

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CHAT

May 1939



with Compliments.

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB

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[May, 1939.

Editorial.

WITH this issue we bid good-bye to Season 1938/39. A season which will most probably be remembered for its interruptions. Remember the night of the first Trial Game ? Pouring with rain outside and some eight or nine of us in the Bar discussing in awed whispers the Crisis, and whether the Season would ever start. Then came the long drawn out Cup Tie with Old Lyonians right in the middle of the Season. Almost at the same time a severe spell of weather made grounds unplayable and among other games we had to cancel the match v. Public School XI which we had all been anticipating so eagerly. Finally, to crown our troubles the epidemic of 'flu which made the Team Secretary's job a nightmare, and spoilt so many of the games at the end of the season.

In spite of these influences however, this season has been more successful than last. The

1st XI have finished higher in the league than last year and the 2nds after recovering from the fatiguing Cup Tie, finished in a blaze of glory. The excellent coaching we have had is beginning to bear fruit. It takes more than twenty odd games to translate theory into perfect practice and to mend faults which have accumulated over several seasons, but the improvement in our play for which we hoped is already showing itself and we can look forward with confidence to next season when we start not as this year right from the beginning but from where we left off.

There is only one thing left to do for this season—that is to make a point of attending the A.G.M. on Friday 2nd June. Exceptional events this season have caused the officials to give a great deal of time to club affairs. They only ask you to give one evening, Friday, 2nd June.

1st XI REPORT.

The 1st XI's last two games of the season were staged at Fords Grove and whereas we beat the Old Carthusians comfortably, we were defeated heavily by National Provincial Bank in our final league match.

On March 18th, Old Carthusians visited us and with the exception of certain members

nursing injuries, they brought along their full Arthur Dunn side. A fast enjoyable game resulted, and although the visitors' quick passing methods upset our defence at first, the Hill soon settled down and after turning round with a two goal lead, eventually ran out winners 3—0.

On the following Saturday, National Provincial Bank proved too good for us and by winning 6—1, took full revenge for the defeat we inflicted upon them at Lower Sydenham earlier in the season. The Hill started quite promisingly but owing to hesitation at close quarters, failed to get that important opening goal. The Bank then scored through Wrightson as a result of a good combined movement, the same player soon adding another. Jacques reduced the lead with an excellent drive but half time arrived with our opponents holding a comfortable lead of 4—1. The Hill shewed plenty of enthusiasm and spirit in the second half but very little method and National Provincial Bank in due course added two further goals without reply.

2nd XI REPORT.

The 2nd XI finished the season in splendid form, getting 7 points from the last 4 games, and it certainly seems that the change in captaincy has proved an inspiration to the side. "Young" Alec is playing as well as ever, and, since he took over the skipper's ship, the 2nd XI have not lost a game.

On March 18th we visited West Wickham with a good side, though the personnel of the defence was a little unusual. On the excellent playing surface the game was played at a good pace, though in the first half we were inclined to keep the ball a little too close and to hold it a little too long.

Mold opened the scoring with a fine shot from the wing and a little later we added a second and we crossed over leading 2—0. Playing up the slope in the second half, we played really good football, moving the ball about quickly and keeping the game open and the result was never in doubt. We finally won 6—1, Woollends, who was back to his best form, doing the hat trick. Mold at outside left

played extremely well, scored twice and Banks got a good goal from the opposite wing. Bacon worked very hard, distributing the ball well, "Peter Pan," at centre half shut up the middle of the field and was particularly good in the air, and Freddie played a sound game at back. Gus, in the unaccustomed position of left back, gave a great display, tackling hard, kicking well and heading phenomenal distances. The reason that the number of goals scored may have been that the forwards were promised half a pint a goal! However, there was only one claimant.

We entertained Aquarius on March 25th, and managed to reverse the result of the away game. The first half was a bit scrappy, both sides having scoring chances which were wasted. After the interval the Hill were definitely on top, although weather conditions made the ball difficult to control. After about 15 minutes Gus pushed a lovely pass through to the right and Christie ran on to it and scored a good goal with a first time drive. We continued to press and came near to scoring several times, Woollends in particular making several good efforts, but we had to be satisfied with a 1—0 victory. It is worthy of mention that our skipper got laid out and carried off, but thanks to "Bring - em - back - alive" Ambridge, he was soon back, and finished the game at outside right, and nearly scored a goal.

