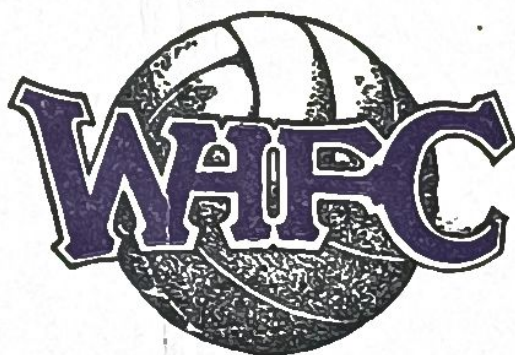


WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CHAT

March 1937



with Compliments

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB

MEMBERS : SOUTHERN AMATEUR LEAGUE

President : Miss I. PAULIN

Ground :

FORDS GROVE

WINCHMORE HILL, N.21

Telephone : Palmers Green 1271



Hon Secretary :

J. S. GOWERS

12 SUFFOLK ROAD

PONDERS END, MIDDLESEX

No. 5 Vol. 1]

Compiled, Arranged and Edited by GEORGE DEACOCK.

[March 1937.

ONE, Robert Willam Charles Gowers, present-day captain of the Club, having gone to the colossal trouble of wading through stacks of references, minute books, etc., in order to trace the Club back to its inception or, if you prefer it, trace the Club from its inception to the present day, and having sent me, as Editor, the result of his findings all very neatly written out, one cannot do less than give ample space to this not uninteresting history. I am sure our own members will be delighted to know that some of us were playing or were connected with the Club when they were nothing more than a sidelong glance, and that being very little, makes grandfathers of quite a few of the glancers. We hope also that members of other clubs will find some interest in what "Gus" Gowers has discovered, all of which, by the way, is strictly authentic, and that references back over a period of nearly twenty years will not cause undue, or increased excess of gouty or rheumaticy pains from which some of you must by now, according to the law of averages, be suffering.

George Deacock.

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB 1919—1937.

Towards the end of season 1919-20 a few lucky fellows who had survived the sporting gambols of Politicians and War Lords and who had thus been able to fold their tents and steal silently away, discovered to their dismay that the growing of whiskers during their holiday on the Field of Flanders, found them unrecognized by mothers, sweethearts and wives. In consequence they had recourse, in order to establish their respective identities, to return *en masse* to the field of pre-war and more congenial sport which belongeth to the Winchmore Hill Cricket Club, from which

these said fellows who were members had drawn stumps before time and rushed away one memorable day in August, 1914. This action was sufficient in itself to prove to the fickle female mind that any one of them might fit the long lost brother cry, as indeed it did, but the womenfolk were perforce, through their own doubting, to lose them again as soon as they had found them, and let me tell you why. With the aid of much hot water, soap and Army razors Mark II, identities were slowly but surely revealed. Such people as Bill Lavers, George Burgoyne, Peter Calkin, Uncle Tom

Cobley and all, gradually came forth from the face fungus to be recognised. The handshakes, hugs, kisses and congratulations having been dispensed among the lads, such as these lads mentioned, to all intents and purposes, and more or less in unison proclaimed—"Well, wot abaht it?" When asked "Wot abaht wot?" the reply, again in unison, was "Wot abaht starting a football club?" and so lo! and behold the Winchmore Hill Football Club held its first management Committee Meeting, 'neath the roof of the horses' stable next the manure heap of much value. Preliminaries having proved very preliminary, the boys, still remembering their sojourn abroad, fielded a "scratch" side on the following Saturday against Latymer Old Boys—who by the way must be very old boys by now!

George Deacock.

THE HISTORY OF W.H.F.C.

