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WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CHAT

JAN 47



With Compliments

WINCHMORE HILL FOOTBALL CLUB

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Editorial

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"And the rain, it raineth every day" sang the ancient poet and each Saturday in these wretched months of November and December the thought has been echoed by groundsmen and players alike with expressive but unprintable expletive.

In view of the conditions, it is not surprising that there have been some cancellations—one at home and two away—but rather that we have had any real football at all. Examination of the local press will have shewn that other local clubs have been far less fortunate and in spite of the disbelief of members of the lower XI's, a visit to more than one London professional club suggests that there are grounds even heavier and more "chewed-up" than our own top pitch.

In playing results, we have less cause for congratulations, for though the senior team has shewn distinct improvement, the Reserves have dropped vital League points—to some extent explained by injuries and by promotion to the 1st XI—and the 3rd were unlucky to be defeated in the A.F.A. Minor Cup. As ever, the 4th XI is most affected by Operation Rota.

The recent good performances of the 1st XI, who have played the unprecedented number of three games without being changed, provide some measure of gratification to a harassed Selection Committee. No less than seven players are featuring in other than their own positions. Only at goal, left-back, centre-forward and outside-right are players in positions of their own choice. There could be no more convincing proof of the necessity for football adaptability and club spirit.

1ST XI REPORT.

November 9th, 1946.

Winchmore Hill met their Southern Amateur League opponents Ibis, and won easily. In extenuation, it must be said, that the visitors were handicapped by the loss of two players who retired with pulled muscles during the first half. Even when at full strength the visitors found the "Hill's" lively forwards a sore trial, and they had some bad shooting and the safe hands of their goal-keeper to thank that the game had been in progress twenty minutes before Saw, playing at outside-left, headed through. Maintaining their attack, B. Thompson, L. Lambert, A. Lambert and Haskell narrowly missed and finally A. Lambert put the "Hill" two up.

Ibis tried hard to reduce the lead, but were well held by the "Hill" defence in which Wiseman was as effective as ever, and Gowers at left-back impressed with resolute tackling and thoughtful passing. Before the interval, Saw steered a pass wide of the goal-keeper to make the score 3—0.

Soon after the resumption, A. Lambert added a fourth goal and then B. Thompson went through the middle for the fifth. A break-away by Ibis gave them their solitary goal but the "Hill" quickly resuming the attack went further ahead with another good goal by A. Lambert. Saw, who was giving a fine display in an unaccustomed position, added his third goal. Ibis, hard-pressed defence, had no respite and the "Hill's" total was increased to nine with two fine goals by L. Lambert.

Saw, who moved to the centre when Bernard Thompson was injured, took the score to double figures and Frankie Thompson celebrated his return to the 1st XI by shooting through a crowd of players to make the score :—

Winchmore Hill 11, Ibis 1.

November 16th, 1946.

Winchmore Hill, playing Metropolitan Police, No. 2 District, at Colindale, were literally at sea, but it was a sea of mud with occasional pools of water.

The Police team were an altogether bigger side, and in adapting themselves more quickly to the deplorable conditions, gained a commanding lead of three goals in the first quarter of an hour. As they became acclimatised the "Hill" came more into the picture, the defence having more success in their efforts to check the Police raids. Wiseman, in particular, got through a tremendous amount of work, his long kicks to both wings turning defence into attack. The forwards were up against a tough proposition in the Police defence, but eventually Haskell, who had been doing some useful work at outside-right, cut in and scored. Later the same player had bad luck with two similar efforts, for had the ball run a little more kindly for him, the "Hill" would have drawn level before half time.

The second half was fairly even, but about ten minutes after the resumption the Police outside-left completed a fine run with a shot which gave Peters no chance. With the centre dominated by the home team centre-half the "Hill" initiated some useful attacking movements on the wings and Alec Lambert succeeded in putting the ball into the net, but a confident appeal for "hands" was upheld by the referee. The "Hill" defence playing with much more confidence in this half prevented any further score by the Police, who though worthy winners, were flattered by the score.

Winchmore Hill 1, Metropolitan Police 4.

November 23rd, 1946.

Winchmore Hill made a number of changes in the side which met Crouch End Vampires at home, Gowers and Hasemore playing at inside-right and inside-left respectively, Cuttler and Meyer as wing-halves and Brooks at left-back.

The game opened with brisk inter-changes, the "Hill" having slightly the better of the play. The Vampires defence was, however, very sound particularly their left-back, whose good positional play foiled Gowers' efforts to send Haskell away on the right. Gus's persistence soon had its reward when Haskell picked up a pass nicely placed on the inside of the back and from his centre Saw opened the scoring. The advantage was short-lived, however, a well executed movement on the Vampires' right paving the way for their centre-forward to score with a grand shot.

The visitors, playing with good understanding, were the more impressive at this stage and despite a stubborn "Hill" defence scored again to lead at half-time by 2—1.

