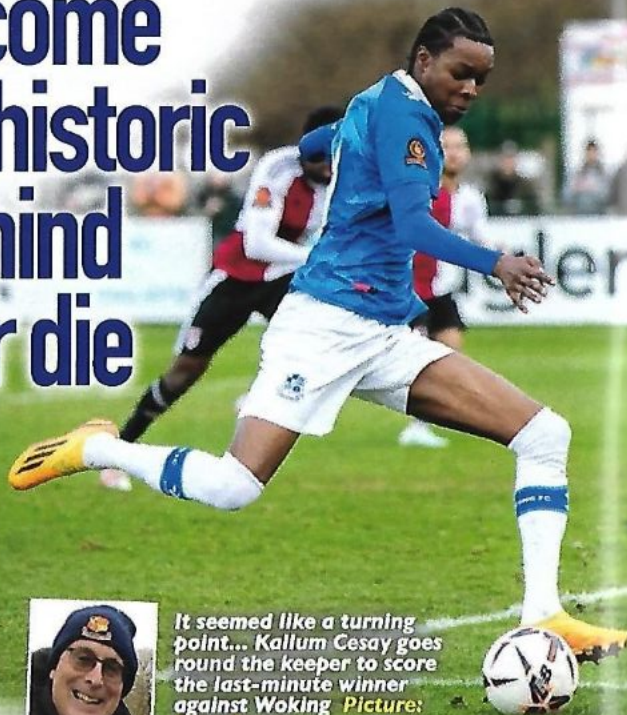
SO, after a 45-game slog, the Stones' survival in the National League - or relegation to the National League South - rests on this one final match against Halifax Town. How has it come to this?

When Neil Gibson and his No.2 Lee Jones joined the club to replace the departed Matt Taylor the team had won just five of the 25 league games played, amassed 26 points and were lying in 21st place. Had we continued that trajectory we would have ended the season on 46 points and been deserving of certain relegation.

And relegation is always painful. This one would have felt particularly awful given how far the club has come since the grim Yeading days and how hard all had worked to get us here. At no point in the season had we been in control of our destiny and, unlike other clubs that had largely struggled, under Taylor we barely strung together a run of wins to gain us those valuable points to relieve pressure.

How did we get to this point?

Like most things in life, there is no single reason. We probably need to go back to the appointment of Dean Brennan and Stuart Maynard in the National League



It seemed like a turning point... Kallum Cesay goes round the keeper to score the last-minute winner against Woking. Picture: Sean Troup



South. As a management team they were an excellent appointment. back in 2019, with the plan to make a serious bid for promotion within two or three seasons. But by winning the title in their first season, the club gained promotion ahead of schedule - and we were perhaps not properly prepared for that.

More importantly, the promotion coincided with the Covid pandemic which threw football into chaos. Had times been normal the vibe around the club would have been electric: the end of season celebrations would have been the stuff of legend with merchandise flying off the shelves.

Instead, the club was left to face the new season in a higher league in empty stadia with no income beyond that provided by the National League for its member clubs. Manager Brennan decided to retain the entire promotion squad which, with reduced income, meant no money for effective new signings. With the covid emer-



Neil Gibson (left) and Matt Taylor went head-to-head in the first match under the Stones' new regime. Picture: Jon Taffel

LOOK AT WHY 2024-25 BECAME AN AGONISING SEASON

club coach Sam Cox to take over the remaining five games to try and keep us up. Three wins and two meant defeats Sam did the job.

Having made two great calls in appointing Dean Brennan and then Stuart Maynard as managers, they fell well short with David Noble.

But the club had survived and the decision was taken to lift the playing budget significantly so that the new manager, when he arrived, would be able to make signings of sufficient quality to keep us in the division. They decided the job had come too early for Sam Cox and went for Matt Taylor, a man with wonderful playing experience but a much briefer and less successful stint as a manager with both Shrewsbury Town and Walsall.

Before appointing a new manager, the board had to decide either to sign some of the squad for the new season or risk their going elsewhere. Eight players were signed and two more recruited before Matt Taylor entered the fray... and in my view that was misguided, as it took up a significant part of the playing budget and landed the new manager with players who might not have found favour with him.

But Taylor still had a decent wedge to work with and, again in my view, did not spend the money wisely. At his Q & A session recently Neil Gibson suggested that the squad he inherited comprised three distinct groups: a small number of senior professionals whose best days were behind them; a group of young players who were a bit naïve and still learning their trade; and a third group of players of varying abilities but experienced enough for the level.

In a polite way Neil had highlighted that the squad was effectively dysfunctional and his job was to try and eke out enough points from the remaining games to keep us up.

His analysis was sound. Without wishing to make judgement on any individual player, the team from the previous season had just, and only just kept us up. From that squad the Board decided to re-sign Jack Cook, Mason Barrett, Sean Adarkwa, Max Kretzschmar, Micah Obiero, Luke Dreher, Dom Hutchinson and Brandon Mason, as well as sign Deon Woodman and Elliot Simmons.

Following his arrival, Matt Taylor offered contracts to Alex Dyer, Kallum Cesay and Jaydn Mundie Smith - it could not be foreseen that Barrett, Adarkwa and Dreher would all succumb to season-ending injuries, and a case could be made for the players already at the club on Matt's arrival providing an effective part of a decent squad if further recruitment was sound.

It wasn't. Keepers Archie Matthews and Jacob Adams, defenders Adrian Mariappa and Anthony Georgiou, midfielders Enzo Boldewijn, Craig East-

gency deepening and funds running low the relationship between club and manager became fractious and a parting of the ways resulted.

The subsequent decision to promote Stuart and Matty Saunders proved to be inspired. They understood the financial limitations and became adept at producing teams capable of competing using clever and judicious recruitment of both contracted and loan players. The two complete seasons under their stewardship resulted in survival; not always comfortably but with no sense of panic. By the time of their departure to Notts County midway through the 2023/24 season, the team was comfortably mid table with sufficient games in hand to touch the promotion play-off positions.

But the decision to replace Stuart and Matty with David Noble was an unmitigated disaster: Nobby had enjoyed a brief but reasonably successful stint as manager of St Albans, but that was very thin evidence for his being able to retain NL status for Wealdstone. His tenure was disastrous as the increasingly shambolic team stumbled from one defeat to another and Rory and the board took the drastic action of relieving Nobby of his duties and asking ex-player and

Continued overpage >>>

WEALDSTONE FC

It's gone right to the wire **CONTINUED**



Highlight of the season? It's FA Cup day and a great drone view of the Vale before the Wycombe game

From previous page

mond, Todd Miller; Christian Scott and loanee Yacou Traore, and forwards Sam Ashford and loanee Henry Sandat were recruited.

Again, it was nobody's fault that both keepers succumbed to season ending injuries, but how many of the outfield signings went on to play a significant role in the season? Arguably Mariappa, Boldewijn, Georgiou and Ashford all contributed to a greater or lesser extent. Eastmond spent the vast majority of the season on the treatment table while Miller, Traore and Sandat just didn't work out.

There have been some successes. Josh Grant is a fine footballer; loanees Jack Wells-Morrison, Callum McFarlane, Connor McAvoy and Harrison Sonha have all contributed positively; and, of course, the loan signing of Alex Reid was the ingredient that gave us even a sniff of avoiding relegation.

Reaching the FA Cup 2nd Round for the first time since 1983, with all the TV coverage and the prize money gained, should not be ignored, but by the time of his leaving, Matt Taylor's record could only be viewed as a failure. With just five wins from 25 league games, the club rested in the bottom four.

Neil and Lee were passed the poisoned chalice of all poisoned chalices, but they were positive they could save the club from relegation. They may yet fail, but they have made a great fist of the attempt.

How have they achieved getting the club to the cusp of a rescue from relegation? Decisions about players, formations and playing style has played a part, but I believe it was more fundamental. Matt had not been a comfortable fit with the club. Always professional in how he went about his work, he did not engage with the supporters and came across as cool and aloof. While that would matter little at bigger full-time operations, despite being a NL club, Wealdstone remains at heart a traditional non-league outfit in which the supporters play a hugely significant role. The fact that

Jez's begging e-mails for funds to sign players have become routine tells you all you need to know about our great club.

Matt paid lip service to the involvement of the fans; but Neil properly understands it. Matt did his job but rarely engaged with the fans: Neil will talk to anyone about anything for any length of time and revel in it. That warmth and engagement goes a long way with both the players and supporters at a club like ours.