After a week's rest to get over our Easter holiday, we played our penultimate league game against Highgate on Old Stationers ground at Barnet, where we unfortunately had to play with only 10 men, as the grocer forgot to deliver the rashers. Neither side played particularly well and the wind didn't make things any easier. The first half was fairly evenly contested and we crossed over without score.

Early in the second half Gus received the ball down the middle, tricked the advancing goalkeeper and found himself on the goal line all alone with the ball. Ken Bain joined him there so Gus gave him the ball and Ken pushed it the necessary 6 inches to make us one up. Subsequently we had several good scoring chances which were wasted, and we looked like winning by the only goal scored, but in the last 2 minutes of the game the Highgate left wing got away and put a high ball across the middle, which I think was intended for a centre, but, with the assistance of the wind, the ball dropped almost vertically into our net to the amazement of our sylph-like goalkeeper. This was really the end and we had to be satisfied with one point from a good game.

The following week we again journeyed to Barnet, this time to play Old Stationers in a postponed league game.

There was almost a gale blowing down the slope which did much to spoil the game.

In the first 5 minutes we were rewarded a penalty for hands and Gus scored from the spot, placing the ball just inside the post. With the wind at our back we continued to press, but we were inclined to bunch too much, and we should have shot more, particularly as, with the assistance of the wind, you could safely have a crack about 30 yards out.

We were awarded corner after corner, about 15 in all, which were perfectly taken, but we were unable to get the ball into the net, partly due to the good display of the Stationers' keeper.

We crossed over leading 1—0, which didn't seem a sufficient lead in view of the weather conditions.

However, our football improved 60% in the second half, we opened the game up and found our wings well against the wind, made several good openings, and certainly should have scored again when all Norman had to do was square the ball gently to our two-footed left winger, but he hit it a bit too hard.

Our defence was playing well, Broad and Cooper on the right, tackling and clearing strongly, and Diggins playing a good game in the middle, while Bing dealt safely with everything that came his way.

After about 25 minutes play the Stationers' outside right broke away, squared the ball well and the centre forward banged it in the net from close range.

We fought back hard, with a certain amount of encouragement from the line, and with 8 minutes to go, Gowers finished a nice movement by putting the ball in the net as their goalie dived. That was the end of the scoring and we ran out winners by 2—1.

Some of us attended the Old Stationers' Supper in the evening, which was an excellent show and a fitting climax to the season.

We can look forward to next season cheerfully, as we have some excellent material among our younger members, Brooks, Banks and Buck to name three, in addition to several others, at the moment in lower elevens.

We would like to offer our congratulations to Mold on his recent marriage and we hope this does not mean that we are to lose him as a playing member.

3rd XI REPORT.

On March 18th we visited Motspur Park and played Merton, and playing one short throughout we lost 0—5. Facing a strong breeze and on a rough ground, we held our own in the first half. We rarely passed the half-way line but when the interval came Merton were leading by only one goal, chiefly due to the heroic work on the part of our defenders. Despite the help of the wind in the second half, we did not perform so well. Mid-way through this half, our goalkeeper (who will remain nameless) made rather a mess of a high pass-back and dropped the ball most obligingly on to the feet of a Merton forward, who promptly banged it into the back of the net to put Merton 2 up. Our defence then cracked and our goalkeeper (still nameless) had to pick the ball out of the net three more times, two of which he should have prevented.

The following week we journeyed to Honor Oak and were beaten by Aquarius 1—5. We were less successful here with regard to the number required to form a team (no blame is attached to the Team Secretary), lining up with only 8 men this time. Another player arrived whilst the first half was in progress and seemed most surprised to think that we had dared to start the game without him. Unfortunately no further reinforcements were forthcoming and battling against a strong wind in the first half we turned over 3 goals down. We improved slightly after the interval and managed to score once against 2 further goals by Aquarius.

We played our old friends the Norsemen at Edmonton on April 1st and with a full side, together with some vocal support from the touch-line we won 2—1, Eeles and Roper being the scorers. The game was keenly fought and

Eeles opened the scoring with a grand cross shot following a corner. There followed some heavy pressure from the Norsemen but we were the next to score through Roper, who snapped up a chance to put us 2 up. The Norsemen reduced the lead before the interval, but despite many desperate efforts on their part in the second half they were unable to equalise. Cooper at centre-half and Brooks at right back were pillars of strength in our defence and strange as it may seem our forwards looked quite dangerous when they were attacking.