Play during the second half was scrappy. The "Hill" did most of the attacking and were twice within an ace of scoring, Saw hitting the cross-bar on both occasions. Any hope of a draw was finally dashed when through a misunderstanding between the "Hill" goal-keeper and a back, the Vampires scored a simple goal.

Winchmore Hill 1, Crouch End Vampires 3.

November 30th, 1946.

In an away friendly the "Hill" inflicted the first defeat of the season upon Old Brentwoods who expect to do well in the Arthur Dunn Cup. The Old Boys played open, robust football in contrast to the "Hill's" short passing game. The low scoring was not a reflection upon the respective forward lines, but a tribute to the excellent goal-keeping by Peters and his opposite number.

Midway in the first half, Frank Thompson opened the scoring with a well-placed header from a Haskell centre. Brentwood equalised fifteen minutes from time, and, after Wiseman had missed a penalty, Saw ran through to score from close range.

While the defensive covering improved and Frank Thompson gave an enterprising display at outside-left, there was some lack of mid-field cohesion.

Winchmore Hill 2, Old Brentwoods 1.

December 7th, 1946.

After a succession of friendlies, the "Hill" resumed Southern Amateur League fixtures and overwhelmed Alleyns at Dulwich. The "Hill's" forwards gave a sparkling first-half display, scoring five goals in thirty minutes. Attack was concentrated upon the wings where the ground was firmer and the wingers scored six goals—four to Alec. Lambert and two to Vic. Haskell. The other scorers were Murray, who crashed in the first goal from thirty yards and Saw who completed a beautiful right-wing movement.

The game was by no means as one-sided as the score suggests. The Old Boys continued to play keenly and Peters could not complain of an idle afternoon. Just before the final whistle, Alleyns, centre-forward, scored with a header from a corner, a well deserved, if small reward for an energetic and resourceful display.

The feature of the "Hill's" play was the dominating game of Murray at right-half, the left-wing combination of the brothers Lambert and Gus Gowers, and the strong tackling and long kicking of Bill Brooks.

Winchmore Hill 8, Old Alleyns 1.

December 14th, 1946.

Winchmore Hill's friendly match versus Fulham Central O.B. at Fords Grove provided the best football so far seen on the home ground this season. Despite the somewhat heavy going the play was fast, both forward lines developing excellent attacking movements.

The "Hill" were slightly the better side during the opening stages, and the visiting goalkeeper gave a sound and confident display in keeping his charge intact. Eventually the home team's persistence was rewarded when following a hot attack Haskell opened the scoring. The visitors' constructive play kept the Hill at full stretch but failed to penetrate a sound defence, and at half-time the Hill led by the only goal scored.

The quality of the football was maintained during the second half, and from a throw-in the O.B.'s inside-right sent his centre-forward away to level the score. A draw seemed likely but the Hill put on a spurt, Alec and Leslie Lambert indulging in some neat bouts of inter-passing on the left-wing, and from a well-placed centre Saw headed in. From this point the Hill assumed a definite superiority, and in failing light Saw scored again.

Winchmore Hill 3, Fulham Central O.B. 1.

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2ND XI REPORT.

November 9th, 1946.

This game, played against the Ibis at Eden Park, resulted in a somewhat easy win for the "Hill" by 7—0. Ibis members stated after the game, that the "Hill" would have beaten their 1st team on this form. This, surely, sums up the match.

The Ibis goal-keeper gave a very good display and saved his side from a much heavier defeat. A feature of the "Hill's" display was the good passing indulged in throughout the game. Murray played a very good game at left-back and had a hand in more than one goal. The scorers were Bailey 2, Ward 2, Harold Lambert, Cuttler and Meyer 1 each.

Winchmore Hill 7, Ibis 0.

November 16th, 1946.

This S.A. League game against Crouch End Vampires resulted in a win for the "Hill." Within a minute of the kick-off, Les. Lambert scored from Bailey's pass. Play was very even for the rest of the first half and there were no further goals before the interval. The "Hill," good in mid-field, were not able to finish off their attacks. Ward and Bailey had good attempts and at the other end Plant kicked the ball off the goal line when a goal seemed certain.

After 15 minutes of the second half a Vampire defender deflected a shot by H. Lambert past his own goal-keeper. Following further pressure by the "Hill" W. Bacon deceived the Vampire goal-keeper, with a long shot, and scored. At this stage Crouch End were handicapped by their left-half having to retire with a pulled muscle.

Ten minutes from the end H. Lambert scored a further goal and five minutes later a clearance by a "Hill" defender cannoned off the Vampires' left-winger and entered the net.

For the "Hill" H. Lambert at inside-right played a very good game, both in attack and defence. Brooks played another very sound and confident game and Meyer getting through a lot of hard work was the best half-back on the field.

Winchmore Hill 4, Crouch End Vampires 1.

November 23rd, 1946.

Match cancelled owing to the unfit state of the ground.

November 30th, 1946.