We must also acknowledge that we have arrived here despite a flu bug having decimated the squad last month at a crucial time when the already injury-hit team needed to win vital matches that were arriving thick and fast. That particularly coincided with the York City away game - but the wafer-thin squad somehow bounced back three days later with a pivotal win over Boston, followed by another three points against title challengers Forest Green Rovers.

That, and the successive wins against Woking and Altrincham, following on from three successive wins against Yeovil, Braintree and Ebbsfleet saw us garner sufficient points to give us hope. I believe that the players who turned out while injured - or straight from their sick beds - are genuine Wealdstone heroes.

For what it's worth, whether we stay up or get relegated, and despite the record of manager appointments by the club being suspect, I think Neil Gibson and Lee Jones have what it takes to rebuild and revitalise the club.

It's now up to them. They can release every player on our books and start again or try and re-sign some and infill as appropriate.

If they get it right, next season could be one of excitement and success. I hope for their sakes and ours they do get it right. I believe they will.

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FC HALIFAX TOWN

Today's opposition in focus

Following the demise of Halifax Town AFC at the end of the 2007-2008 season, a new Club was born and re-formed just in time for the 2008-2009 season. The new Football Club was placed in Level Four of the Non-League pyramid, taking a place in the Northern Premier League Unibond North One and it was called FC Halifax Town.

Time was short and the new Club was faced with appointing a new Manager and bringing a team together from scratch in only five weeks.

Jim Vince, a coach in the Crewe Alexandra Football Academy working closely with Crewe Manager Dario Grady was appointed.

Pre-season friendlies were hastily arranged and the first ever game by the Club was played at Tamworth, when 22 trialists made appearances for the Club, trying to catch the eye of the new Manager.

The first ever official game for FC Halifax Town was a home game against Bamber Bridge at the Shay Stadium. For the Halifax fans, it was an emotionally charged game; as they were so relieved to see their beloved 'Shaymen' play a real game of football again, after all the heartache of previous years.!

Disappointingly, the team had a mediocre first season and for whatever reason, Jim Vince struggled to get things going with any real conviction on the pitch, culminating in a far from satisfactory 8th place.

An early appointment was made for the 2009-2010 season, with Neil Aspin joining from Conference North side, Harrogate Town.

Despite dropping two divisions, he was confident of a bright future for the Football Club and was ready for the challenge of moving the club further up the pyramid. Town eventually achieved promotion and the Championship, with five games to spare, missing the 100 points by just two and scoring over 100 goals. The only blot on a wonderful season was the emotional loss of Neil's assistant Trevor Storton, who sadly died after a long battle with cancer. He was with the team nearly all the way, passing away just before our promotion was secured. Promotion was a fitting tribute to a wonderful



man.

2011-2012 saw the arrival in the Football Conference and the Blue Square Bet North division. Another tough challenge made all the harder with the departure of star striker Jamie Vardy, after only four games of the new season. Despite that set-back on the pitch, the Shaymen battled their way to a play-off position, to meet and eventually lose to Gainsborough Trinity.

The season was also highlighted by finally achieving the FA Cup First Round Proper and what a draw. League One

leaders Charlton Athletic.

Understanding the league, a little more, Neil Aspin brought in one or two fresh faces for the 2012-2013 campaign and said 'goodbye' to some good players, who had helped the Club progress so much.

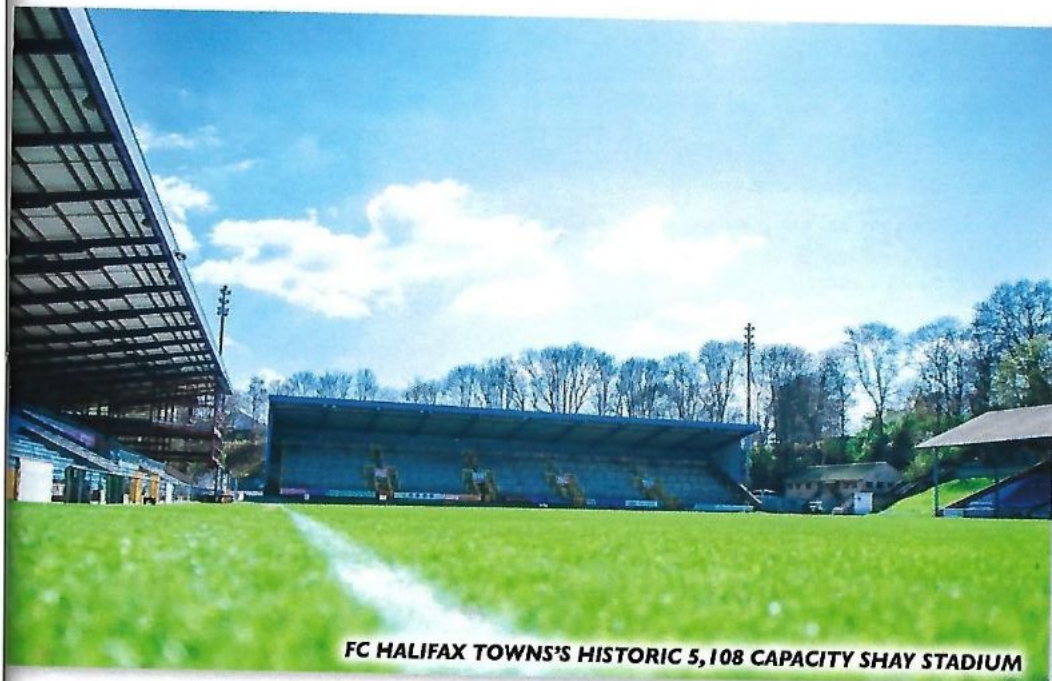
This season was the hardest for the Club since reformation but finished fifth place and after a local derby against Guiseley in the semis reached the Final against Brackley & winning 1-0 to earn a place in the Conference Premier division, for the first time in their history.

The following season FC Halifax Town finished 5th in the Skirill Premier and the play-offs beckoned again, this time with the chance of a Wembley final and promotion to the Football League. However, despite a 1-0 home win over Cambridge United at the Shay, a 2-0 defeat at the Abbey Stadium saw Cambridge head to Wembley.

Neil Aspin promised several changes over the summer, which he duly delivered. However, just a few games into the season, Aspin departed the Club having been in charge for over 300 games. Gareth McClelland, Darren Kelly, and Jim Harvey all had spells in charge during the 2015/16 season. The season was to be one of mixed emotions as Town were relegated from the National League.

Despite the relegation, The Shaymen made it to Wembley for the first time in their history. FC Halifax Town beat Nantwich Town 6-4 on aggregate to reach the final of the FA Trophy. Grimsby Town were the opponents that day and an early second half goal from Scott McManus was enough to give the Town fans their dream day out in the capital as The Shaymen lifted the FA Trophy.

The 2016/17 season saw another manager in charge as Billy Heath took over the coaching duties and was able to guide Town straight back to the National League. Town had finished 3rd in the National League North and were promoted after winning the playoff final against Chorley.



FC HALIFAX TOWN'S HISTORIC 5,108 CAPACITY SHAY STADIUM

OUR RECORD V FC HALIFAX
P9 W3 D1 L5 F7 A13
LAST LEAGUE MEETINGS
SAT 28TH SEP 24 (A) - D 2-2
THU 27TH JAN 24 (H) - W 2-0

Heath's second season in charge did not get off to a good start as Town languished near the bottom of the league. Eventually, the decision was made to part ways with Billy Heath and Neil Young was given the role of caretaker manager until Jamie Fullarton, was instated on a permanent basis.

Fullarton managed to save The Shaymen from relegation in 2017/18 as they ended up finishing 16th.

In the 2018/19 season, Town had one of the highest clean sheet records but struggled for goals and finished in mid table. However, Jamie Fullarton decided to leave the Club in mid-July and former Oldham boss Pete Wild took charge for the 2019/20 season.

Wild guided The Shaymen to a 6th placed finish after 37 matches - due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the season was cut short in late-March. Halifax played the final televised National League game that season - a 1-0 loss to Ebbsfleet, this would be Town's last game up until the league made the decision to go ahead with the play-offs.

This resulted in Town playing Boreham Wood away in the National League Play-Off eliminator in July - four months after the season ended abruptly. The Shaymen unfortunately lost the match, after going 1-0 up through Tobi Shio-Silva, the Wood came back to win 2-1.