On April 15th we visited Carshalton and were beaten 2—4. Again we were forced to play one short and I have the feeling that if we had had a full side we should have won this game. We opened the scoring and after an equalising goal from Carshalton, Roper regained the lead for us with a good individual effort. Right on half-time, in fact it is said that the first half lasted 52 minutes, Carshalton levelled the scores again. Luck was against us throughout this game, as in the second half Carter was adjudged to have handled the ball in our penalty area and they scored from the resultant kick to take the lead for the first time. A little later their outside right ran through and increased their lead.

4th XI REPORT.

We entertained Old Parkonians on March 18th and with memories of giving them a sound beating earlier in the season at Ilford, we hoped to secure two more points. But they fielded a stronger side than previously; and we, once again, tried to make a side out of two goalkeepers, six defenders assorted, one forward, one crock and a schoolboy roped in from the touchline.

Consequently, in the process of settling down into some sort of a team, we let the "Parks" in four times by half-time. The cause was not particularly bad play on the part of our defenders so much as lack of positioning and crowding in the goal mouth.

After half-time, playing against the slope, we did much better, scoring a goal to one more by the visitors; our point was a very sound effort by Brewer.

Outstanding among the defenders was our old friend Huntley, on leave from the R.A.F., who, in spite of lack of recent games and the fact of wearing someone else's boots, laid about the opposing forwards magnificently.

The Old Parkonians deserved to win; and we can pay them the compliment of saying that our two games with them this season were as sporting and enjoyable as we could hope for from any opposition.

The following week we visited Lensbury at Lower Sydenham and fifteen minutes after K.O. time we had six men and a very agitated referee to humour. Three others turned up just in time, with murmurs of 'break-down,' 'hold-up,' etc., and with the aid of one more player conscripted on the ground, we fielded ten men and took another beating, as expected.

The game was enjoyable, none the less, and fairly even in the first half, which arrived with the score at one all; they having scored from a rather doubtful free kick in our goal-mouth, and we having taken advantage of a penalty kick, which the skipper placed very nicely for the first time in eight years.

After change-over, Lensbury's greater numerical strength proved the deciding factor,

and although our conscripted friend scored for us, the home forwards successfully broke through our defence four times; their inside left being a particular nuisance in scoring three. Our boys all deserve an honourable mention in putting up a plucky display against heavier and—may as well admit it—more skilful opponents.

PEN PORTRAITS

H. J. Diggins.

"Dig" joined the Hill from a South London Club in 1934, and his starting displays at centre half soon earned for him a regular place in the 1st XI. His most outstanding attributes are his heading—probably the best in the Club—and strong tackling and though sometimes he appears slow in turning, is in fact quite fast in recovery. His left clearances are strong but unfortunately his right foot is only a swinger.

"Dig" knows neither nerves nor temperament and plays the same steady reliable game under any conditions. His pace has slowed up somewhat in the past season or so and he is at present one of the mainstays of the second team. His play, however, is still of the same high standard.

We have heard this "youngster" speak of an early retirement, but from a football viewpoint that would be criminal and in any case the Club's difficulty in finding a pivot of a similar class to replace him would be too great.

A man of few words but keen perception "Dig" is welcomed into every conversational group on a Saturday evening, and we look forward to having this good fellow and club spirited member with us for seasons and seasons yet to come.

E. G. WATSON.

Known by his team mates as "Ernie," but more generally known to members as "Watty," E. G. Watson joined the Club in December, 1931.

He was not very long in finding his way into the 1st IX, but did not hold a regular place in that side until seasons 1933 to 1936. During these years he played regularly at wing half for the 1st XI, and no more whole-hearted player ever represented the Club.

Fearless in every respect, he tackled hard, and for a fellow whose sitting down arrangements were so near the ground, was exceptionally fast. Generally speaking he was a decided asset to the 1st XI, although on occasions his prowess varied.

Watty always kept himself very fit, attended training nights religiously, and during his playing career was a teetotaller and non-smoker. It is understood but not confirmed that whereas he is still a T.T. he is now courting Lady Nicotine.

He has represented the Football Club as Social's Secretary for three seasons, and has been on the Management Committee for the last two.

He recently finished his football career, although at times he still turns out to give the 4th XI a hand or a couple of feet as the case may be, and is generally most in evidence at the Club when tickets for one function or another are for sale.

E.G.W. possesses a retiring nature and does not often advance an opinion. When it is sought, he almost reluctantly opens his mouth, but when he does, he invariably says something.