At Barnes the "Hill" took two points from the Bank of England in a S.A.L. game. The "Hill" played very good football especially in mid-field and if the finishing had been up to standard the Bank would have been heavily defeated. In the first half, goals were scored by Ward and Bailey, the latter from an excellent long pass by Gaunt. In the second half, the Bank quickly scored direct from a free kick but the rest of the game was mainly all Winchmore Hill. The only goal being scored by Gaunt.

Winchmore Hill 3, Bank of England 1.

December 7th, 1946.

The "Hill" lost to Old Stationers in this S.A.L. game, thereby suffering their first league defeat. The "Hill" never settled down and our opponents taking their chances won deservedly.

No score resulted in the first half, although several chances were missed by our forwards. After the interval Old Stationers were soon one goal up, a shot by an inside-forward hitting the bar and rebounding to their centre-forward who made no mistake.

Ten minutes later a faulty clearance by a defender was taken advantage of and the Stationer's centre-forward again scored. Despite strenuous efforts by the "Hill" towards the close, they could not reduce the deficit and the final score was :

Winchmore Hill 0, Old Stationers 2.

December 14th, 1946.

This S.A.L. game against Midland Bank resulted in a draw, a very fine performance in view of the fact that the "Hill" played the greater part of the game with nine men only. Starting the game one man short, the "Hill" lost Hasemore, injured, after only five minutes play. The Bank, after continuous pressure, were soon one goal up, but a fine goal by Bailey made the scores equal.

In the second half, the "Hill" more than held their own, and a very long drive by Plant completely beat the opponents' goal-keeper. The Bank rallied, however, and their inside-left made the scores level.

Mention must be made of Phil Manners, who filled the left-back position and the three lone forwards, Bain, Bailey and Harold Lambert.

Winchmore Hill 2, Midland Bank 2.

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3RD XI REPORT.

November 9th, 1946.

In a game played under very trying conditions, the "Hill" beat Ealing Association 4—1 by superior finishing. It was an even first half with Ealing showing more determination in tackling and better contact between their halves and forwards.

Bell opened the scoring for the "Hill" after five minutes play and Ealing equalised half an hour later after persistent pressure.

In the second half, Ealing piled on the pressure, but their defence made the mistake of coming too far down the field, as a result of which Bain 2 and Smith were able to add further goals for the "Hill." Our defence tightened considerably and contributed largely to the favourable result. The final score did not accurately represent the run of the game, but credit must be given to the "Hill" forwards for their opportunism in this half.

More attention, however, must be paid to the business of linking the play between the backs and forwards and the inside men must do more fetching and carrying than was apparent in this game.

Winchmore Hill, 4, Ealing Assn. 1.

November 16th, 1946.

Despite last minute alterations in the "Hill" side, Mayfield were well beaten at Tottenhall Road. The "Hill" were superior throughout and although Mayfield had a fair share of the game they never looked like overcoming a steady defence. Smith opened the scoring and repeated the feat shortly afterwards. Then Mayfield scored but this was almost immediately followed with a goal by Jacques as the result of a fine combined movement on the right wing.

On the resumption Mayfield, now kicking downhill, tried rush tactics through the middle, this was countered by very good team work between all the members of the defence, the covering being excellent. After a spell, the "Hill" forwards by fast open play well served from the rear, subjected the Mayfield defence to strong pressure which resulted in goals from Jacques, Bain and Barker. A feature of the play throughout was the fine form shown by Jacques at inside-right, he opened up the play repeatedly.

Winchmore Hill 6, Mayfield 1.

November 23rd, 1946.

Alexandra Park by adapting their play to the condition of the ground deserved to win. The ground was very muddy and treacherous, the "Hill" made the mistake of keeping the ball too close, consequently, allowing their opponents to anticipate and therefore easily repulse their attacks. The "Park" opened the score after a very fine shot by Sid. Cooper had crashed against the cross-bar with the "Park" keeper helpless. The "Hill" quickly equalised with the best goal of the match, a fine individual effort by Ken. Bain ending with a terrific cross-shot.

However, from then on, Alexandra Park dominated the play and scored a further two goals before the interval. On the resumption, the "Park" continued swinging the ball about and as a result increased their lead. Then the "Hill" staged a fighting come-back by opening up the game, first Sid. Cooper and then Wilf. Bacon netted. At this stage it looked anybody's game but the "Park" defence survived and as a result, ran out winners of a very hard and well fought game.

Winchmore Hill 3, Alexandra Park 5.

November 30th, 1946.

Winchmore Hill was unfortunate to lose 2—1 to Midland Bank in the A.F.A. Minor Cup. Playing a man short throughout the game, they attacked persistently. The "Bank" opened the score after ten minutes play, the centre-forward breaking through. "Hill" equalised when Bell chased a ball and netted.

On the resumption the "Hill" pressed repeatedly, Bell striking the cross-bar and post, but the "Bank" goal bore a charmed life. Barrett also scored from the edge of the penalty area, but unfortunately the goal was disallowed, owing to one of our forwards being about a foot offside. Our opponents then began to press and against the run of the play scored their winning goal. "Hill" then put on pressure but the loss of one man definitely affected the finishing. Considering all the circumstances, our team played exceptionally well without having any luck.