Wild was tasked with another season as the boss at the Shay and had a summer overhaul ahead of the 2020/21 season. It began with inconsistency for FC Halifax Town but three consecutive wins in early December ensured that the Shaymen's season got going. It was an unusual season in that matches were played without supporters in the ground which affected FC

Halifax Town as well as a plethora of teams up and down the country. After the three successive wins, Halifax's form dipped slightly and this could have led to a derailing of the season however, 4 wins in March on the trot meant that the Shaymen were at the upper echelons of the table and harboured ambitions of the play-offs. These ambitions appeared realistic when after a 4-2 victory at home to Kings Lynn Town, FC Halifax Town sat 5th and in the play off places but inconsistency towards the end of the season plagued them. They had an outside chance of the play offs on the final day of the season at home to Chesterfield in front of their own fans but unfortunately lost 2-1 and the play off dream was over. The club finished 10th.

Pete Wild left Halifax at the end of the 2021/22 season, becoming manager of EFL League Two Barrow. Wild's assistant, Chris Millington, was promoted to the manager's hot seat for the 2022-23 season.

In his time as manager his side have reached the National League play-offs as well as winning the FA Trophy for a second time. Jamie Cooke scored the only goal at Wembley to give the Shaymen a 1-0 victory over Gateshead.

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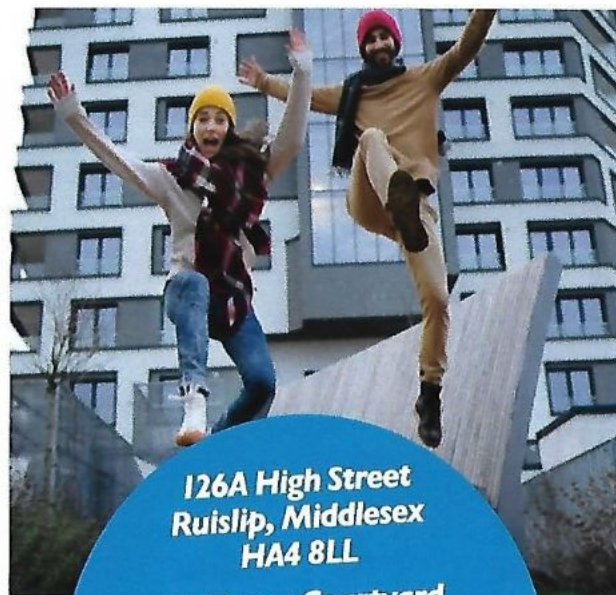
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TODAY WE WELCOME FANS OF HALIFAX TOWN TO GROSVENOR VALE

Good afternoon one and all and welcome to The Vale for this afternoon's final home match of the 24/25 season versus Halifax. We trust every fan has a pleasant stay here with us in the heart of Middlesex and have time to share a drink in the social club after a good game

As the football season draws to a close, the BBQ season is just beginning. Last Saturday and Sunday we hosted Aston Villa and Manchester City for our third and fourth Fanzone of 2025. These days are always long and lots of preparation goes into making such events a success. There are many individuals involved on both the day and in the weeks leading up to such an event; from taking bookings and fielding the ridiculous number of phone calls from fans, to buying all the stock, cleaning the equipment, cooking and serving the food, checking off the bookings, parking the cars, directing the traffic, decorating the social club, selling raffle tickets, directing fans to the station, running back and forth to kitchen and freezers, collecting the empties and clearing it all away after a very long day. We are now into something like our fifteenth year of running such events and they have steadily grown and generated more and more funds for both the club and Supporters Club. These events wouldn't be possible, and such a success, without the amazing volunteers who give up their time. They are good fun, especially when you remember all the money goes back into the club that we are so passionate about. And let us not forget the potential further fan zones in the form of the FA cup final and the various play-offs in May. If you have a spare few hours let us know as we are always looking for helpers. Our volunteers have ranged in age from 12 years old to almost 80 years young. No matter your ability or confidence we will find you a job. Just drop us a message either via twitter or on the various WFCSC facebook groups or just ask any committee member and we will happily put you to work.

Megastore News – Well it is that time of year and we have an end of season SALE on the Megastore. We have several of the very popular T-shirts and various polo shirts available for only £9.99. There is something for everyone in a range of sizes. We also have a good stock of the more recent style

WFCSC update

BY MARK RANDALL



'Established' polo shirts (£25) available in a number of colour combinations and the 'Once a Stone' or 'Established' hoodies which can be yours for £28. If you want something a little smaller check out our mugs (£6) and pint glasses (£10) which are available in store.

The 'Old Programme Hut' – As always, we carry a large quantity of Stones home and away programmes from seasons past, as well as even more Chelsea, Watford, Fulham, Arsenal, Millwall, Palace and many other football league club programmes. We also have a large volume of what we class as 'specials' in the form of England programmes through the decades, FA Cup and League Cup finals, Trophy finals and recently donated football magazines from the 1950's and 60's. We are always willing to do a deal, so build a bundle and we will do a deal as prices are cheap.

50/50 – Don't forget to pick up your 50/50 ticket with a chance to win a helpful bundle of cash. Today's tickets can be brought from several committee men and women (look out for wonder seller Lottie who is a master at spotting your loose change) who will be selling around the social club and inside the ground. It is only a pound so well worth a little flutter. Let's not forget our prizes have regularly been over £300 this year

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

Goodbye & goodnight – That ends my umpteenth set of programme notes. Remember the shop will be open all home league games, and we are still online at wfcmegastore.co.uk and our eBay shop (wfcsc). Come on you Stones and don't forget to bring your wallets.

Mark

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AUGUST	10 Dagenham and Redbridge	VNL	1-2	1,523	215	16	Ashford	1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	17 OLDHAM ATHLETIC	VNL	0-1	1,825	517	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	20 SUTTON UNITED	VNL	0-1	1,566	310	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	24 Hartlepool United	VNL	1-1	3,614	33	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	26 AFC FYLDE	VNL	1-0	1,325	50	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	31 Solihull Moors	VNL	1-1	948	180	20		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
SEPTEMBER	7 YORK CITY	VNL	0-2	1,904	427	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	10 Woking	VNL	0-1	2,125	127	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	14 Forest Green Rovers	VNL	2-2	2,265	200	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	21 BARNET	VNL	0-3	2,590	575	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	24 SOUTHEAST UNITED	VNL	1-1	1,947	746	23		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	28 FC Halifax Town	VNL	2-2	1,442	97	23		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
OCTOBER	5 Gateshead	VNL	0-1	1,147	95	23		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	12 GOSPORT BOROUGH	FAC40	4-1	1,005	178	23		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	19 YEovil TOWN	VNL	0-3	1,510	341	23		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	23 BRAINTREE TOWN	VNL	3-2	1,163	85	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	26 Ebbsfleet United	VNL	2-2	1,498	250	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
NOVEMBER	2 Grimsby Town	FAC19	1-0	3,174	268	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	5 FULHAM U21s	NLC	0-2	190	TBD	22		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	9 Aldershot Town	VNL	2-0	3,156	204	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	12 SOUTHAMPTON U21s	NLC	3-1	160	TBD	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	16 ROCHEDALE	VNL	2-0	1,922	558	20		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	23 Eastleigh	VNL	1-1	2,020	187	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	30 WYCOMBE WANDERERS	FAC2R	0-2	3,534	1,035	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
DECEMBER	3 DERBY COUNTY U21s	NLC	2-0	96	TBD	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	7 Aldershot Town	FAC19	1-3	1,172	140	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	10 ALTRINCHAM	VNL	3-3	1,005	45	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	14 Oldham Athletic	VNL	2-3	5,534	77	20		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	21 DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE	VNL	3-0	1,404	230	18		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	26 Maidenhead United	VNL	1-3	1,725	300	19		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
JANUARY	15 Sutton United	VNL	2-2	1,983	128	20		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	18 HARTLEPOOL UNITED	VNL	1-1	1,467	210	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	21 BRIGHTON & HOVE A U21s	NLC	0-1	116	TBD	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	25 AFC Fylde	VNL	0-2	1,082	120	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
FEBRUARY	1 SOLIHULL MOORS	VNL	1-1	1,480	80	20		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	4 TAMWORTH	VNL	0-1	1,013	30	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	8 GATESHEAD	VNL	0-4	1,323	72	21		1	2	3	4	5	7			10	11					14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
	15 Yeovil Town	VNL	2-1	3,179	143	21		1	2	3	4	5																																					