The first game against Latymer Old Boys was lost by 2 goals to 6, but they continued their wanderings and the season closed with six defeats from seven matches and a balance of 1½d. An emergency Committee Meeting was held in March and on May 16th, 1920, a football General Meeting held at St. Paul's Institute, Winchmore Hill, decided upon the constitution of the Winchmore Hill Football Club, and accepted the Cricket Club's generous offer of a pitch at a rental of £15. In season 1920-21 two elevens were run and the Club had 33 playing and 18 non-playing members. Friendly games, mainly in North London, were arranged with the following result:—

	Pl.	W.	L.	D.	Goals	
					For	Agst.
1st XI	...	24	17	5	2	87 20
2nd XI	...	19	11	7	1	65 42

This excellent performance and a balance now of £13 after all expenses had been paid were due in particular to the efforts of Bill Lavers (Chairman and 1st XI Captain), Jim Follett (Treasurer), George Burgoyne (Secretary),

Peter Calkin (Committee). An offer to participate in the Northern Suburban League was rejected and both teams entered the Middlesex County Amateur League and the 1st XI the County Amateur Charity Cup. The 2nd XI had a moderate season, but the 1st XI, a beefy side, whose average age was over 30, won both the League and the Cup (1920-21).

At the commencement of the season the Club colours were fixed as white shirts, blue knickers and Club stockings. A gate (2d.) was charged and matches were advertised by handbill, but after printing charges and Entertainment Tax had been deducted only a balance of £3 remained. This experiment was not repeated, but a collection box, newly presented by Charlie Pring, continued to touch the pockets of spectators. In 1922-23 the Club moved into the Pavilion, which remains to-day and which was built by the Cricket Club at a cost of £1,800 from moneys subscribed on loan from members. The Cricket Club formed in the year 1880 had played on this ground since 1881. The field was then the Home Park of the Buck family, whose house occupied the site of the present Capitol Cinema.

It was then rough pasture land dotted with trees, surrounded by a hedge and crossed north to south by a ditch. The Cricket Club had the use of the present 1st XI table and built two Pavilions between it and the New River which bordered one side of the ground. It was the second one, built in 1912, that the Football Club used for changing in, whilst visiting teams were housed in round corrugated iron sheds which had open windows until December, 1921, when an expenditure on mica was granted because they were "very draughty windows!" After the War the estate having been purchased by Sir William Paulin, a generous lease was given to the Cricket Club and Sir William

became first President of both the Cricket and Football Clubs. The Cricket Club then took over for the first time a large area at the back of the present Pavilion and it was here that the Football Club first played, the pitch crossing the 3rd XI Cricket table. In 1922-23 the 1st XI entered "B" Division of the Southern Olympian League and the A.F.A. Senior Cup, whilst the 2nd XI remained in the County Amateur League and entered the A.F.A. Junior Cup. The loss of three or four of our best players, the stronger opposition and end-of-season slackness produced a poor result. The Club was faced with 10 months' notice to quit from the Parent Club, but fortunately this was soon withdrawn.

In 1923-24 the 1st XI won "B" Division of the Southern Olympian League and the 2nd XI also improved.

In 1924-25 the 1st XI secured 19 points in 16 games in the Premier Division, S.O.L., after a bad start.

A Strollers' XI was formed to avoid the loss of those who could not be accommodated in the two XI's, but it was poorly supported. Nevertheless the Club had flourished and had 43 Vice-Presidents and Honorary Members and a balance of £31.

After a moderate season in 1925-26 the Club revived under the captaincy of Bill Gower, who was fortunate in the arrival of excellent players such as Punchard, Ted Boden and Frank Smith. In 1926-27 the 1st XI finished third in the S.O.L. which included Lensbury, Catford Wanderers, London Welsh, Chingford, and Watford Amateurs, and they won the Middlesex A.F.A. Senior Cup by defeating Old Hamptonians 4-0 on the Liverpool Victoria ground at Acton. The 2nd XI had started well but declined owing to 1st XI calls. The 1st XI won the League in 1927-28 and were

second in 1928-29 during which year they were also runners-up in the Middlesex Senior Cup, losing to Broomfield 2-4. This run of success under Gower and Smith led to the election of 1st and 2nd XI's to Divisions III Senior and Junior Southern Amateur League, and to the formation of a 3rd XI which played on the second pitch that now became necessary. In 1929-30, their first season in the new competition, the 1st XI were runners-up and were promoted to Division II, while the 2nd XI were also promoted when they won Division III Junior Section in 1930-31. The Club has continued without further success in the same competitions—the 1st XI in Division II S.A.L., A.F.A. Senior and Middlesex Senior Cups, and the 2nd XI in Division II Junior S.A.L., A.F.A. Junior and Middlesex Junior Cups. However, membership has expanded and the 3rd XI entered Division III Nemean League in 1930, while a 4th XI was formed in 1930 and entered Division V Nemean League.