Winchmore Hill 1, Midland Bank 2.

December 7th, 1946.

In this game against Mayfield the "Hill" were reinforced by the return of Jacques and Bain. The match proved to be one of the best played this season. Both sides played keen, forceful stuff, not sparing themselves under the trying conditions. With the fast end to end play on an inaccurate surface, it is perhaps not surprising that "sitters" were missed by both sets of forwards, the ball being extremely difficult to control.

Half-time arrived with the score sheet blank, but within ten minutes of the restart Bell scored his usual, a well-placed shot leaving the goalie helpless. Barrett increased the lead shortly after. To the credit of the opposition, however, these goals only spurred them to greater efforts and when the inside-right reduced the "Hill's" lead an all-forward effort in the closing minutes produced an equaliser.

Winchmore Hill 2, Mayfield 2.

December 14th, 1946.

Alexandra Park again demonstrated their superiority by defeating the "Hill" for the second time this season. The decisive period came fifteen minutes after the start when they opened the score with the "Hill" defence appealing for off-side, two further goals followed within a few minutes making us three down.

In the ensuing play "Hill" were unlucky when a certain goal was punched out by a defender and the subsequent penalty was saved. In the second half play swung from end to end but there was no further scoring. The "Hill" played well but were faced by a strong combination who took all their chances.

Winchmore Hill 0, Alexandra Park 3.

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4TH XI REPORT.

November 9th, 1946.

No match.

November 16th, 1946.

This game against Hurlingham Oddfellows, played under very sticky conditions under foot, ended in a draw. Both sides were very evenly matched and the "Hill's" scorers were Gleed and Burgess.

Winchmore Hill 2, Hurlingham Oddfellows 2.

November 23rd, 1946.

Match cancelled owing to the unfit state of the ground.

November 30th, 1946.

In this friendly match against North Met. away, the "Hill" secured a two-goal lead in the first half, but against a much stronger side were eventually overwhelmed. The goals were scored by Sandell and North Met. (own goal).

Winchmore Hill 2, North Met. 11.

December 7th, 1946.

On a very treacherous ground, which was practically waterlogged, Norsemen adapted themselves to the conditions far better than the "Hill," by swinging the ball about and hitting it first time, they soon established a lead of two goals. This was reduced by a good shot from Eve which hit the cross bar and rebounded to Alan Bacon who made no mistake and scored.

In the second half a good movement on the left-wing followed by a good centre from Wilsher resulted in another goal by Bacon. Outstanding for the "Hill" were Williams, Wiseman and Wilsher.

Norsemen, however, went further ahead and the final score was :

Winchmore Hill 2, Norsmen 5.

December 14th, 1946.

The "Hill" won far more easily than the score suggests, though the Old Aloysians were handicapped by being one man short. Playing up a steep slope in the first half, "Hill" crossed over with the score at one all, "Hill's" goal coming from a good effort by Pickard. In the second half it was all "Hill" although Old Aloysians scored twice more from breakaways, but not before the "Hill" had put the result beyond doubt.

Spence scored after a good run down the wing and Cooper and Spence added two more. Finke followed up some good work with a shot that gave the goalie no chance. Cooper converted a Pickard pass and after O.A.'s goal-keeper had managed to push out a drive by Barker, Finke added a seventh goal. Although he had little to do, Meakin in goal, put in some very sound work on a very slippery ground.

Winchmore Hill 7, Old Aloysians 3.

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PEN PORTRAITS.

STAN. BELL (Ding-Dong-Ding).

Stanley has been playing for the "Hill" since the early days of the war, when as a goal-keeper of no mean ability, he soon found his way into the 1st XI and gave some excellent displays between the sticks. One doesn't see Stan in his immaculate green sweater these days, as passing through the Winchmore Hill sausage machine, as all our players do, he has played at inside-forward, outside-right, centre-half, and is now a very capable centre-forward, but his sweater is still often to be seen in his bag in the dressing room, just in case of an accident. As a centre-forward he has many goals to his credit, and has been among the club's highest goal-getters for the last three years, making a grand start again this season, by netting four of the best in the opening game.

Although the famous green jersey is seldom worn these days, Stan. can still be picked out among any eleven, by his equally famous purple, black and white knitted stockings which seem to be renewed every year. Nobody knows who does the knitting, but he still persists in his claim that his mother is the handy one with the needles.

A great club member is Stan., always willing to travel any distance and always an early arrival at all matches. He has, on quite a few occasions been asked to travel as reserve with the first eleven, and never a refusal.

Away from the playing field Stan's equally a fine chap, ever ready for a laugh and a joke in the dressing room, or in the bar of an evening after the game, where he can often be seen drinking a "nifty noggin" of Carter's best beer and ruffing at a pipe in the true Stanley manner (apologies to Baldwin). It is rumoured that, at an after-the-match dance at a certain club near Catford Bridge during last season, Stan. found the beer a trifle too strong, and circled the dance floor two or three times before contacting his prospective partner, this is open to doubt, as other sources persist that he only pursued a very zig-zig course at each attempt, eventually finding that the certain lady had brought her father with her.