ROBSONS

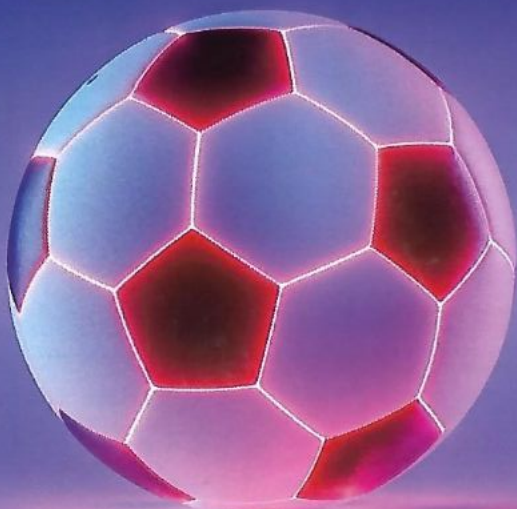
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The White Bear
Version 2 Lights

FC HALIFAX TOWN THE SHAYMEN TO LOOK OUT FOR 2024-25

4. FESTUS ARTHUR- DEFENCE

Born in Hamburg, the centre back was in the Oldham Athletic academy before joining Stockport County in 2019. Arthur then made the move to Hull. Arthur then spent the first half of two seasons ago out on loan with Barrow in League.

5. ADAM SENIOR DEFENCE (C)

Adam was on loan with Town two seasons ago from Bolton Wanderers making 20 appearances during his time with the Club. He rejoined last season and made the centreback position his own.

8. DANIEL NKURUMAH- Forward

On loan from Middlesbrough, the forward joined Leyton Orient's academy at the age of eight and progressed through the youth ranks. Nkrumah received his first professional contract at the age of 17. Middlesbrough paid an undisclosed fee to bring him to the Riverside Stadium. The following March, Nkrumah joined National League side Dagenham & Redbridge on a one-month loan deal.

9. LUCA THOMAS- FORWARD

Luca is on loan from Leeds United. Thomas has spent most his career in the Leeds academy. He became the first player to score in ten consecutive Under 18 Premier League games in April 2022 as he also won goal of the season in the league and Leeds under 18 player's player of the year. In October of this season, the forward signed on loan with fellow National League side York City. Initially just for one month, this was extended in November until January when he returned to Leeds.

10. JAMIE COOKE - FORWARD

Signed three summers ago, Cooke was a real impressive sight for Halifax in Pre-Season. The Scouse attacking midfielder was picked up after a compensation fee was paid to Colne, and it was at Fleetwood Town where Cooke first came onto the scene through their youth ranks.

16. JOSH EMMANUEL - DEFENCE

Emmanuel spent time in the academies at West Ham United and Ipswich Town. Whilst with Ipswich, Emmanuel had loan spells at Crawley Town, Rotherham United, and Shrewsbury Town

Who's who for the visitors



ADAM SENIOR

before he was released by the Tractor Boys in 2019. Subsequently, the defender signed for Bolton Wanderers in League One and made over 30 appearances in his only season at the club. Prior to the start of the 2020/21 season,

Emmanuel signed for Hull City. After two and a half years with the Tigers, Emmanuel made the switch to Grimsby Town then Carlisle United & then Doncaster Rovers.

18. FLORENT HOTI - MIDFIELD

Florent signed for Dundee United in August 2020, & spent time on loan at Forfar Athletic. He then signed for Arbroath on a short term deal, lasting until the end of January 2023, where he then joined Tranmere, again on a short term deal.

26. OWEN BRAY - MIDFIELD

Bray spent time in the Leeds United academy, rising through the ranks and making an appearance for the under 23s in the EFL Trophy in 2020. In 2022, Bray left Leeds after his contract wasn't renewed having made a number of appearances for the under 18s over the course of the previous season. In July 2023, Bray became one of the first players to sign a professional deal with Barrow's b-team and made his first start for the first team in November. At the end of last season, the midfielder was one of 10 players released by the Bluebirds.

31. TOBY SAVIN - GOALKEEPER

Toby is on loan from League One side Shrewsbury Town. Having spent time in various youth academies, Savin made his breakthrough at Accrington Stanley. **In June 2024, Savin made the switch to current club Shrewsbury, signing a two-year contract.**

MANAGER. CHRIS MILLINGTON -

Millington was appointed manager of the Shaymen at the start of the 2022/23 season following the departure of Pete Wild to Barrow, who Chris had been assistant to for three seasons



Classic Fan in the Stand WE TURN THE

TEN YEARS ago, matchball sponsor Steve Charlton, 64, featured in the programme (reproduced on the next three pages) so now we'd like

to update it and see if his views have changed. He still goes to games, home and away with 'Lyons Tours' and says "I do wonder why

these young lads want to spend their Saturday afternoons with an old git like me, but most of the stuff that happens does strangely seem

'The new branch manager at the supermarket where I worked tried to stop me getting away to watch a game. I told him where to go!'

Name: Steve Charlton

Where you live: I have lived in the Northolt area all of my life (you may well ask why!)

Are you working (and where?): I work as General manager for a Community Transport scheme

First Stones game attended (and when): Romford at home, under the lights! Season 74/75 ... we won 3-2 and I was hooked!

What or who persuaded you to become a Stones fan? I had a mate called Derek (Del Vaughan, now a commercial gent for the club) and whenever we had a kick about, he kept swanning around saying he was George Duck! I said who? And he said come and see for yourself! Can't remember if he scored in that game, but probably!

Do you follow any other team? My dad was a Spurs fan, so I follow them. Unfortunately one of my sons supports Arsenal!

Do you prefer lower-League football? Always have done, travelling around the north circular on a cold wet Tuesday night only to see Spurs get beaten 2-1 by Stoke at home is not much fun! You don't feel that connection that you do at Wealdstone. Going to the Stones is not just about a match it is an experience!

Any disadvantages? It's all good as far as I can see. It's cheaper, the food's better, and you can have a beer if you so wish.

How do you fit watching football, and Wealdstone, into



Steve Charlton soaks up the atmosphere in the Bulla Stand. There are no disadvantages to watching non-League football, he says

your family/working life? I have always made time for it. I remember working for a large supermarket chain in the 80s when I used to start early on a Saturday morning so I could get away sharp by 2.30pm. A new branch manager was

put in place and saw me 'sneaking out' and wanted to know where I was going. I told him "I start early and finish early" but he said: "I don't think so! According to your name badge you are section manager and I want you to return to work". So I removed my badge and politely told him what he could do with it and proceeded to leave for the game. (Probably not recommended these days). Surprisingly, I still had a job on Monday!

How big a part of your life is the game? I have always loved football (continued over page)

George Duck is on hand (left) as the ball flies into the Reading net in the famous 1977 FA Cup 2nd round win (2-1) at Lower Mead



CLOCK BACK BY UPDATING STEVE CHARLTON'S FIS FROM 2015

to revolve round me! Great times, great mates and sometimes great football". So we threw some more questions at Steve....

You predicted we'd be in the NLS or higher by 2020 and you were right! Has it surprised you? From where we were

and all the challenges that Wealdstone has faced over the years, to just get to the National League Continued overpage>>>

FAN IN THE STAND continued

PAGE 21



since a kid and have been watching Wealdstone for 40 years.

Most memorable game/s you've EVER seen? I could say Boston at Wembley, but I don't remember any of it! Cambridge United of course, and I was stone cold sober as I was driving onto to Lowestoft that evening. I celebrated later though! Plus Kettering away to lift the Gola league trophy. And Hastings at home that evening when we won the Southern League are a few that spring to mind.

And most memorable Wealdstone game, and moment? See the above....Also Andy Graham was a huge hero the year we did the double, and one occasion that sticks out was when we played Frickley at home in the Quarter-Final ... we had been singing before

the game, non-stop for about 15 minutes "Andy Graham, Andy Graham, Andy, Andy. Graham, he gets the ball and he scores a goal Andy, Andy Graham". Well, the game kicked off and over came the first cross and Andy tucks it away. Absolutely priceless!

There was also an away game at Banbury - a fancy dress day. A punch-up broke out on the dance floor of the clubhouse at half time. It was surreal! Spiderman was being set upon by three blokes and there was a 6ft 2inch Garfield the cat with his head bobbing about, right in the thick of it!