Much has been done to improve the amenities of the Club. The bar was installed in the Pavilion in 1932 and brought to the Cricket Club the profits which had once gone to the "Green Dragon" and "King's Head"; baths were given by Stan Pryke and others, a warm lounge was added by subscription in 1935-36, and this season training equipment has been enlarged and improved. The condition of the playing pitches has been a constant concern. In 1930 when two pitches were taken over the 1st XI pitch was made more level though the main hummock could not be removed, and a £100 drainage scheme is now being carried out in co-operation with the Parent Club which should prevent new year mud. In 1932 the corrugated stand was erected at a cost of £20 thanks to the "labour gang" led by Ted Boden.

The late Sir William Paulin was President until

his death in 1931, when Miss Paulin graciously succeeded him. The Club has always had a large number of Vice-Presidents (more than fifty this year), and the keenest of them, "the fans" led by Harry Tidy and Jimmy Green, follow both home and away matches with encouragement and trenchant criticism. As with most organisations the "donkey work" has been done by a few and the Club is particularly indebted to Bill Lavers (Captain and Chairman, 1920-27), Jim Follett (Treasurer, 1920-30), R. H. McLeod (Chairman, 1927-37), P. Hockley (Treasurer, 1930-36), Horace Whittard (Secretary, 1930-36), George Deacock (Team and Match Secretary since 1930) and the late Mrs. Groom (who superintended teas, 1920-35).

As the Club has grown it has lost something of its original family atmosphere. Committee meetings are no longer held in private houses; fewer members belong to the Cricket Club; dances and suppers are less frequent. Older members recount rash escapades and nights-out but the younger generation takes its pleasures with less gusto and more sobriety. However, players are still drawn almost entirely from North London and are 100 per cent. amateur in spite of the fact that "shamateurism" seems rife in all games from table tennis to ice hockey. Liberal expenses and soft jobs have never been employed to lure players from other clubs. In the absence of large crowds, the Committee has only been able to pay its way by special efforts of which many have been tried—an attache-case draw, Derby draws, pin boards, a stop-watch competition, dances and whilst drives, and the football pontoon (O.C. "Tiger" Smith). Yet a balance has always been shown which rose every year until it reached £52 in 1932; it then declined to £7 in 1934 and advanced to £127 in 1936. In lean years consideration has always been shewn by the Parent Club, two of whose officials,

Fred Huson and Sam Spratley, especially merit thanks for advice and supervision of all ground and pavilion improvements.

The Selection Committee has often remarked that there is but a small difference between 1st and 3rd XI's, and proof of this lack of outstanding players is provided by the fact that no player while at Winchmore Hill has been selected for A.F.A. or S.A.L. representative sides.

(The best players cannot always play in representative matches, most of which are played in mid-week. The best players are generally also the best workers, all of whose grandparents have long since departed.—Ed.)

The Hill has usually played open, robust football in a casual, sociable way. Longevity rather than brilliance has been the characteristic. Harold Follett, Les. and Gray Hancock, Ted Boden, Dick Platt, George Deacock, Les. Brown and Jack Hurst have all played ten or more seasons. Yet, if it were possible to rejuvenate all those who have played for the Club a fine team could have been selected: Deacock; Punchard, Hurst; Gower (Capt.), Smith, Birch (G.); Carr, Birch (E.), Gowers (J.), Boden (or H. Follett), Chinn.

Who said Walthamstow Avenue?

In 16 years the Hill has progressed from a scratch, wandering side to a Club with large membership, substantial bank balance and high hopes of promotion. What of 1952?

PERSONALITY PAR.

ROBERT H. MCLEOD.

Rob. McLeod has been a member of the Club almost since its inception, but has never played. He has, however, taken a close interest in the Club and, in particular, its management affairs. He acted as Hon. Auditor 1921-29 and was elected a member of the Management Committee in 1923. He acted as Deputy-Chairman 1926-27 and has been Chairman since 1927 to date. In ancient minutes is recorded appreciation of the work, i.e., dance refreshments, put

in by the late Mrs. McLeod (1920) and of "Mac" himself for football reports to "The Herald" and "Gazette" (1928). Always most keen to the point of abject misery, that the Club should do well, he, up to a year or so ago, religiously followed the 1st XI home and away.

