

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CHAT

CLUB COPY

NO. 19

MAY 40



with Compliments

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB

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[May, 1940.

Editorial

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WHAT shall we say of our first War Time Season ? Its beginning seems so far distant now, that it is difficult to remember how we thought at that time or even what we planned to do. At least one thing is clear. The season 1939/40 has been well worth while ! We have kept the club going, provided a Rendezvous for the fellows home on leave, and have had some good games.

When one recalls the fact that an entirely fresh start had to be made without even knowing whether we should have enough members to run one side or what the strength of that side would be ; and the uncertainty as to what course the War would take, it is extraordinary that apart from the interference of the weather in January and February, the Season should have run so smoothly.

In War-time, results are often misleading but the fact that the 1st XI, whatever their shortcomings in the middle of the season, finished in winning vein and what is more were playing really good football at the end of the Season, proves that the Hill are fully alive and kicking and still able to maintain their place in Senior A.F.A. football.

What the future holds in store, none of us can say, but whatever difficulties lay before us, the experience we have gained in this season gives us confidence in looking forward to Season 1940/1.

1st XI REPORT.

Unfortunately owing to severe snow and ice, and later flooded ground, experienced in January and February, the second half of this season's fixtures became somewhat depleted. Members also thinned out owing to the further demands of the Forces, evacuated Firms, illnesses, etc.; thus the Hill have been fortunate in carrying on with these various difficulties to face, and the playing members have to thank Our Tiger, Our Treasurer Mr. Welsford and Mr. P. F. Hockley for the extra time and energy given in fixing up teams and games.

Following four weeks inactivity including the scratching of both our matches with Mayfield, on Saturday 20th January, nine men defied snow and ice to play Crouch End Vampires on their new pitch at Woodside Park. We had an equal share of the game and in the matter of goal scoring proved ourselves nearly but not quite the equals of the full home side.

After further inactivity we entertained Central Y.M.C.A. but here the fixture bureau broke down and we duly trounced an inferior side to the tune of double figures. Our opponents however never gave up and took the unequal contest most sportingly. About this time the departure of Harwood and shortage of members due to various reasons, left us a very weak side and some disappointing displays followed.

We were well beaten at home first by Southgate Olympic and then by Old Minchendenians. In the return match against Old Minchendenians at Hedge Lane however, the side showed a definite improvement and although beaten by the odd goal, looked a little more like a Hill XI.

An enjoyable game was had on the track pitch in Broomfield against Southgate Olympic resulting in a win for the opponents. Our goalkeeper had a spot of bad luck on one or two occasions. On the whole the Hill put up the better game and should have won on the run of the play. It was pleasing to feel more spirit in the team during this game, which inevitably has waned during the second half of this season. Walker acquitted himself well on the wing for the first time, showing considerable force, and accurate centring.

Following this however, we had another sad lapse, taking a rather muddled side to Alexandra Park and duly paying the penalty to the tune of 7—2. Weakness in the centre of the Hill defence was our failing. Congratulations to Jack Gowers on his reappearance in the team after such a long absence. We hope to see him well in his stride next season.

From this point however, the side improved out of all recognition. We entertained Trinity County Old Boys duly marked their forwards, tricked their defence and gave the spectators a real afternoon's football winning by 2—1.

A mixed side was fielded for the evening game with Old Tennysonians, who must have spent the day resting, for they had us running the wrong way all the time and won easily.

Then followed two games with Old Ignations. In the first at home, the Hill played grand football, dominating the play and scoring four goals without reply. In the return match at Tottenham, some of our players appeared unduly influenced at the prospect of playing in the shadow of the Spurs' Grand Stand and the consequent lack of attention to the game in hand allowed the Old Boys to walk away with the game 4—1.

Our final game against Trinity County Old Boys at Grange Park however, found the whole side in great fettle. Everyone tried to show Gus Gowers that fitness was not the sole perquisite of P. T. Instructors and consequently we ran our opponents off their feet. The score at half time was 3—3 but in the second half although playing up the slope, we took full charge of the game and scored three further goals to win 6—3. A grand finish to the season.

Dealing with personalities, we have lost count of how many members have turned out for the side. Places have been made whenever possible for Service members and frequent calls had to be made on the seconds when illness and other engagements have depleted the side.

Our most consistent player has undoubtedly been Chapman. He has given some great displays in goal and his judgment in coming out has saved many a dangerous situation. Brooke who skippered the side, has had some good games at back and was badly missed when his injury kept him out of the side for so long in the middle of the season. At half, Harwood was a tower of strength till he left us for higher circles and Pearl has worked hard in spite of constant changes of position. Carter was also consistent both with his appearances and ability but the real success of the season was 'Gus' Gowers who in his last few games was right back to his best form.