Stan. is an engineer by trade, and during the war had quite a few narrow escapes from H.E.'s whilst on night work. Often he came off duty on Saturday mornings, snatched a few hours sleep, and then off to Fords Grove for his game, then back again at work at seven o'clock the same evening.

We wish him a very long stay at Fords Grove, where, as all will agree, he will always be classed as a grand sportsman, club fellow and footballer, and may he score as many or more goals in the future as in the past.

So, to coin Scott's famous words,

CHARGE! DING DONG, CHARGE! ON! STANLEY ON!

A. W. R. MARCUS

"floreate carcus esse torso marcus."

How is it possible to do justice to Bill Marcus in a short paragraph like this? The answer is simple—it isn't. So we commence with two strikes on us, like Harry the Horse.

To begin with, Bill is known to the "Hill" as a footballer hardly at all, that is to say, most of his football was perpetrated elsewhere. It is Bill the cricketer that we know best for he has played cricket for the "Hill" for a dozen years or so. It is not his genial number 9 batting that appeals to the imagination so much as his bowling. Bill is a wily bowler who gets a lot of wickets, but although we say this in all deference we cannot allow our affection to blind us. The fact is that we seriously contend that his methods are not quite above suspicion. It is a great pity, and most surprising to find a fine sportsman like Bill resorting to tactics which we believe definitely contravene the "incommoding the batsman" clause.

Bill's methods are unique. He uses a specially made shirt. It has two tails, one of which is left flapping. It has extra large sleeves constructed of parachute silk, and with the gyration of the arms they fill with air and flail about like a couple of barrage balloons in a gale. The shirt front has no buttons and is worn décolleté, and when Bill "the torso" shuffles up to deliver, the batsman is faced with the impression of a strangely attired warrior going through a tribal tap routine. Now these impressive and highly successful tactics are not quite so easy to adopt as they might seem and we do not advise young bowlers to try them without a great deal of practise, for it isn't everyone who could get away with them.

However, it is Bill, the footballer, who is our main concern, and it is therefore necessary to leave the "Hill" for a while, and to go back to that well known free for all in Broomfield Park at the dawn of the 1920s. A crowd of semi-educated boys just escaped from school (City of London and Stationers mostly) had the urge to form a club, and it is due chiefly to the inspiration of Bill Marcus as founder, secretary, and treasurer combined that they graduated through a gallant and romantic nomadic career to become a club famous for its genial hospitality, and honoured among its contemporaries. Southgate Wanderers was its name, and roving its heritage. For 20 years it progressed on its way, gaining in stature and repute, but unfortunately never able to find a permanent home. The cricket section was the first to find its peace however.

The view from the Winchmore Hill Pavilion verandah was very pleasant and rural 15 years ago. Beyond the cricket field, and separated from it by a country lane called Firs Lane, stood a line of tall elms. Beyond the elms lay the first and most pleasant of the Wanderers home grounds. There, amid the shock and surge would have been seen Bill, a younger Bill it is true, hewing out a name for himself in London amateur soccer. There, too, it was that he abandoned fast bowling and discovered the delights of the slow foxy stuff of the flapping flukes, and perfected the torso tactics.

But the elm trees and the field vanished, and houses grew in their place, and Bill brought his cricketers across the lane to the "Hill." Southgate Wanderers carried on as a football club on various grounds and it was not until 1939, when the last ground became an A.A. gunsite that the Southgate Wanderers' club ended its gallant roaming and found its final peace. The Wanderers who were still left in civilian life came at last, inevitably, to the "Hill." They came without Bill, however, for the Ministry of Food banished him to the Cambrian wilds, from whence he returned only last cricket season.

The fame and significance of the Wanderers was out of all proportion to the size of its membership. The club attracted to its ranks an astonishing number of fellows who represented all that is best in the sporting tradition of good fellowship on and off the field. Bill Marcus was the mainspring and inspiration of their success, and as a famous Winchmore Hill 2A cricket XI of a dozen years ago was known, so might the Wanderers have been known, as "Bill's Own."

If Bill were fifteen years younger he would no doubt have been about the business of re-forming his old club long ago, and one wonders how many of the far scattered Wanderers could have resisted the call. But memories belong to the past, and for Bill those footballing memories would be the envy of many an older player. He must know more footballers than any man in this part of Town. The Banks and Insurance Houses and Old Boys' sides, and a host of the private "friendly" clubs over London and the Home Counties. He has known them all, and their grounds, their stars and their skippers intimately for the past 20 years.

Somehow his ability as a footballer seems unimportant. Such sportsmen as Bill do not need to be stars, and seldom are, for without them the game would not survive. Though Bill was no mean performer, mostly at inside forward and half-back. And no man ever put more into his game or enjoyed it better. His love of the game has not diminished and his long experience is very useful now when he takes the whistle in some of the "friendlies."