I also recall travelling to Swansea three times in a week in the FA cup... I sat next to Nick Dugard and that's how we got to know each other. All those hours in the com-

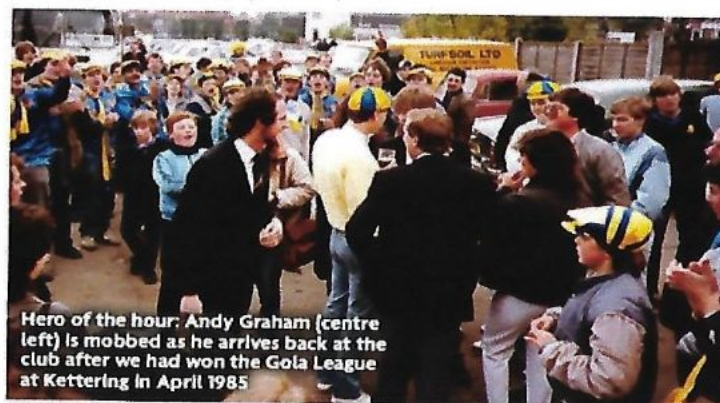
pany of Nick (bad luck - Ed).

Last but not least was my first away game, at Aldershot in the FA Cup 1975. Great game, and didn't we take 13 coaches? I remember getting on the wrong coach on the way home and it was just a haze of booze and cigarettes. I nearly passed out!

Oh, and who remembers one away game at Hillingdon in the late 70s? We were waiting to see which end we were kicking into and had to change round. As we walked towards the other end the stand was full of skinheads and on seeing our "huge" away following they pegged it! But unfortunately by the time we got to the other end, most of our fans had 'stopped off' at the side and there was only about 30 of us left! The Hillingdon fans

then returned and stood threateningly behind us regaling us with choruses of "You're going home in a *!@*! ambulance!! One of our fans (in a tartan cap) said "none of you move, we are going to see this out to half time" and then Stones did the worst possible thing by scoring! It was the longest 45 mins I have ever had to spend at a football match but fortunately we came away unscathed...

What really gets your goat watching football? You can't touch a player (continued over page)



Hero of the hour: Andy Graham (centre left) is mobbed as he arrives back at the club after we had won the Gola League at Kettering in April 1985

Classic Fan in the Stand CONTINUED

from previous page

was a great achievement, and to do it with Gordon Bartlett at the helm made it all the more special.

To reach the National League on our limited resources and compete in it (I hope we are still in it, after this has gone to print!) is a

brilliant, ongoing achievement. **Have you continued going to home and away games as the seasons have passed?** I get to

PAGE 22 FAN IN THE STAND continued

Steve Charlton

nowadays without the ref blowing up. I remember Alan Cordice getting chunks kicked out of him but ref played on! Though I am not condoning the treatment he used to get!

Have you ever played the game yourself (to any level) and most memorable moments? I used to enjoy the occasional staff v students at work and played a blinder once at right back and thought I was really good! Then I played my next game and I was c**p!

Any suggestions to improve your Stones-watching experience at the Vale? It has improved so much over the last few years. When I first saw the pitch remember thinking how can we play football on that!!

Favourite current Wealdstone line-up (1-11, with reasons)? North, (though he has a rush of blood sometimes!); Hammond (solid this year); Watts (looks composed); Cronin/ Parker/ Hamblin. (can't decide on just two of them); Godfrey (started to look himself again in the last couple of games); Lucien (breath of fresh air, gets at people and looks like he can play a bit too); Hickey (quietly gets on with it); McGleish (he's here, he's there...!); I think his experience at this level can help the young strikers coming through; Brown (A bit early yet but looks good) though I like Wright (committed and holds ball up well); and O'Nien who runs himself into the ground-though keep him out of our penalty box!

Favourite all-time Stones line-up (with reasons)? As it's my favourite it doesn't mean it's the best! John Morton (outstanding saves); Polly Perkins (so composed); Dennis Byatt, Paul Bowgett (so solid together); Stuart Pearce (hard,

'Our programme is great.. after a game I get in a hot bath, and there's so much to read I'm there till it gets cold!'

some of his tackles would make you wince) and exciting; Adrian Eglite (not hard but brilliant... He just used to hug the touchline, get the ball and run at people! He had the bandiest legs I have ever seen and I think it used to bamboozle the defenders!); Glen Little (class when he wanted to be); Robin Wainright (silky skills); Alan Cordice (the most exciting player I have ever seen! Gave me so much pleasure!); Richard Jolly (for Cambridge alone) and of course George Duck (goal machine!)

Where do you like to stand (or sit) at the Vale? I move around according to my mood! Though

I suffer with my back at times so you might find me in the seats.

Where did you used to stand or sit at Lower Mead? Always behind the goal! I remember it could be heaving at times and when we scored everybody used to surge forwards. My dad once ended up over the little white fence that used to surround the ground! We lived in Hayes and he used to watch them, but when he came along to watch Wealdstone I warned him that it got quite boisterous behind the goal.. there were hundreds of fans with their silk scarves etc... then suddenly there was a surge when we scored and he was over that fence!

What are your expectations for the Stones for this season? Hope fully things will continue to pick up and we can get away from the relegation scrap.

How does the current programme compare with others you see? Much, much better. When I get home from Wealdstone after a cold wet day, a nice hot bath and a read of the programme, though there's so much to read I can be in there for an hour!

Any articles or features that you'd like to see? Maybe a feature on our ex players (what become of Adrian Eglite for example?)

What has been the most readable/least readable Fan in the Stand so far? I enjoy all the old ones, takes me back, although my son's recently was a load of dross!

What do you think of the bars and catering at The Vale? The social club is great though I'd like to see the large function room open on Saturdays- hire income is very important to the club however. As for food I am always partial to a bit of ham, egg and chips!

Finally, where do you see the club in five years' time? We need to be in our own ground. If we can be settled who knows? But Conference South hopefully at the very least.



Steve's dug out this drinking picture from the past - that's him on the right at the social club at Lower Mead. Who remembers the limited-edition supporters club jumpers??



...AND STEVE REMEMBERS THE WEE TRIP TO AND FROM TRURO

as many games as I can even - though I still live in Northolt, I travel to Cheshunt every weekend to spend time with my partner Jane.

I still manage to "sneak off" for most home games! Train from Cheshunt to Tottenham Hale, Victoria line to Oxford Circus, and then the Central line to Greenford to meet the "boys" for a pint or three.

I recently fell off a ladder in Jane's garden and broke two ribs but the following day I still made the Stones game after she agreed to drive me! Every bump along the way, ouch!

As for away games, always a good day out! I travel on what has been affectionately been labeled "Lyons Tours". The brothers Ian and Aaron Lyons have been following the Stones for many years now and Aaron holds me responsible for ruining his Saturday afternoons as I was the person that introduced him to Wealdstone, sorry Aaron! Each week they tell me where to be and at what time... tickets are already purchased and with my maturing years that's good enough for me!

Wetherspoons for breakfast, sports bar for the early kick off, and off to the game later.

Also joining us now are new additions Christian and Jerry... they say laughter is the best medicine and that's something we always have and we reminisce often about away days past, but somehow as the years go by the stories seem to grow! One such tale was when we were playing Truro. They have a bar at one end of the ground that remains open for the whole game, and on the way back to the hotel after the game, the 45-minute non-stop bus ride became very uncomfortable after a combination of the amount of beers consumed and my ageing bladder!

About half way into the trip the bus suddenly made a non scheduled stop to let someone off. I was down those steps of the bus like a



'Lyons Tours' convenes at an away ground with Ian and Aaron, Christian and Jerry... and Steve far right. Fifth pint anyone?

greyhound out of a trap, just a blur as I passed the driver who fortunately realised my predicament and waited for me. When we got to our destination I thanked the driver and dropped him a fiver... and over the years this has morphed into "Steve dropped the driver a fiver to stop the bus so he could take a pee!" Lol!

You are sponsoring the matchball v Halifax today.. is that to commemorate 50 years of following the Stones? Yes, I'm 65 this year and I started watching the Stones in the 1974/75 season. Fifty years of ups and downs and some great memories along the way. Met some great characters and always enjoyed

the banter and humour at games, maybe not so prevalent now but the clever banter where you would be rolling up with laughter. Even the players joined in!

