



Welcome to members and non-members alike for this latest edition. I hope that you enjoy reading it and will pass it on to your friends afterwards. Please note, as always, some of the opinions expressed are mine and not necessarily those of OWWSA as a whole.

COMMITTEE NEWS

At our last meeting, your committee decided to donate a total of £3,200 to the Club. £1,200 was for Gareth to obtain a new 50 inch TV with a wall-mount, plus laptops for use at the training ground. The other £2,000 will go towards upgrading the floodlights. We trust that you all will find this a good use of some of the Association's funds.

SOCIAL EVENTS

There was a disappointing turn-out at the recent race-night, with only 31 of you present. Why was this? If any of you who go regularly chose not to this time can you let us know the reason. Do you think it's the same old thing and should we try something different next season? Remember it is your Association and

we welcome your views. Despite this we still made a profit of £950, which will boost the Club's funds (all profits from our events are donated to the Club).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mick and Mary Quigley who stood in for Lynden and I on the night (we were in sunnier climes). Aided by Keith Blagbrough, they ran the tote. Many thanks.

Our next event is not far off. On Friday, 12th January we have our quiz night. This will be held in the Caledonian (Vere) Suite, starting at 7.30pm, although food and drink is available from 6.30. Thanks to the hard work of Sandie Derben this event is now, for the first time, a complete sell-out of 25 tables. Well done Sandie! One thing, can anyone knock James Herriot's Soapy Elbows off their perch? They have won it for the last three years!

Next up will be the Annual Dinner on Friday, 9th March. Details to follow.



TRAVEL

Rena has had a lukewarm response to the proposed weekend around our last away game of the season at Chesterfield and, unless we get sufficient support, the trip will not run. I know one or two of you raised eyebrows about it but remember it could be a weekend of celebration like Torquay, although for different reasons! Also, Derbyshire has some wonderful scenery. So come on, give it some serious thought and put your names down. If we do go ahead a deposit of £25 each will be needed.

The next away trip is on Saturday, 20th January to Crewe. Cost for Adult Members is £21, Senior Members £20 and Junior Members £19. For all non-members it is £26. As usual please contact Rena or Graham by the Thursday evening to secure your seat.

Details of other forthcoming games are available on the OWWSA website.

SUPPORTERS TRUST

Their AGM was held at the Club recently and it was good to see both John Derben and David Cook being re-elected to the Trust Board in recognition of all of the time and effort that they put in. Also pleasing was a third member of OWWSA, Tony Hector, was voted on. Tony, who hails from St Vincent, has been a supporter since 1969 and is often to be seen on the away coaches. With a history in banking and his obvious love for the Club he will be a most welcome addition.

R. I. P.

We sadly lost one of our oldest ex-players recently when Harold Hillson passed away. Harold, who was 96, made a lone appearance in the 1941/42 season in the Great Western Combination. His main club during the War years was Wycombe Redfords though. Based at Terriers, they also played in this competition and there was a great rivalry between the two clubs, with several players turning out for both. After the War, he made nine Isthmian League appearances (scoring one goal) as football started to get back



to normality. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

ON THE FIELD

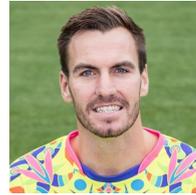
I'm writing this after a disappointing performance at Coventry, where a young and vibrant City side overran us in the first half, in which we could easily have been four down before Dan Scarr scored his first goal for us with a great strike. The ultimate defeat completed exactly half of our league fixtures for the season.

Looking back, we started in a blaze of goals, both for and against. Since then the defence has been much tighter. This though has coincided with a drop in the amount of goals scored, the Crawley game excepted.

After going 13 games unbeaten on our travels, we have now gained just one point and scored three goals in the last five away. Despite this we have managed to hold onto a play-off, although several teams are breathing down our necks. If we can maintain our home form and pick up on the road, then we have a great chance of gaining a play-off place at the very least.

I personally can't see Luton and Notts County blowing out (although Plymouth nearly did last season) but third spot is up for grabs.

On the playing front, I would like to single out a player in each position.



Scott Brown has proved he is as good as any at this level



Adam El-Abd has adapted well to this division after a difficult start (he was sorely missed at Coventry).



Luke O'Nien has been terrific since coming back from a long lay-off, culminating with that cracking goal against Chesterfield.



Up front, what more can you say about the Big Man! He is amazing. I would like to see the front three play closer together though as I feel we don't always take advantage of his nod-ons. Perhaps this will improve with the expected return of Scott Kashket.