In mulling over the memories of football one is assailed occasionally by a sort of guilty doubt which whispers "what is football, anyway? Just a crowd of grown men chasing a piece of inflated leather." If that were true who would play it unashamed? Well, there's a philosophy in it, the secret of which is found in the friendship and genial warmth which in time brings memories far richer than those of hard kicks and mud and blood. Bill Marcus has found the secret and he does his best to pass it on, and it is on such as Bill that clubs like ours are built.

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

I had previously visited the club during the 1946 Cricket season when playing for North Middlesex and in turn was introduced to the Football section by your 1st and 2nd XI skippers, Messrs. Wiseman and Attwood.

My decision to join was influenced by the fact that your club is large and well-run, with many facilities not enjoyed by your less fortunate rivals.

First impressions were more than justified and my reception was extremely cordial—many thanks to the Hon. Secretary and Match Secretary for this. The trial games which resulted in my subsequent selection in one of the teams was conducted with the method and seriousness, which is demanded when the good name and reputation of any club are at stake.

The coaching by Len. Thompson and work of our masseur, Sergt. Ambridge are invaluable and the unselfish work of these two gentlemen, who give their time to these duties, does much to influence the high standard of play and sportsmanship shown by the members of the teams.

To conclude, my playing colleagues are as nice a bunch of fellows as I have had the pleasure of meeting for a long time.

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It was with a feeling of apprehension that a certain newly demobbed individual walked across the field towards the pavilion one evening in October. On entering the building a rather portly gentleman detached himself from a chatting crowd and approached. "Good evening," he said, "Are you a new member?" To this, I made the obvious reply: "Yes," and having made my introduction, was shown to the dressing-room.

Those few words seemed to break the ice completely and I was soon able to settle down with the other players and join in the practice games and matches, much to my enjoyment, and, as if I had been a member for several seasons. Since then I have realised that the members of the Winchmore Hill Football Club are friendly and sociable and it is pleasing to play football with such fellows, and then, after the matches on Saturday to drink the "odd noggin" at the Club house or any place we choose on our way home.

FOOTBALL IN SOMALILAND.

Four o'clock on Saturday afternoon and the officers' lines began to stir. Officers' boys scurry to their "Sahibs'" huts with mugs of tea. After drinking the tea the Officers rouse themselves and dress for football. It's the weekly match—Officers v. Somalis.

There were only fourteen of us in mess, so picking eleven footballers was not easy. The C.O. hadn't played for years, but he was game enough to try most things at least once. He turned up to the match in tropical shorts, white shirt, brown boots and a slouch hat (the latter was protection from the glare of the sun which was rather strong after lunch time "Gin session"). The "Doc." was far too fat and could never be persuaded to turn out. However, we always managed to get eleven white men on the field with varying experiences and affections for football. Most of us wore P.T. kit with either boots or shoes—(Somaliland saw the ruin of two pairs of my footwear).

The pitch was a chunk of the barren waste of Somaliland, just iron-hard desert, which had been cleared of trees and shrubs, roughly levelled with stones to mark the touch and goal lines.

The Somalis are not natural footballers, like most men in this country, but those who have learned to play in Aden or at one of the town schools are usually quite good. Being more numerous than us they were always able to find eleven reasonably good players for the match. One difficulty was that the Somali is by nature very excitable so it was essential to have a European referee—we usually caught the R.Q.M.S. for this.

Four-thirty would find the officers at one end taking pots at the goal, whilst the Somalis were still haggling amongst themselves as to who was to play where? They all wanted to be forwards so that they could score goals. On the touch line would be the majority of the two companies at H.Q.

After the Somalis had finally sorted themselves out, the game started. It was usually quite hopeless for the Officers to play any serious form of positional or tactical play, because if the ball came near any one of us the poor man was pounced upon by three or four Somalis, who came tearing in at full tilt. It was just too bad if one of them got the idea into his head to take a kick at the ball because their reflexes are so much slower than ours that if the ball moved, their feet just could not stop moving and had to execute the kick and that usually meant the unfortunate officer got a kick on the shin but "malish" you had a bruise if you were lucky or a broken leg if you were not so lucky.

Once they had the ball they were certainly a menace and they could move at no mean pace. Their footwork and dribbling is very slick, but if they beat two opponents they think they can score a goal and refuse to pass the ball and just go on until they are stopped or they score.

The pitch being so firm and hard, causes the ball to bounce and move much faster than on grass and bustling for a header usually resulted in, at least, one of the several players making the attempt and ending in a somewhat forced landing, much to the discomfort of his seat. Funnily enough, in spite of the ground, it was amazing that there were so few real injuries; a scraped hand or knee was usually the worst, but like all foreign soil, these wounds would turn an Englishman's flesh septic unless treated promptly.