Where do you see the club in another five years? I would love to see the club get a crack at the EFL, but I'd be happy if we can maintain our National league status and move into our new ground at that level.

Are there any additions to your all-time Wealdstone team from ten years ago?

Since then, I've been entertained by some good players, but it's the ones that excite you that are special, so I probably stand by that XI. However, Jack Cook has fitted the bill, so I would probably now include him.

Finally... Is there anything that would improve your Wealdstone-watching experience? I think the club and all of those who give up their time, have done a great job. When my partner Jane drove me recently to the game (she used to attend a few games over the years before she moved) she commented on how much it had changed since she last attended.

She said everything seemed at another level, more professional, better organised, more fans and the standard of football was better.... so I think as a club I think we are getting it right.



New generation: Steve with his grandson Finn

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The stats don't lie: We have frittered away points but our fate can still be rectified today

AFTER nine long, arduous months across 45 National League games, Wealdstone's destiny will seemingly be decided by one last 90 minutes.

Nothing less than three points is required against playoff-bound Halifax Town if Wealdstone are to play National League football for a sixth consecutive season. Even then, that may not be enough depending on events in Birmingham. Here, Stat Attack plays *The Numbers Game* to shed some statistical light on what has gone wrong this season and why Wealdstone are on the cusp of relegation...

48 The number of players who have appeared in the Wealdstone squad this season. Some of those didn't register a single minute, many more barely cumulated more than a single match and most of them just weren't good enough. The names of Henry Jeffcot, Todd Miller, Taylor Clark, Jahmari Clarke and Jedidiah Brown all featured in a matchday squad at some point, but their lack of minutes and swift departures says enough. Ultimately, the recruitment has overall not been good enough.

8 Different goalkeepers appeared in a National League matchday squad in a campaign blighted by injuries. It started with Archie Matthews who cruelly had his season ended in September following a dislocated shoulder at Forest Green. We saw a brief glimpse of Jacob Adams before Sam Howes returned to the club only to manage a handful of appearances before a hamstring injury



curtailed his loan spell. Marcus Harness came in on loan from MK Dons but Jacob Adams was given the nod and initially excelled... before another freak injury (having his hand broken in training by a Henry Sandat shot) ended his season. We then saw the shaky Toby Steward (now desperately trying to keep Crawley in League

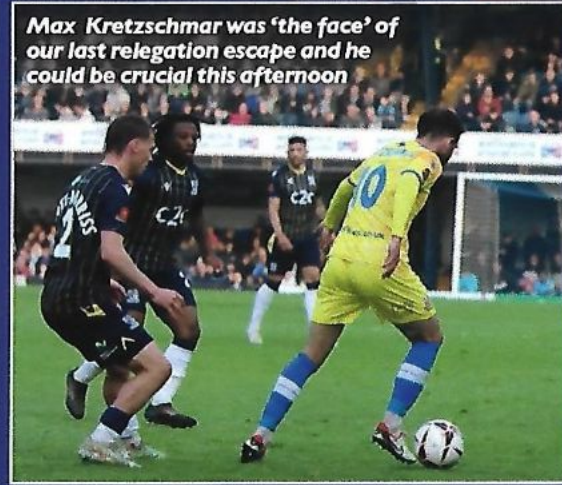
One) with James Hillson as backup before Luca Gunter arrived on loan from Tottenham. His spell has been hit and miss and ultimately, he was replaced by Dante Baptiste who has generally done well since claiming the jersey.

20 Points lost from winning positions. Many fans will look back at the Ebbsfleet (away) saga when the Stones were cruising to three points with a 2-0 lead on 88 minutes, only to concede twice late on. Don't forget Hartlepool's 98th minute equaliser back in August, or Southend's dramatic injury time leveller after we'd taken the lead on 90 minutes. The capitulation at Oldham, the meek surrender at home to Aldershot. The list of missed opportunities is endless. To be fair though...

21 Points won from losing positions. There has been a resilience to Wealdstone, at times – especially under Neil Gibson with dramatic turnarounds against Braintree (home and away), Ebbsfleet and Forest Green and of course the dramatic comeback against Eastleigh (left). Scoring the first goal in a game is often crucial for the Stones, something they have only managed to do in 18 of their 45 league games this season. However, they have re-



Nearest we came to a goal at Southend as Harrison Sohna (far left) blasts over the bar
Pictures: Jon Taffel



Max Kretzschmar was 'the face' of our last relegation escape and he could be crucial this afternoon

corded 9 wins and 7 draws in those games with just two defeats coming after scoring that first goal. Boy, do we need to notch first today!!

It's interesting to note the different records of Matt Taylor and Neil Gibson through this lens with Taylor's Wealdstone scoring the first goal in 12 of his 25 games in charge but only recording five wins in that period. All those wins came when scoring the first goal. In comparison, Neil Gibson has only seen his side score the first goal in 6 of his 19 games yet he has managed seven wins.

We'll be looking to the senior players in the squad to really stand up and ensure we do our part of the job.

ALEX REID has had a wonderful spell at Grosvenor Vale and we'd all love to see him reeling away towards a packed Bulla one last time.

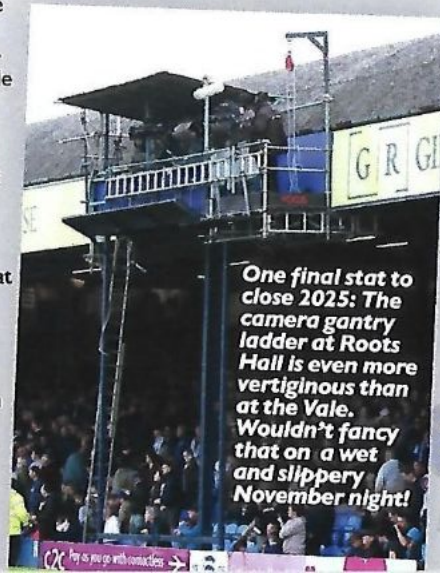
MAX KRETZSCHMAR was the 'face' of our relegation survival last season but hasn't quite hit the same heights this time around. That said, we've seen plenty of Max this season as he has amassed 3,033 minutes, starting 36 games and completing the full 90 minutes on 17 occasions. Despite a 'quiet' campaign, Max has 15 goal contributions (12

assists) and he is still a likely figure to impact the game.

After three consecutive games conceding early goals, a fast start today will be required. However, it's generally been the second halves where the goals come with 32 of Wealdstone's 53 league goals coming after the break. Indeed, 24 of those have come after the hour. Despite Alex Reid's prolific season, goals have been hard to come by with Wealdstone registering more than one goal in a game on just 15 occasions this season and only five times under Neil Gibson. Just eight goals in the last 10 games makes for difficult reading and the manner of the last three performances have been worrying.

Despite all the stats and angles, what really matters most is that those 11 players picked today give it their all and see what happens. The supporters have really showed up in the last few weeks and one final push could be enough.

Over the last five seasons, The Vale has witnessed some incredible moments and it's generally been the foundation of Wealdstone's National League successes. The Bulla, the Collins Stand and the rest of the Stones faithful are firmly behind the players and ready to do the business. **UP THE STONES!**



One final stat to close 2025: The camera gantry ladder at Roots Hall is even more vertiginous than at the Vale. Wouldn't fancy that on a wet and slippery November night!



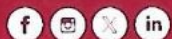
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It's the final hurrah for the Stones' magic man Georgie.. 7 years and 250 goals

Duck hits 250 mark as 'Stones win easily

Wealdstone 4, Yeovil Town 0

GEORGE Duck, Wealdstone's faithful goal machine, notched his 250th goal for the club as the 'Stones' marched to an emphatic Southern Premier League victory over a jaded Yeovil Town at Lower Mead on Saturday.



George Duck — classic goal

Duck, who could well have had four, then scored a second time and prompted further scores from the hard-running Bobby Moss and young midfielder Terry Boyle — his first league goal for Wealdstone.

However, Duck's milestone goal was worthy of the occasion. Indeed, it had all the hallmarks of a George Best classic — balance, close skill and clinical finishing.

And even more so when you realise that eight minutes previously, George had missed the easiest method of scoring — from the penalty spot. But my, how, he atoned for his mistake.

Gem

Galloping on to an excellent through ball — one of many throughout the match — from the aggressive Paul Brannigan, Duck split two defenders, rounded Yeovil goalkeeper, Parker, and coolly side-footed the ball into the empty net. A gem!