Among the forwards Thompson worked hard to get some constructive football into our games and scored some excellent goals. In the latter part of the season, he was well supported on the wings by Walker and Guettier whose 'header' against Trinity County Old Boys was probably the best goal of the season. Ken Bain worked well when scheming with Thompson, and Hunter was always in evidence.

2nd XI REPORT.

Like the 1st XI we had little football in January and February. During this period however, we met Southgate Olympic at home on an ice-bound pitch. In spite of the conditions, both sides managed to muster nine men, and considering the extremely difficult going, the match provided some good play. The teams were evenly matched, and drew 1—1.

Thanks to the energy and ingenuity of our Match Secretary however, we were able to crowd no less than 10 games into seven weeks at the end of the season.

Against Old Minchendenians away both sides played short, but Earle who was still under the influence of a Wedding Breakfast played such a 'blinder' that there was only one man in it. Our forwards well supplied with the ball notched up five without reply. Following this we had our best game of the season against Old Tennysonianians. The whole side played well together and were an even match for our strong opponents. The visitors won by the only goal scored, but in view of what the same side did to the 1st XI later in the year we take full marks for a good performance.

A fantastic game followed against Royal Dental Hospital at Hendon. Playing up hill in the first half we were level 2—2 at half time and appeared to have the game well in hand. Then however, the defence fell to pieces. Every time they were caught running the wrong way and although we scored four more goals, the home side bagged five to win 7—6.

Owing to excessive zeal on 23rd March, we found ourselves with two opponents. Crouch End Vampires and Bowes Park Wesleyan. Our new team Secretary was in no wise nonplussed.

He ingeniously arranged for Bowes Park to play Crouch End for 45 minutes—22½ each way and then for the Hill to take on each opponent in turn also for games of 22½ (note the half) each way. In the initial contest Bowes Park were too good for the Vamps and won 3—0. The Hill then had a stern struggle with Bowes Park who, however, found the covering of the home defence a greater obstacle than that of the Vampires. The Hill were two up at half time and eventually won 3—2. Crouch End Vampires were by now thoroughly refreshed and set about the game in great style. The Hill however, continued to play well together and in the end won comfortably by 2—0.

The return game against Royal Dental Hospital proved a more sober affair and this time the defence marked their men with greater skill. The game was well contested but the home side were always on top and won comfortably.

Against Crouch End Vampires in a 90 minute game, we did not fare so well. We had a level tussle but our forwards fiddled their chances away. The two defences were fairly level, but the visitors deserved to win. At half time, Crouch End were two up and added a third shortly after half time. The Hill fought back however, and brought the score to 3—2 before the final whistle. On the Tuesday we entertained Trinity County Old Boys' 2nd XI and a fast and enjoyable game resulted. Watson was in good form for the Hill but the forwards never quite got together. The Hill opened the scoring but the visitors were fairly soon on terms, the half time score being 1—1. The game continued at a fast pace, but although the Hill had more of the game territorially, the visitors always looked more dangerous. About halfway through the second half, bad covering in the home defence let the Visitors through to score what proved the

winning goal. The Old Boys combined better than the home side and the score 2—1 in their favour was representative of the game.

The following week the 2nd XI gave a disappointing display against Parkhurst whose youthful energy proved too much for our somewhat staid defence. The Hill however, had their share of the games and had the forwards taken their chances, might easily have won the game. On the run of the play, however, the visitors were the better side and deserved their win.

For our second evening game, we entertained Bowes Park Methodist and a fine game resulted in a draw 3—3. The Home side had all the play for the first fifteen minutes and should have piled up an unbeatable score during this time. Actually the visitors scored first and at half time, the score was 1—1. The beginning of the second half was a repetition of the first except that this time Bowes Park were on top. The Hill, however, fought back and were leading 3—2 with a few moments to go. The visitors however, staged a concerted attack, and in the gathering gloom, snatched an equaliser.

In the final game against Crouch End at Woodside Park we met a stronger side and consequently we were never able to get going. The Vamps were much quicker on the ball and what few scoring chances we did have were frittered away. Towards the end however, Grout managed to get one past the home keeper which was our sole reply to some half dozen from the home attack.

Hobbs and Bingley between them kept goal well, but most of the credit for the side's good displays must go to the halves, where Earle, Bristow and Grout were fortunately able to play undisturbed for several consecutive

games. Of the forwards Hockley showed considerable improvement over last year and when he turns his speed to full accounts, should do well. Weatherhead showed that he has plenty of football sense. Rissbrook also showed talent but on occasions seemed to lack the necessary punch to make the most of his opportunities. In between various appearances with the 1st XI, Eldred played some useful games, his powerful kicks being put to good use at back late in the season. Brown turned out as usual and played as well as his boots would let him, but after scoring an accidental goal, could not be kept out of the forward line.

The side was well skippered by Bill Marcus who worked as hard as anyone. The forwards always had some punch when he was on the spot to set things moving.