Whenever the Somalis scored a goal, by either an individual effort or the work of a few, the crowd on the touch line would cheer like mad, trumpet and hoot like the dickens—then break into a frenzied and extremely energetic dance which lasted some few minutes. Meanwhile the players attempted to continue the game. When the officers scored a goal, however, there were, invariably, frantic appeals for some infringement or other. The games were always good exercise and enjoyable, although somewhat "bucky" at times, especially if the officers managed to get a substantial lead. However, there was never any real ill-feeling after the game and although the Somalis were not good losers, they had to get used to the idea of being beaten because the officers usually managed to leave the field two or three goals up.

FORCES REMINISCENCES.

1939 AND ALL THAT.

Funny, looking back, how we all say how much we miss the good old days. The ex-Serviceman on his return to Civilian status is very apt to think longingly of the idyllic times he spent in uniform, days when every cloud was lined with silver, so filled with new experiences, new sights and new faces that there was just not room for the ordinary worries and difficulties that trouble us now. How easy it is, too, to forget the unpleasant, those periods of intense fear, those weeks of physical discomforts, those sad moments following bad news of a comrade.

My most vivid impressions of 6½ long years in the Army are strangely enough of my first 18 months, of which I intend to write now.

Well can I visualise 4 o'clock Friday afternoon, 1st September, 1939 when, as a member of the Territorial Army, I first learned definitely that "England expects . . . !" "Report Drill Hall soonest after 6.30," a very brief message but containing a wealth of meaning to a corny lad of 18! The rather quiet preparation at home "no need to hurry—kitbag has been packed for days—drat these long puttees—poor old Paddy, don't want to put her to sleep but she's an excitable pup and will go crazy when the bombing starts—now remember, a firm handshake, chin up—musn't let 'em know how I feel." Yes, well do I remember the aching void of parting with fond parents, the excitement at the drill hall, the brief medical followed by tea and buns, then out into the black-out in search of a billet. Finished up on the bare boards of an empty flat. What a day! What a night!

Weeks of training, dark dreary nights guarding V.P.'s, then blessed relief; a move from London to the peace of Beltring, Kent. Life was hard but we were training for war. Long route marches—hours spent on the parade ground—T's O.E.T.—drill—target indication and recognition. Driving instruction—vehicle maintenance—field craft—signalling. The poor infantier was dragged through his first few months of training so quickly he didn't know his bayonet boss from his No. 3 spanner. Snow, rain and mud were his constant companions. Wonderful preparation for the blazing sun and the everlasting sand that were soon to be his lot!

166 O.C.T.U. and a posting to the Indian Army was just another exciting link in the chain of rapid events. Wonders never did cease! 17th August, 1940, found me a junior 2/Lieut. of one day's seniority bowling back to London on a motor-bike with orders for indefinite leave awaiting embarkation for India.

Gerry was just starting his nuisances. Winchmore Hill took its share and in company with all London experienced the damaging blows of the initial blitz. Could I ever forget what terrors faced London in those days and later. It was a good thing really, it helped me overseas to picture what life at home must really have been like.

20th October, 1940, excitement, eager anticipation and bitter sadness fought for supremacy as I read instructions to embark in two days at Liverpool. A journey to town through an air raid was then common practise, but my farewell to parents and friends on the platform at Euston will never be forgotten. At last, thank God, the train started and I stumbled aboard with smarting eyes never more thankful than at that moment that an air-raid was in progress. The window blinds were drawn and I was able to fight back those salt tears and regain my composure without censure from the crusty old naval commander sitting opposite me. How I envied him his ability to take leave of his family without so much as a flicker of an eyelid to betray his emotions. I felt very young!

Seven enjoyable but rather boring weeks at sea broken only occasionally by glimpses of exotic landscapes, followed our stealthy departure from Liverpool. Rich food, regular exercise and long hours in marvellous sunshine are my chastened memories of the voyage. Bombay was a new world a place of strange sights, sour smells and interminable bable. With unusual efficiency and with hardly time to grow accustomed to terra firma, we were segregated into groups by destinations, shepherded on to trains and dispatched into our first experience of one of India's most infamous tortures—train travel. Four long days, shaken, bumped, and sweated into a complete coma. Dust, flies, the cringing beggars "Baksheesh, Sah'b," the mournful cries of station vendors, "Char Walla-a-ah," "Hindu Pani-ee-ee," "Mussalman char-ar-ar," "Sah'b, Sah'b—Give it pisas, Sah'b." How thankful my little party was to arrive in Quetta. I must have looked dirty and miserable, I felt b——y. However, the two chaps, sent from the Regiment saw my plight and quickly drove me to the mess where I bathed and changed into fresh clothes and into my right mind. Just as well, too, that my self-esteem had been re-furbished, for from that time onwards, 11.00 hrs. Sunday, I was subjected to rigorous cross-examination by the team of regular I.A. officers who were later to be my constant companions. What was this peculiar thing called an E.C.O. (Emergency Commissioned Officer)? Being the first to join the Regiment. I was a bit of a novelty. How would he react to his first Curry! Sunday is the big day of Curry lunch and didn't I know it. Rising unsteadily to my feet, weighed down by an enormous quantity of rice and hotly-spiced viands, I was dragged round the regiment throughout the afternoon being introduced to huge bearded Sikhs who answered my polite queries with a string of mumbo jumbo, hearty laughter and much flashing of sparkling white teeth.