Once in front, the 'Stones' never looked back and one had the feeling that many goals would follow.

Wealdstone manager Alan Fogarty had the rare luxury of being able to field, probably, his strongest team. With Fred Barwick restored to full fitness alongside Scamus Horgan,

By **Pat Mooney**

due to bad finishing. After Horgan had two headers well saved by Parker, his opposite number, Cranstone, was forced to rush out of goal and clear with his feet to prevent Sturges from opening the scoring.

Then after 24 minutes Duck was handed a golden opportunity to draw first blood and notch his 250th goal when he was brought down in the box by Flay. But Duck's spot kick was pushed away by Parker and Johnson, following up, failed to shoot on target.

But all was forgiven eight minutes later when Duck scored that classic goal.

Farceful

Jim McVeigh and Alan Furstion, the defence looked watertight.

Midfield dominated throughout, with John Watson, the ever improving Terry Boyle and Paul Brannigan in no-nonsense mood. The front three of Duck, Moss and the admirable Johnson looked as sharp as I have seen them, and it was a total miscarriage of justice that Johnson didn't get his name on the scoresheet.

Refreshing

After Wednesday's disappointing display at bottom club, Bridgford, Wealdstone gave a refreshing performance of attacking football on Saturday and this victory almost assures them of qualification for the new Alliance Premier League.

Yeovil, playing their fourth match in a week, looked a jaded tired side. And with a high table position already secured, Town, it seems, are content to play out their remaining fixtures at a leisurely pace.

Terminated

However, Town almost scored in the opening minute when Finnigan seized on a defensive mistake but pulled his drive wide of goal.

Wealdstone soon settled down and a couple of promising moves terminated

Moss almost made it two before the break when he stormed through, rounded Parker but shot wide. The nearest Town came to snatching one back was when Watson almost put through his own goal but Cranstone got down well to concede a corner.

The pattern continued in the second half with the 'Stones' completely on top. Duck should have scored in the opening minute but in attempting to top, Parker only managed to hit the ball straight at the 'keeper.

Duck eventually scored a second time six minutes later following a farcical goal-mouth scramble. McVeigh hoisted over a corner, Horgan headed against a post, the ball bobbed as if it were demented before Duck nudged it home with the easiest of headers.

Johnson set up Wealdstone's third when he turned the Yeovil defence inside out and his shot cum cross was touched home by Moss.

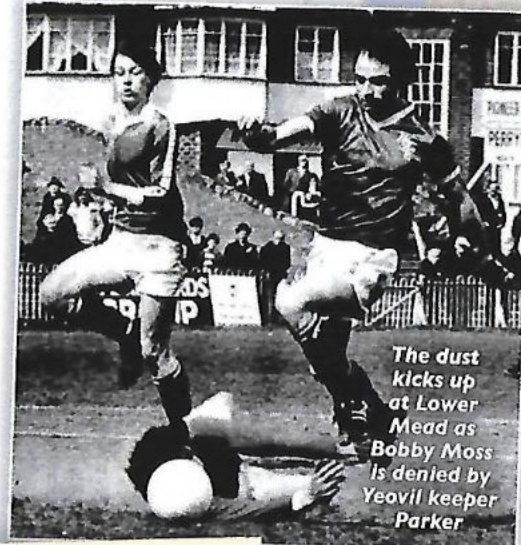
Duck created the final 'Stones' goal with another glimpse of his immense skill. He elegantly chested down a Johnson cross, flicked the ball into the path of Boyle, who hammered past Parker for a well deserved score.

Wealdstone: Cranstone; McVeigh, Furstion, Horgan, Barwick; Watson, Brannigan, Boyle; Duck, Moss, Johnson. **Subs:** Pearce.

TO THE FINAL GAME OF TWO QUITE MEMORABLE SEASONS...

goals in all competitions, and then walloped an astonishing 64 the following season as the Stones romped to the Southern League Div One title. George's pedigree (an ex-Tottenham and Millwall youngster with games in the League for Southend United), his balance, his heading ability and his coolness in front of goal made him unstoppable at that level, and also in the Southern League Prem which was nominally the division below the Football League ... although automatic promotion wouldn't arrive for another eight years.

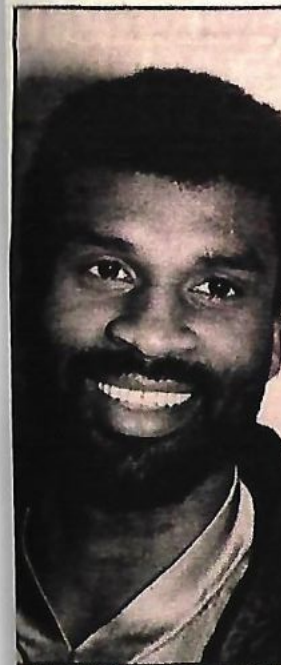
His goals, particularly in his final season (1978-79) kept the Stones in contention for a place in the new Alliance Premier League (today's National League) when it kicked off in August 1979. The Stones just about made the cut as the Southern League Prem merged with Northern Premier League 'giants' like Altrincham, Boston Utd, Bangor City and Scarborough - and we survived at that level, up and down, for nine years thanks to the goalscoring prowess of another Stones hero....



The dust kicks up at Lower Mead as Bobby Moss is denied by Yeovil keeper Parker

Cordice brightens gloom with 100th Stones goal

By **Aaron Gransby**



Alan Cordice — 100th goal for Wealdstone

Wealdstone 1 Maidstone United 3

ALAN Cordice provided the only memorable moment of this dreary end-of-season affair, finishing his comeback season on a high note with his 100th goal for Stones.

The veteran striker, whose all-round play has been impressive since he made his return in January, even if the once electrifying pace seems to have deserted him, beat a defender before rolling a shot home after Tony Lynch's ninth minute cross.

It equalised a Maidstone opener scored just two minutes previously, when Mark Gall hit the first of his hat-trick by sidefooting in from a corner as the Wealdstone defence stood by and watched.

Maidstone restored their lead within 60 seconds of the home side's equaliser, Gall working himself into a shooting position before unleashing a 30-yard shot past Kevin Foster.

Continuing the early action, Tony Jennings' team went close to making it 2-2 in the 12th minute, a goalmouth scramble ensuing after a corner and four shots being blocked before Greg Zacharia headed wide.

But Maidstone withstood further pressure before breaking away to increase their lead in the 34th minute. Gall got on the end of a high, bouncing ball and lofted a shot over Foster and just underneath the crossbar.

Wealdstone felt they should have had a goal five minutes into the second half when Tom

English ran through, shrugging off four challenges, before shooting strongly home. But referee Paul Alcock, who had given some mysterious decisions throughout the evening, ruled it out for an offside.

In the 58th minute, Maidstone were reduced to ten men — again from a debatable decision. Their top scorer Steve Butler was pulled up for a foul on Francisco Rivero and promptly sent off — presumably for saying something out of turn to Mr Alcock.

Wealdstone had a few more chances to pull themselves back into it, Lynch having a shot well saved and Rivero heading wide, but they looked generally disinterested as did the sparse crowd that bothered to assemble for the final competitive match of a disastrous season.

At least they can have the consolation of knowing that Wealdstone go down from the Conference a far better side than they were at the beginning of the campaign, with more quality players, a better spirit, a new board of directors and a management team that must have a good chance of bringing them back up at the first attempt.

Wealdstone: Foster, Pittaway (Rivero), Bowtell, Byatt, Harrison, McCarthy, Zacharia, Bailey, English, Cordice, Lynch. **Other** sub: Wainwright.

THURSDAY MAY 5 1988, GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: WEALDSTONE 1 MAIDSTONE UTD 3

These were truly desperate days.

After the glory of the mid-80s and that first non-League double, Stones' attempts to tread water under chairman David Morritt (and latterly manager Tony Jennings) finally saw us slip under the waves two weeks before this final, sad end to the season with just 445 inside Lower Mead. How fitting, though, was it that the brilliant Alan Cordice (*non-League Player of the Year in 1985*) scored our last goal at the top level for 32 years? It was his 100th for the club and how we'd lamented his pace and skill after a bad injury saw him miss most of those last few seasons.