To Watty goes the credit, in fact the entire responsibility for organising this year's Club Supper, a job which he did most efficiently.

EASTER TOUR, 1939.

A remarkable number of cries-off on account of illness and domestic and business difficulties sadly depleted the second Winchmore Hill tour in Hampshire and Dorset. Only 12 players and Dudley Wright travelled down and we were fortunate to have Ramsbottom in the vicinity in case of accidents.

We were glad to observe that one of the sufferers—a schoolmaster, whose identity it would be unfair to reveal—had the good sense to make every endeavour to cure his complaint quickly, and prevent the trouble spreading. He travelled to Mudeford with a thick woollen rug wound round him, and only on occasions of considerable importance such as the taking of a pastille or quinine mixture, or the consumption of guinness or port wine, did he reveal his features to the light and air. Arrived at his destination, he took his full quota of refreshment and after ordering some hot milk and a double portion of rum to be sent to his room was seen to mount the stairs with an obviously heavy bag which to his colleagues appeared, no doubt, to contain the whole of his equipment. His room mates, however, soon discovered, that this large portmanteau in fact, held only his anti-germ outfit and they became very intrigued by all the interesting unctions, liquids and instruments which were to be seen. Their gentlemanly interest was turned to unconcealed awe when the sufferer undressed and commenced to make use of the numerous articles. The ceremony began with a brisk gargle with glycerine of thymol followed by the application of Vick to chest and back and rubbed home with almost military precision. Our friend then proceeded to take his temperature, the score being recorded on a hastily improvised chart, and as the reading proved rather disconcerting, he wisely decided

to help himself to a further ample dose of quinine, this time made more potent by liberal sprinklings of essence of cinnamon. Numerous well chosen additional precautions were in due course taken including the application of camphorated oil (treated) and boracic ointment and the swallowing of a couple of aspirins, the ritual of course culminating in drinking the rum and milk. Thus with the first rays of dawn streaking through, the patient was seen finally to take to his bed fully prepared for a restful and healing sleep, and although, no doubt, considerable benefit was obtained, it was counteracted to a certain extent by his forgetting, in his preoccupation, to don his sleeping apparel.

This Easter the weather was even more perfect than in 1938, but we soon discovered that whilst the situation of our hotel with grounds down to water was magnificent and its breakfasts and accommodation adequate, we had arrived at a home of rest such as we ourselves should seek in 40 years' time, away from football tourists !

Friday morning the more energetic crossed the Race by ferry, clambered over the gorse and dead bracken of Hengistbury Head and followed the quiet waters of the Avon to Christchurch. We returned to Mudeford by bus to find the remainder of the party basking in the sun and resting from strenuous dart-throwing at "The Ship in Distress" a few yards down the road.

The afternoon found us at Wimbourne, a small Dorset market town on the Stour dominated by its ancient Minster. The pitch is strategically placed within a stone's throw of the Hospital and Cemetery and commands a fine view across wide river meadows. Putting other interests aside we got "stuck in" quickly, determined to reverse our 3—1 defeat

last year when we faded out in the second half. After a quarter of an hour the Wimbourne centre scored with a remarkable header but Gowers quickly equalised from close range at the second attempt. Much to our surprise Wimbourne piled on two further goals and at half-time we were losing 3—1 after having had most of the play. In the second half playing uphill and against the wind the side played football reminiscent of those days in December and January when it confidently headed the League. Pluck scored with a fine hook shot and during the next quarter of an hour the Hill should have established a comfortable lead. Posts and bar were hit and open goals missed and then Wimbourne rather luckily added a fourth. The end came with the Hill still attacking. Wimbourne deserved their success for the opportunism of their inside trio. We were later informed that they should be runners-up in the Dorset Senior League.

We had tea with the Wimbourne players and officials and then adjourned to "The George" where we lost 7—6 in a dart contest more remarkable for the nervousness of the throwers than for their exhibition of skill. The writer then finds it difficult to sort out events but he has no doubt that accordions played melodiously, that some sang and danced and that others adjourned to side bars to settle with high-placed Wimbourne officials and Naval men which side should have won that afternoon. A sleep between Wimbourne and Mudeford cleared the cobwebs.