I was a member of the 45th Rattrays Sikhs, an old and much honoured regiment of the Indian Army.

Work hard, play hard and drink frequently was the maxim which I had to live to. My tender 19 years were not used to the latter but I did my best to learn!

More training and long hours of language study faced me during the next four months but in April, 1941, we were considered fit for active service and were dispatched in quick time to Basra, Iraq, where the presence of German troops and agents made intervention by the Allies imperative.

From here, my eighteenth month, I could take you a long fantastic journey of exploration and adventure through Persia, Syria, Transjordan, Palestine, Egypt, Western Desert, Cyprus, Italy and Greece, and finally back home again to India!

To reminisce is one thing but already I fear I am a bore so I'll shut up.

"BILL" BROOKS.

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CLUB JOTTINGS.

It would be an appreciative gesture if **ALL** the playing members would endeavour to **TURN UP** on Wednesday evenings, for training and tactical talks. Our good friend, Len. Thompson, gives his very valuable time to the players with the sole object of improving their play. It is not very encouraging for him when attendances are so poor and only the same "old faithfuls" appear each week.

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Our honorary masseur, Sergt. C. H. Ambridge, celebrated his **SILVER WEDDING** on Boxing Day. Unanimously we wished him and Mrs. Ambridge very many more years of happy married life. We hope it will be possible to repeat our good wishes for the Golden Anniversary.

After the Boxing Day match with Norsemen, the Chairman of the Football Club, "Tiger" Smith, presented "Sarge" with a Silver Salver as a small token of the Club's appreciation of his valuable services for so many years.

A word of thanks is due to " Benny " who so graciously provides transport facilities for Sergt. Ambridge every Saturday evening.

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We hear that Norman Chesher and Jack Peacock are stationed at Gloucester and are able to meet occasionally.

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It is pleasing news to hear that Reg. Maynard, our goal-keeper, has made a very good recovery from the injury he received to his collar-bone, in his first match of the season. In fact he has had a trial run with the reserves.

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Don Ashby has arrived home safely from India and we extend to him a very hearty welcome.

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We are very pleased to welcome home, Cyril Hatch, who has returned safely from Greece.

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We very much regret to announce that, we have now been officially informed, that Charles F. B. Livermore, died on the 3rd January, 1944, whilst in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. He joined our Club in 1937.

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At the time of going to press, the amount raised in respect of the Boxing Day match for Cooper, exceeded £45.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Will the members who have not yet remitted their "subs." to the Treasurer, please do so at their very earliest convenience and oblige.

SOUTHERN AMATEUR FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

(DIVISION 2—SENIOR SECTION)

Positions as at 28-12-1946.

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals for	Goals agst.	Points
Winchmore Hill ...	6	6	—	—	36	5	12
Alexandra Park ...	6	5	—	1	32	12	10
Brentham ...	6	5	—	1	18	10	10
Reigate Priory ...	7	4	1	2	19	16	9
West Wickham ...	7	2	2	3	31	22	6
Old Parkonians ...	8	2	2	4	26	31	6
Kew Association ...	7	2	1	4	19	25	5
Alleyn O.B. ...	7	1	1	5	15	38	3
Ibis ...	6	1	—	5	7	37	2
Old Latymerians ...	4	—	1	3	9	16	1

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(DIVISION 2—RESERVE SECTION)

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals for	Goals agst.	Points
Merton ...	8	5	1	2	23	8	11
Winchmore Hill ...	8	5	1	2	26	11	11
Crouch End Vampires	6	4	1	1	17	12	9
Reigate Priory ...	5	4	—	1	18	9	8
Midland Bank ...	7	2	3	2	15	16	7
Borough Poly ...	5	2	1	2	14	6	5
Old Stationers ...	6	2	1	3	10	12	5
Ibis ...	9	2	—	7	9	38	4
Bank of England ...	6	—	—	6	3	23	0

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NEMEAN AMATEUR FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

(DIVISION 3.)

Positions as at 28-12-1946.

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals for	Goals agst.	Points
Crouch End Vps. 3rd	9	5	1	3	40	17	11
Alexandra Park 3rd.	7	5	0	2	20	12	10
Borough Poly. 3rd. ...	8	5	0	3	29	19	10
Norsemen 3rd	7	4	2	1	24	18	10
Winchmore Hill 3rd	8	4	1	3	26	20	9
Mayfield 3rd. ...	9	4	1	4	26	23	9
Ealing Association 3rd	6	3	1	2	21	15	7
Lensbury 3rd ...	10	3	0	7	19	36	6
Trinity Old Boys 3rd	7	1	0	6	8	34	2
Old Latymerians 3rd	5	1	0	4	3	22	2