Once, when offered a cigarette at a time when the Hill were losing, this inveterate smoker was heard to proclaim "This is no time for smoking."

Thoroughly enjoyable company and the perfect chairman—he deals with delinquents like a bull after a butcher, but nevertheless in such a way as to create an atmosphere of complete tactfulness.

Advancing years make no difference to his virile appearance, but they have slowed him down a bit from sitting in the icy blast to watch a game. Only the best of weather brings him out now, and he can still be traced by his groans borne of utter keenness vented at a time when a Hill player does or does not do that which he should or shouldn't.



1st. XI.

During the last month the Senior XI has advanced to the Semi-final of the Middlesex Senior Cup, but secured only three points from three League games.

In the Cup, Crouch End Vampires were defeated 6—2 on their own ground on January 9th, and Ealing by 5—4 at home on February 6th. This victory over the leaders of Division II (Southern Section) is the best performance of the season. In the League a lucky point was secured from N.P. Bank (away) 3—3, a deserved home defeat was suffered to Alexandra Park, 2—3, and an easy win recorded over Norseman, 5—1, at home. The further loss of League

points probably puts us out of the race for promotion, since Highgate and Old Lyonians have now a clear lead, but we still have Cup hopes. In the Semi-final we meet Brentham, Southern Olympian champions, who surprisingly defeated Lensbury 5—2 in the previous round.

Since Christmas the side has changed considerably. Wheatley has replaced Foster in goal; Falk has returned with renewed energy and craft, at half; and the illness of Jack and Gus Gowers has brought in Jacques and Varley. Jacques has pleasing ball control but keeps it too close, while Varley has recaptured his best form—and his hat-trick against Ealing puts us into the Semi-final.

R. Gowers.

4th. XI. — January.

Through many members of the Club turning over in bed instead of a new leaf, during January 1937, the 4th XI again suffered badly by having to field very weak sides. However, the position is improving, and with the coming of the rainy season, the 4th XI are progressing swimmingly.

Merton brought over a very good side on January 9th, and defeated us 6—1 and, although they took every opportunity in the first half and netted five times, the Hill got together well in the second half and the visitors were very lucky to get that other goal just on time.

The visit to Carshalton was a tragedy, as only eight men turned up. They are probably the strongest side in the League and nobody can be blamed for the 8—1 defeat.

London Welsh provided us with the most enjoyable game we have had for a long time, and in spite of the visitors weight we managed to win 3—1.

The game against Old Finchleians was abandoned owing to the condition of the

ground, but we hope to meet these good fellows again before the end of the season.

On February 7th, the 3rd XI asked us to deputise for them against Crouch End Vampires' 3rd XI, and the result 2—2 enabled us to bring home one point, although we feel that with just a little luck we should have had both—as we led by 2 goals to nil.

The improvement in the last few games has

been due to a reshuffling of the team. We have obtained Ramsbottom from the 3rd XI to keep goal for us and thus have been able to liberate Rollings to play in his correct position at centre forward, and with changes round in the defence and our stalwart half-back line, we look forward a little more hopefully to the next two months.

Les. Abbott.

(In spite of repeated requests, the Captains of the 2nd & 3rd XIs have failed to send in their reports. Pressure of business is the excuse in both instances.....Pressure my foot. Ed.)

Southern Amateur Football League.

SENIOR SECTION—Tables up to and including 6th FEBRUARY 1937.

DIVISION 2.

NAME OF CLUB	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	GOALS FOR	GOALS AGAINST	POINTS
Highgate	10	7	2	1	32	24	16
Old Lyonians	9	7	1	1	34	16	15
Norsemen	11	6	1	4	24	21	13
Old Stationers	12	5	2	5	32	31	12
Winchmore Hill	10	5	1	4	28	19	11
Old Grocers	12	4	2	6	27	24	10
Alexandra Park	9	4	1	4	19	24	9
National Provincial Bank	10	3	3	4	22	30	9
Old Parkonians	13	2	2	9	30	45	6
Crouch End Vampires	10	2	1	7	20	34	5