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RANDOM REFLECTIONS

There is a saying that every evil brings its compensation and the present War, so far as the Club is concerned, has proved no exception.

Without it we might never have discovered Mrs. Welsford's most excellent ability in running our canteen. The Club owes her a very great debt of gratitude for the cheery atmosphere she has created, for the Teas she provided and for the handsome profit she handed our Treasurer at the end of the season. This year, judging the amount of Catering required, was doubly difficult but adequate cakes, buns and Tea were always available even if she did sometimes have to wait for the Pot to draw whilst someone hastily rushed up to the Village for further supplies. We take this opportunity to offer our thanks to Mrs. Willies who so ably assisted Mrs. Welsford behind the scenes. We have also been able to include Len

Thompson in our sides, and those who watched the games with Broomfield, who themselves included Joe Hulme, will vouch for the improvement in the quality of the game, when experience shows the way to enthusiasm. We are very grateful to Thompson for the interest he has shewn in us this year and hope our improved displays at the end of the season will in some part reward him for the work he has put in to try to make something out of nothing. We anticipated difficulty in getting Referees for Friendly games but as events turned out, our real difficulty lay in not offending the several aspirants for this honour, which as one of them points out elsewhere is by no means a sinecure. In this connection our thanks go in particular to Messrs. Gowers, Smith and Grant. Charlie Grant is one of the best Referees we have seen at the Hill and the keenness he shows on the field undoubtedly has a psychological effect in gingering up the efforts of the players. Cooper has worked well this season and in spite of being without assistance found time on occasions to lend a hand with the whistle. For him, however, the high spot was the evening game, when our visitors stayed in force and cleared the full contents of his cellar.

It is surprising how economical one can be with gear when the Devil Drives. Our motto for most of the season was "better a game with an old ball than no game at all." In March, however, an anonymous donor earned our heartfelt gratitude by presenting us with a new ball. So touched were the players, that even notorious sinners got out the last and knocked down some protruding nails.

Towards the end of the season, when war work deprived us for the time being of Tiger's Services, our old friend Hockley stepped nobly into the breach and worked up a veritable flood of enthusiasm. He took over just at that period of the season, when normally interest

begins to lag, but so thoroughly did he tackle the job that on two occasions there were a queue of players seeking a game half an hour before the start.

On the other hand there were many things we missed in this war-time football. Apart from a brief visit at the beginning of the season when the weather was still warm enough to fill twelve glasses from one bottle, we saw little of Horace. His inimitable banter would have done much to liven some of our more depressing results. The absence of our Chairman was also felt by our older members whose afternoon's enjoyment in the past was never complete till they had heard him expound his theory of the day's game over a cup of tea.

We missed many of our fans, to say nothing of their comments from the stand. In the past, their admonitions may not always have led to singleness of purpose, but their encouragement could be counted upon to ginger up a waning game and the sparsely filled stand never allowed us quite to forget the war.

The absence of Sausage and Mash, so dear to the Hearts and Stomachs of our Committee men and Visitors' Teas mutually sacrificed in the name of economy, seemed to leave the afternoon incomplete, but most of all we missed the jolly evenings spent with some of our old friends and opponents.

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NEWS FROM THE FORCES

Since our December issue there is little to report from the Home Front. Most of the lads who joined up at the beginning of the season are still located in and around the Home Counties, and have managed to get some football with their units.

All are in fine fettle except Fred Varley who is at present on a month's convalescent leave after a serious illness.

Gus Gowers has been in charge of a Physical Training course, and is certainly a great advertisement for his own medicine.

W. Brooks and Dudley Wright are both with Officer producing Units and hope to get their commissions shortly.

Bernard Carter is cultivating a mechanical mind and is reported to be dissecting engines from Monday to Friday. Saturdays and Sundays are of course occupied by white haired mechanics trying to piece the litter together again.

So far as we know G. Blake is the only member actually called up since Xmas.

Farther afield our old friend Serj Ambridge, has seen service on a destroyer but is now back on shore work at a naval depot.

Denis Huntley has had considerable activity with the R.A.F. in France where he has returned after a brief Xmas leave.

T. L. Howson has been gazetted as a Flying Officer but his more recent activities are unknown.

Gordon Summerfield is still somewhere in France. Foreign correspondents have suggested shortening the War by appointing Gordon as Adolf's chauffeur.

H. Dupont whose adventures have been so adequately reported in the local press is now Overseas, and Arnold Wrigglesworth having grown tired of golf is believed to be visiting the Fjords.