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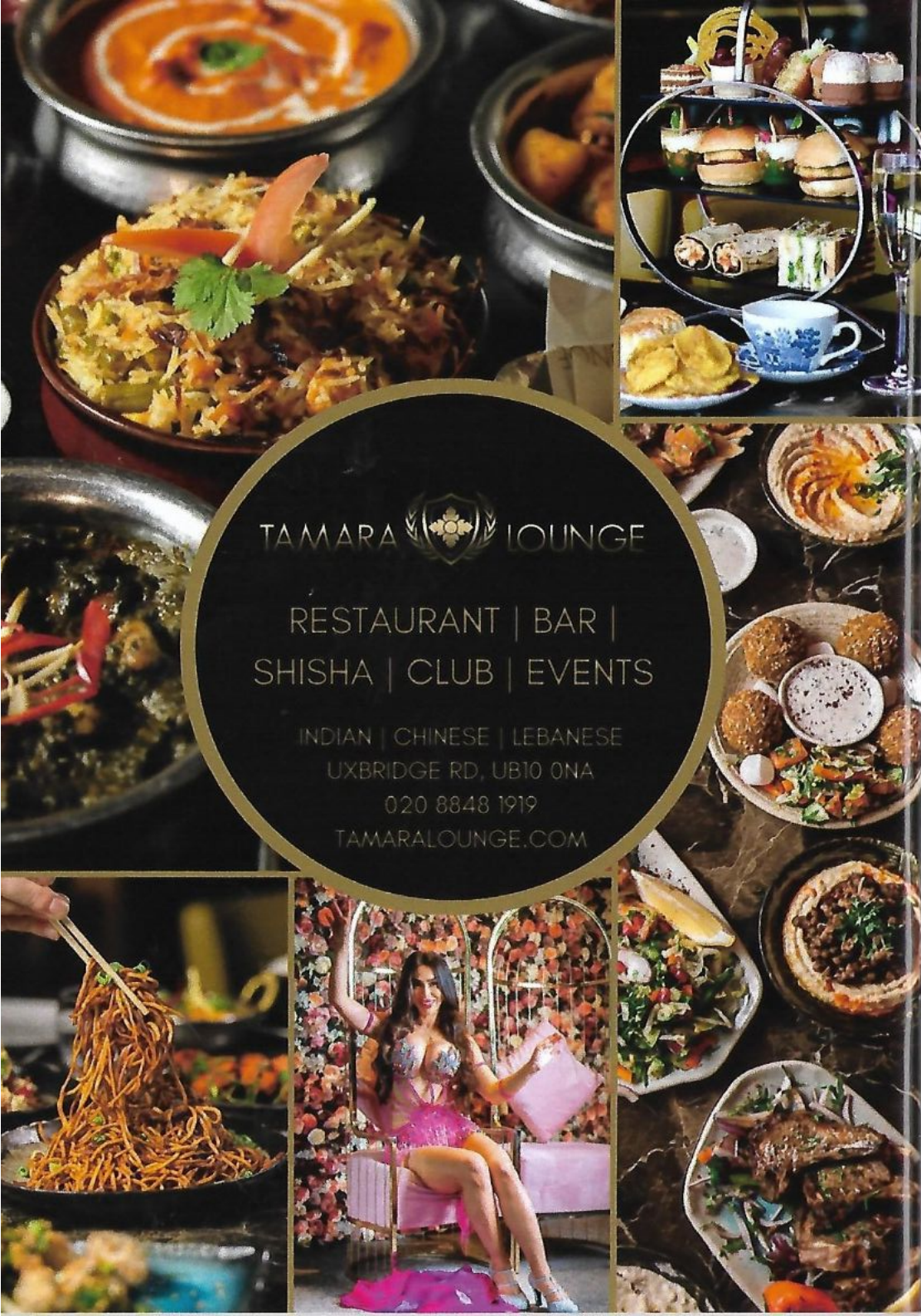
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Anthony Georgiou
Forum Charlie



Deon Woodman
"In Memory of our Dad
Bernie Ingram, Wouldstone
borne and bred"



Alex Dyer
IC Property



Alex Dyer
Hillcrest Group



Mason Barrett
Robert Barrett,
Rofie East



Enzio Boldewijn
Tim Parks



Craig Eastmond
@Stonescast85



Craig Eastmond
Jamie McGarrity
& family



Sean Adarkwa
Luca



Max Kretschmar
Adam Rowlands



Todd Miller
Hampshire Rose
& Norwich Singing
Man



Jacob Adams
LTB Coaching



Micah Obiero
Nicky Clark



Elliot Simmons
Mick Fishman



Alex Reid
Sarah Gowdy



Dominic Hutchinson
APA Events
& Security



Christian Scott
The 3 Amigos (John,
James & Victor)



Adrian Mariappa
Sudhir, Akhil,
Nikhil, Sarin &
Kamran Rawal



Adrian Mariappa
Watford Stones
(JP, Scott & Luca).



Sam Ashford
Jim Sorrell



Kallum Cesay
Matthew Snell



Elliot Thorpe
The Taffia



Jaydn Mundle-Smith
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Brandon Mason
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PRE-SEASON FIXTURES

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE – TABLE, AS AT 27TH APRIL		ALL			HOME			AWAY			STONES RESULTS												
		P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	H	A
1	Barnet	45	30	9	6	94	38	23	18	5	0	58	15	22	12	4	6	36	23	56	99	0-3	1-1
2	York City	45	28	9	8	93	42	23	16	4	3	57	20	22	12	5	5	36	22	51	93	0-2	0-3
3	Forest Green Rovers	45	22	16	7	68	41	23	15	7	1	38	17	22	7	9	6	30	24	27	82	2-1	2-2
4	Rochdale	44	20	11	13	68	42	23	13	4	6	43	21	21	7	7	7	25	21	26	71	2-0	1-4
5	Oldham Athletic	45	18	16	11	62	48	22	10	6	6	33	23	23	8	10	5	29	25	14	70	0-1	2-3
6	Halifax Town	45	19	13	13	49	43	23	9	5	9	22	24	22	10	8	4	27	19	6	70		2-2
7	Southend United	45	17	16	12	59	48	23	10	7	6	33	24	22	7	9	6	26	24	11	67	1-1	0-3
8	Gateshead	45	19	9	17	76	68	22	11	3	8	37	31	23	8	6	9	39	37	8	66	0-4	0-1
9	Altrincham	45	17	12	16	67	61	22	9	7	6	33	20	23	8	5	10	34	41	6	63	3-3	1-0
10	Tamworth	45	17	12	16	64	71	23	10	8	5	40	28	22	7	4	11	24	43	-7	63	0-1	1-4
11	Eastleigh	45	14	17	14	58	59	22	9	9	4	35	25	23	5	8	10	23	34	-1	59	3-3	1-1
12	Hartlepool United	45	14	17	14	58	61	22	8	10	4	28	22	23	6	7	10	30	39	-3	59	1-1	1-1
13	Sutton United	45	15	14	16	58	63	22	7	7	8	27	29	23	8	7	8	31	34	-5	59	0-1	2-2
14	Solihull Moors	44	16	9	19	60	65	21	8	4	9	33	38	23	8	5	10	27	27	-5	57	1-1	1-1
15	Woking	45	13	18	14	51	58	23	10	8	5	27	22	22	3	10	9	24	36	-7	57	1-0	0-1
16	Yeovil Town	45	15	11	19	50	58	23	7	7	9	25	27	22	8	4	10	25	31	-8	56	0-3	2-1
17	Boston United	45	15	10	20	54	64	23	7	7	9	28	31	22	8	3	11	26	33	-10	55	1-0	0-2
18	Aldershot Town	45	13	15	17	67	82	22	8	9	5	40	34	23	5	6	12	27	48	-15	54	1-3	2-0
19	Braintree Town	45	14	11	20	49	59	22	9	5	8	19	18	23	5	6	12	30	41	-10	53	3-2	2-1
20	Dagenham & Redbridge	45	12	15	18	60	61	23	9	6	8	44	35	22	3	9	10	16	26	-1	51	3-0	1-2
21	Wealdstone	45	12	14	19	53	75	22	8	6	8	28	33	23	4	8	11	25	42	-22	50	--	--
22	Maidenhead United	45	13	10	22	54	75	22	6	7	9	29	36	23	7	3	13	25	39	-21	49	1-0	1-3
23	Fylde	45	11	7	27	50	82	22	8	4	10	35	36	23	3	3	17	15	46	-32	40	1-0	0-2
24	Ebbsfleet United	45	3	13	29	38	96	23	3	7	13	18	41	22	0	6	16	20	55	-58	22	4-2	2-2

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