



Welcome to the last edition of the season. As usual I hope that you enjoy reading it (as yet I haven't heard anything to the contrary!). Please pass it on to friends and neighbours to show them that we are much more than a travel club.

COMMITTEE

Just before the start of the season we lost the services of John and Sandie, who had done so much in raising the profile of OWWSA. However, I am sure that you will have been pleased with how the new recruits to the Committee have helped us carry on their good work.

Over the course of the season we have contributed a substantial amount of money to the Football Club, thanks in part to our fund-raising events and, at our most recent committee meeting, we agreed to pay for the software for the new screen, which it is hoped will enhance the matchday experience next season.

SOCIAL EVENTS

We held our Annual Dinner at the beginning of this month, which was a most enjoyable evening despite the numbers being down. It was a shame that we had to cancel the original date due to a misunderstanding between us and the Football Club regarding the menu. We will make sure this doesn't happen next season. We still came out of it with a small profit though which all helps the Club.

For me the highlight of the evening was the surprise guest, Paul Hyde, who played a big part in our double promotions, first to the Football League then again the following season. He gave an emotional speech on his time at Adams Park.

Thanks also to Gareth and Dobbo who, despite a big game the following afternoon, always find time to join us. It says so much about what this wonderful Football Club of ours is all about.

I would also like to thank Sue and her little committee, comprising Graham and Louise alongside herself, for all their work in organising these events.

MEMBERSHIP & TRAVEL

You should be reading this just before we set out on our last away trip of the season, to Wimbledon. Let's hope that we return home having made mathematically sure of our place in League One for next season.

Thanks to everyone who have travelled with us throughout the season. We look forward to seeing you all in the future so make sure you renew your membership, the fee of which remains the same as this season.

A big thank you to Rena and Graham for all of their organisation and all of you who have helped with the little tasks en route, especially James Ashby.



ON THE FIELD OF PLAY

After winning three consecutive matches in January we ended that month in ninth place and deserved to be there. Little did we know what was to follow. Suffering our worst run of results since becoming a League side we find ourselves embroiled in a relegation battle with almost half the division. It hasn't always been down to poor performances though. In fact we have played well in many of the games. However, costly mistakes at crucial times and a lack of a regular goalscorer have contributed.

I did feel at the time they returned to their parent clubs that we would miss our excellent loan players and I'm afraid my fears were founded.

As I write this though we have come through three nerve-wracking matches (certainly for me!) with two important wins and clean sheets, while how we also didn't win at Rochdale I will never know! With teams below us still to play each other it is still very much in our own hands.



Since my last effort Matt Bloomfield has passed over 500 appearances, which is an amazing feat in this day and age. He joins an illustrious list of players who have achieved this for us. At this moment in time his 505 appearances is made up of

442 Football League, 23 FA Cup, 17 League Cup, 19 League Trophy and 4 Play-Off matches.



Other milestones were reached by Ryan Allsop and Curtis Thompson, both of whom passed the 50 mark. Well done guys!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?



Just the one to pick up on. Martin Kuhl, who was Gary Waddock's assistant before an unfortunate incident led to him leaving the Club, is the manager at Basingstoke Town. The Hampshire-based club are due to lose their old Camrose Ground at the end of the season, moving to the County FA ground at Winklebury until they can find a site around the town for a new stadium. They knocked us out of the 1997/98 FA Cup in a penalty shoot-out there in a replay, after we had thrown away a two goal lead at Adams Park. It was the first time that we had lost to a



non-league side in the competition. Since then Eastwood and Fleetwood have also managed the feat.



On a slightly different note, it was interesting to learn that a tram on the West

Midlands Metro has been named in honour of Cyrille Regis.

IN THE PAST

Five years ago, on the penultimate weekend, as we trudged dejectedly out of Adams Park after losing 2-1 to Bristol Rovers, most of us believed we would be spending the following season in non-league football. Little did we know that we would discover a new hero in Mansfield's Colin Daniel. His goal gave his team an unlikely win the following week at the Bristol club's Memorial Ground and, coupled with our 3-0 victory at Torquay, it was they who were relegated, despite their efforts to discredit us later. Matt McClure scored our goal in that defeat against them, while the line-up was : Ingram, Rowe, Wood, Scowen, Stewart, Pierre, Kretschmar (Morias), Lewis, Craig (Styche), McClure, Bloomfield.

Ten years ago, we travelled to Port Vale in search of clinching promotion from League Two under Peter Taylor. A late goal from Chelsea loanee Lee Sawyer gained us a point in a 1-1 draw. This meant we

needed just a further point in our remaining game at Adams Park against lowly Notts County. However, a nervy performance saw County midfielder John Thompson score twice, the second with just three minutes left, as we went down 2-1. David McCracken had equalised Thompson's first. An anxious wait followed afterwards as Bury's match with Accrington overrun. The Shakers won 1-0 which gave us the third promotion spot ahead of them by virtue of just one goal after points finished equal.

Our team at Vale Park was: Young, Hunt, Woodman, Sinclair, McCracken, Holt (Beavon), Sawyer , Doherty, Akinde (Pittman), Bloomfield (Phillips), Zebroski.

Footnote: Amazingly, those two goals of Thompson's were the only ones he scored in a 100 league appearances for Notts County !

Twenty years ago on this weekend and there always seems to be something to play for! This time it was another relegation battle in Division Two (now League One) when Blackpool came to Adams Park. Twice we took the lead through, first Sean Devine (1st minute) and then Dave Carroll, but they pegged us back on both occasions, the game ending 2-2. A midweek win over Wigan, again at home, saw a visit to Lincoln for the last match. A last-ditch header by Paul Emblen gave us a 1-0 win, cue wild celebrations and a job well done by Lawrie Sanchez, as



we were in dire trouble when he replaced Neil Smillie as manager in the February. Not only did the defeat confirm Lincoln's relegation (they finished in 23rd place) but it sent York into the bottom four in our place.

The line-up against Blackpool was: Taylor, Lawrence, Vinnicombe, Forsyth, Bates, Ryan, Carroll (Senda), Simpson, Emblen, Devine, Baird (McSporran).

Footnote to that season: We completed the double over Manchester City, 1-0 at home and 2-1 at Maine Road. I wonder what happened to them!

FOOTBALL MATTERS

A disturbing trend over the last two or three seasons is the booing of injured opposition players. We had this recently at Adams Park when Matt Bloomfield suffered a head injury. Although he was clearly in distress and substituted he was treated to some terrible barracking by the visiting supporters. I know that a lot of players go down easy these days and some make their injuries look worse but surely even the most biased and unobservant among you can see when someone is genuinely injured. The ridiculous thing is that no team are squeaky clean and you must be able to see when your own players are trying it on or when opponents are actually injured. Let's be fair everyone.

As usual the views on anything footballwise are mine and not necessarily those of the Committee. If anyone has any comments regarding the content of this newsletter please contact me on 07484 723982 or d Finch105@btinternet.com. Also if anyone has anything they would like to see included let me know. I will be issuing my next edition in the Summer, after the fixtures have come out and we have had a committee meeting. Have a good break.

Dave Finch (OWWSA Committee Member)