Finally we have to apologise for an error in our last issue. W. E. Jacques was wrongly assigned to the Queen Victoria Rifles. This should have read the Queen's Westminsters.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

Surprising how lightly we took our Saturday's football in those good old pre-war days, although it was always the high spot of the week. Until you're torn away from it, you don't realise how much fun it was ploughing through the mud on the Hill pitch, trying to respond to the cry of 'chase it' when the lungs were absolutely devoid of wind and complete exhaustion was quickly overtaking you. Trying terribly hard to 'Face the throw' when caught completely out of position. These Saturday afternoon battles were amazing fun but unfortunately some of us have to put these days behind us for a while, and our football is limited to spasmodic games or army football for the battery.

These matches are different from the luxurious games we played way back. Often I chuckle when I see blokes, who I remember in their Saturday sporting suits sitting elegantly in their magnificent motors speeding to some distant ground, now in khaki perched precariously on the tail board of an army lorry, then after a game more conspicuous for its enthusiasm than skill, a hurried wash and after a quick beer with an opponent in the canteen, most of the players are back on duty.

How often we Winchmore Hill players now in the same unit, sit round and talk of our triumphs and defeats in the past. Stories are retold of those Saturday evenings with our opponents in bars all over London.

Magnificent accounts are told and retold of Tour Episodes and when the supply shows signs of exhaustion old stores are dug up and embellished to sound like new.

The arrival of the Club Chat or a letter from an old friend is a great occasion and sets the whole party reminiscing afresh and longing to

be back in the Hill colours trotting out to face some old friends and opponents in the S.A.L.

So here's the best of luck to you and all our old 'Pals.' Whatever happens, keep the old flag flying till we get back.

N.W.

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THE ART OF REFEREEING

In a very early number of the "Chat" an article appeared on the subject of Criticism, in the course of which sympathy was expressed with the referee, who was never right anyway. The man who put forward that theory blew a whistleful. Refereeing though is perhaps not really an art but a craft, and referees are best chosen from the ranks of former players; after all the experienced poacher always makes the most efficient game-keeper.

It is unfortunate that custom has succeeded in persuading referees that they must dress for the part, even if it cannot "stale their infinite variety" in this respect. How much better it would be if they could turn out in the get-up affected by seconds in french duels instead of in shorts, stockings, blazers, and studded boots—how much better if, instead of ordering people off, they pointed at them and shouted, "Il est mort," and had a penalty-box in the offing labelled "Mortuary." The thought of variety in costume is prompted by the sartorial wonders observed at the Club during this past season, when khaki stockings, blazers of bright red and fearsome black and red stripes, and sometimes flannel bags, were worn—among other things. These, however, were not sported by proper professional referees, but by volunteers who didn't care a blue pencil what the crowd or players had to say about them.

It is said that Solomon was the first referee, but what he did may be fairly described as child's play compared with the tough problems set to referees in these days by the sea-lawyers of football.

Refereeing, like criticism, is not learned in a day. Having mastered the rules and been examined on them by the old lags, the aspirant must also learn several hand and arm movements, and must not lose his whistle in the course of performing them. The most difficult of these is to wave both arms in the air while running away from an infuriated mob of players, but so as to give the impression of being still interested in the game. Further, there is difficulty in watching players kicking one another slyly behind one's back, and then in determining the aggressor and imposing the necessary sanctions. But what about our own 1939 vintage among referees who stopped a game and stalked off the field? It is said that such conduct so stupefied the players that they all meekly followed him into the dressing-room, and their astonishment lasted sufficiently long for him to get away with his life—if it's worth anything to him after that.

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SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The Parent Club is continuing its Cricket and Tennis activities this season and is running two elevens on Saturday and one on Sunday. The principal games at Fords Grove will be against Northampton Polytechnic on June 8th when there will be a collection in aid of the Red Cross Fund, and against Highgate on 29th June which has been fixed as the Groundsman's Benefit match. There will be dances in the pavilion following both these games and also on August Bank Holiday and Saturday 7th September.

A Club Concert has been fixed for 28th September and it is hoped that these events will provide opportunities for Re-unions for evacuated and service members.

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CLUB JOTTINGS

Don't forget the A.G.M. Club Pavilion Friday, 31st May, 8 p.m. As so many members will be unable to attend this year, please make a point of being there.

We regret to report the death of two of our Vice-Presidents, Messrs. W. Ward and C. Yardley. Older members will remember them both as frequent visitors to Fords Grove in our early days.

We should like to express our thanks to the Parent Club for allowing us two extra weeks on the home ground. The extra matches we were able to play helped to compensate us for the loss of games during the period of inactivity after Xmas.

There are a few spare copies of our December Issue still on hand. These can be obtained from the Secretary.

We hope members who are absent from the district will keep in touch with us during the close season and letters addressed to either the Secretary or Treasurer will be circulated among members as far as possible.

Finally, our very best thanks to those Vice-Presidents who have backed us up this season, particularly those who have doubled their subscription. In spite of their generosity, we still have a considerable deficit on The Season's Accounts. Is it too late to hope that those who have so far overlooked our Treasurer's appeal will do something to help keep the Club going for the lads who are away?