Recent milestones reached since my last article are



**Matt Bloomfield
(450 games)**



**Anthony Stewart
(150 games)**



**Sam Saunders
(50 games).**

MATT BLOOMFIELD



Following on from the above, Matt has become just the eighth player to reach 450 competitive games for us. He joins an illustrious list of Tony Horseman (749), John Maskell (616), Dave Carroll (602), Keith Ryan (517), Len Worley (512), Jason Cousins (473) and Paul Birdseye (459). He has also overtaken Steve Brown's record of most Football League appearances for us, with his total now standing at 397. Steve made 371.

FROM THE PAST

There hasn't always been football on New Year's Day. In fact it wasn't actually a Bank Holiday until 1974, although we never had a game that first year. The following year, we were due to play Middlesbrough in our first ever FA Cup third round game three days later. Without a scheduled league game Manager Brian Lee fixed up a friendly at Loakes Park against a young Watford XI. Can you imagine that happening these days! A crowd of 1,500 saw us win the game with a single goal scored by Graham Mackenzie. Our line-up that day was: Brian Steventon, Paul Griffiths, Gary Hand, Terry Reardon, Keith Mead, Paul Birdseye (sub-Howard Kennedy), Mackenzie, Dave Alexander, Keith Searle (Steve Perrin), Tony Horseman and Dylan Evans.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Some of our ex-players are performing far and wide. While watching a Serie A match on BT Sport recently I saw Marcello Trotta (an excellent loanee from Fulham) score a penalty for Crotona, a little



club from Southern Italy punching far above their weight. A few days later, also on BT, I then watched Charlie Dunne play for Motherwell against Celtic in the Scottish League Cup Final. In the National League, Sam Wood, Chris Zebroski and Ben Strevens are at Eastleigh, Dave Winfield and Myles Weston are at Ebbsfleet, Stuart Lewis is at Maidstone and Jon-Paul Pittman is at Torquay. Lower down the Pyramid, Craig Faulconbridge is still going strong at Hellenic League side Thame Rangers. To finish on a sadder note, Glyn Creaser has recently been relieved of his duties as manager of Aylesbury United, who are a shadow of the club that we had some hard-fought battles with in the 1980s.

FOOTBALL MATTERS

Please note that this article is entirely how I see things and not the Association's view. A few weeks ago I had an unhappy experience at an away game, where I was treated aggressively by a steward before the game itself and threatened with being removed from the ground. Although I discovered at half-time it

had been a complete misunderstanding, at no time did he apologise to me and I had spent an uncomfortable first 45 minutes under his glare. This episode upset me and got me thinking how different it is at football matches for supporters in this country to our counterparts in other parts of Europe. Lynden and I have been to several games in both Spain and Italy, while I regularly watch games in the latter, plus France, Germany, Belgium and Portugal on television. What comes over is a carnival-like atmosphere with a mass of colour. It seems as though nearly everyone wears their club colours in some form or other. I hesitate to say this but flares are prevalent, along with gigantic banners (that cover entire sections) and huge flags. Supporters are allowed to drink alcohol on the terraces and in the stands. Each club has a cheerleader with a megaphone. His job is to spend the game with his back to the action and lead the singing and chanting, which often is continuous throughout the entire game. These people are often actually paid by the home club to do this! A lot of



clubs, even at the very top, have terracing (replaced by retractable seating for UEFA games) and to see the bank at Borussia Dortmund, where 25,000 bounce up and down in unison is amazing to watch. At Koln FC (Cologne) in the Bundesliga, the mascot is a real live mountain goat and he spends the whole game on the touchline with his handler. At Nice, in the French Ligue 1, they have an eagle that flies around the ground before the game. Also when Lynden and I attended a game at Viktoria Zizkov, on the outskirts of Prague, there was a dog, clad in his team's colours, which was allowed to wander freely around the home end.

Please note that I am not trying to be controversial here, just stating that the above are actual facts and do happen. The authorities there obviously have a more laid-back attitude than ours. I'm also not necessarily advocating any of these things happening here but do wish you were allowed to enjoy yourselves more at games. After all that's why we go isn't it? I realise that we have had dreadful hooligan

problems in the past and there is still an underlining current around but we have not been alone in this. Most of the above countries have also had their fair share.

Footnote - My offence at that away game was that I was attempting to take a photograph of their lovely old-fashioned main stand!

INFO WANTED

I am still on the lookout for information regarding certain ex-players. This time, if any of you have relatives that played during the Second World War, please contact me.

To finish, I hope that you all had a good Christmas and, on behalf of the OWSA committee, wish you a very happy New Year. Let's hope it's a good one!

Don't forget if any of you have any comments on the content of this newsletter or if there is anything you wish to see included in the next edition, please contact me on 07484 723982 or mail me at dfinch105@btinternet.com. I would



be really glad to hear from you. Also can you please make any friends who are not members aware of what we are about.

Dave Finch (OWWSA Committee Member)