On Saturday morning there was more disposition to discuss Albania than football tour, but slowly the perfect morning and lovely views across the river took away pessimism and anger and we again became a holiday party. At mid-day we journeyed to Winton where we saw Tankards beat Newport 2—1 in the Bournemouth Hockey Festival and

found on the line Vice-President Donald, plump and red-faced with good-living and sea air. In the afternoon we beat Christchurch 4—1 and the score inadequately represented our superiority, since we took it easy in the second half in view of Monday's hard game. The match was disappointing owing to the weak side Christchurch were forced to field by reason of holiday Hampshire League games, but was relieved by the opportunism of Pluck who scored all four goals and by the excellent kicking of Chambers and Varley at back. In the evening, half the party danced and drank at "The King's Head," the remainder drank and talked at our hotel and had the pleasure of seeing the others to bed between 3 and 4 a.m.

There was an alcoholic, not political, hang-over on Sunday morning and it was nearly 12 before we set out by car for a trip to the Isle of Purbeck. We traversed the full length of Bournemouth and Poole and had only just escaped from the rash of new villas when we came upon "The Peter's Finger" at Lychett Minster with its long hospitable bar. After a short stop we had an excellent lunch at Wareham and then away to the south across the Dorset heaths with the distant blue whale-back of the Purbecks before us. And so through a gap in the hills to Lulworth Cove which would have been very fine had not several thousands arrived before us. In the absence of Jack Gowers as pacemaker, most of the party found the nearest part of the beach for a doze in the sun. Bing climbed away to dizzy heights whence miserable men shrank into insignificance and he in solitude with nature could think out the foreign situation and damn that Great Wen, London. In the evening we were introduced to the noble game of skittles wherein one holds between the legs a 12 lb. ball of iron and flings it away with such abandon that one's belly hits the floor.

We played like the novices we were but so enjoyed it that we hungered for steak, onions and chips at "The Pembroke."

We were up early for breakfast at eight on Monday, having to make a 35 mile journey to play R.A.F. (Calshot) at 11 a.m.—the match being played early to leave the rest of the day free. The R.A.F. who are second in Hampshire League Div. II, were stronger this year and beat us 1—0. We had the misfortune to miss a penalty in the last minute but we didn't deserve to save the game. It wasn't the wind blowing across the Solent, nor the hard pitch, nor even the light ball which made us play such scrappy football, rather it was inability to move with accustomed speed and disinclination to chase the ball which led to our downfall. This in turn was due to a succession of late nights. It is true that our tour is a holiday, but its purpose is also to play football and in the past two seasons we have faded out in our 3rd game. The writer suggests a voluntary curfew about 1 a.m. in the full realisation that he will be regarded as a spoil sport.

After a magnificently cooked lunch we visited the seaplane base under the friendly guidance of Messrs. Lloyd & Busby, to whose efforts we owe the success of our Calshot visits. The more technical plied our hosts with questions, the remainder were content to appreciate the great size of the planes, the compactness of their living quarters, the fine lines of speedboats and the almost excessive margin of safety provided in the regular taking-down of engines in the shops. We returned to the Mess for tea and a few beers and left soon after 7 for London. It deserves to be recorded that the 1927 Alvis under the skipper's direction safely completed her 2nd tour with 5 up.

COMPLETE TEAM RECORDS 1938/39.

		Goals.					
1st XI.		Played.	Won.	Drawn.	Lost.	For.	Against. Points
League	...	16	7	1	8	31	42 15
Cup-ties	...	6	2	2	2	16	13 —
Friendlies*	...	6	4	—	2	17	11 —
Total Games Played*		28	13	3	12	64	66 —

* Includes Easter Tour.

		Played.	Won.	Drawn.	Lost.	For.	Against.	Points
2nd XI.								
League	...	14	7	1	6	33	33	15
Cup-ties	...	7	1	4	2	8	9	—
Friendlies	...	3	2	—	1	9	7	—
Total Games Played*		23	10	5	8	50	47	—

* Match v Old Lyonians lost 0—2 counted as Cup Tie
and also League Match.

		Played.	Won.	Drawn.	Lost.	For.	Against.	Points
3rd XI.								
League*	...	22	6	5	11	33	58	17
Cup-ties	...	1	—	—	1	1	8	—
Friendlies	...	3	1	—	2	7	11	—
Total Games Played*		25	7	4	14	41	77	—

* Match v Old Parkonians not played each side taking one point
for goalless draw.

		Played.	Won.	Drawn.	Lost.	For.	Against.	Points
4th XI.								
League*	...	16	4	2	10	25	60	10
Friendlies	...	4	—	—	4	6	19	—
Total Games Played*		19	4	1	14	31	79	—

* Match v Norsemen not played each side taking one point
for goalless draw.