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# Wealdstone Football Club

**Official Handbook 1956-57.**

Compiled by  
PHILIP E. CARDEN.

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says

**JIMMY BAIN.**

Earlier this season Mr. Jimmy Bain, who, after a notable playing career with Manchester United and Brentford, spent 21 years as assistant manager with the Griffin Park club, became coach to Wealdstone F.C. In this article he gives his impressions of his first months at Lower Mead and looks to the future.

I am often asked why, after finishing my career as a professional footballer, I didn't find a job outside the game—a job at least as lucrative and certainly one with fewer headaches. Well, the answer is an easy one.

I have "lived" football since I was a young lad at Rutherglen, or, to give my birthplace its full title, the Royal Burgh of Rutherglen. My father was intensely interested in our great winter game, which I took up when I was old enough to kick a ball. I won't say that I aimed at being a professional footballer, but the more I played and the more I saw of some of the great players of the time so the desire developed and was nurtured by some success on the field of play while I was quite young.

Anyway, I took the plunge and I have had no regrets. I went to Manchester United, where I spent rather more than six seasons before being transferred to Brentford. That was a move which forged the pattern of the remainder of my career in the professional game. I played over 200 league and cup matches in the six years or so I spent on the playing staff at Griffin Park.

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I could, I think, write a book on those times, but this article is not intended to be my autobiography. But I would like to add a few words about the 21 years as assistant manager of Brentford which followed my retirement as a player. I have already hinted that there are headaches attached to any managerial post in the soccer world. Yes, there are plenty of them, but no career could have given me more pleasure and more satisfaction.

With a comparatively large playing staff such as any professional club must retain, one meets a wide variety of chaps. Some of them, admittedly, can be awkward and even difficult, but for the most part they are grand chaps—willing and anxious to serve their club to the best of their ability.

On the managerial side, of course, there are many problems other than dealing with the players, but it's all part of the game which gives so many of us so much pleasure for nine months of the year. And for those concerned with club management the close season is no less important than the remainder of the year. Plans for the next season have to be very carefully worked out, while work on the pitch and renovations to the ground generally are among the multitude of tasks to be tackled during the period when cricket, tennis, and athletics are attracting the crowds.

The name of Wealdstone was very well known to me long before, last October, I was invited to come to Lower Mead to coach the lads. Having spent something approaching 30 years all told at Griffin Park, I naturally took a keen interest in the many great amateur clubs in London and the Home Counties. I was familiar with your outstanding achievements and particularly with your splendid record in the F.A. Cup in the club's jubilee season of 1949-50.

The name of Wealdstone was then on the lips of players and management alike in the dressing rooms of professional clubs up and down the country. How we at Griffin Park talked about your win over Colchester United! Yes, and we talked no less about your great performance on the Port Vale ground in the first round proper. Port Vale may have won by the only goal of the match, but it was indeed a triumphant termination to Wealdstone's dreams of going a step nearer Wembley. The "Stones" have many other great deeds among their records, but to-day it's to the future that we are looking.

My active association with Wealdstone has been of very short duration, and if anyone thought, on hearing that I had been appointed coach to the club, that the "Stones" were going to start winning every match and collecting every league point and cup medal going, he must already be a very disappointed man. Such things (or anything approaching them) can only be accomplished as part of a long-term policy. That policy is being pursued steadily and,

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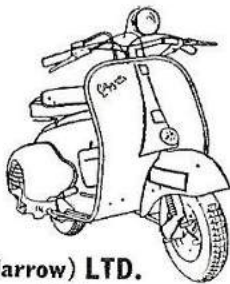
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let me say this quite frankly, I'm not dissatisfied with the way things have been going since I took up the reins at Lower Mead. We are making progress, although, in terms of results, that progress may not as yet have been very convincing.

My heart is in the job. We've got a grand lot of lads in the club and, what is most important, they're willing to listen—and learn. We've made some changes in the playing personnel. Some players have left us, but that is inevitable when one undertakes the task of building for the future. Other players have changed their positions. Changing positions can often be advantageous. I started my career as a centre-half, but many of the games I played for Manchester United were at left-half. With Brentford, however, I reverted to my former position. Nevertheless, I was grateful for the opportunity of having played in another position, and in this connection I would say that no player can afford to ignore the advice of the expert who sees the game from the touchline.

Team work is the answer to those who seek to find success on the field of play. A team of individuals never attains the greatness of the side made up of good players who really fit in together. One has only to consider the present-day Manchester United eleven to realise just what I mean when I talk about team work. There's no place in any successful side for the man who does not fit in with the general plan. Don't think for one moment that I am in favour of stamping out the individualist. But the man with a particular style of his own must learn to adapt that style to the plans of his colleagues. It can be done—with the co-operation of the player and the advice of the expert.

I would not have taken on my duties at Lower Mead if I had not thought that I was going to be helpful in getting the club somewhere, and by that, of course, I mean along the road to success.

I would like to end these notes with a word of thanks to the many people who have done so much to make me feel at home with my new club. Leaving Brentford after such a long association was something of a wrench, but I am more than pleased to have settled in at Lower Mead and, like you, I am looking forward to the time when we can say quite often, "Well, that's another two points," or "I wonder who we'll meet in the next round."

### GROUND RECORD.

The ground record at Lower Mead was set up in the 1948-49 season when 13,504 paid for admission for the F.A. Amateur Cup fourth round replay with Leytonstone. This was the only time that Wealdstone has reached the fourth round of that competition.



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### IT'S ALL RIGHT WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

by

ABEL COMBEN.

Wealdstone's right-half and popular skipper tells us something about the club and the game from the player's viewpoint.

A few weeks ago—it was just after our league match with Walton and Hershams at Lower Mead on March 9th—someone came up to me and said: "Why doesn't the team play like that always?" I pointed out that, being only human, we were bound to have our "ups" and "downs", to which he retorted that we seem to have a lot more "downs" than "ups"! I had to admit that this was so, for the match in question, in which we had recorded our biggest win of the season—8-2 to be exact—was only our third win in 19 consecutive matches.

Now, no one has been more disappointed than the players themselves with the results this season, and we certainly don't wish to make excuses for our failures. In some instances, as at Yiewsley in the Amateur Cup, the ball has not run for us, but in many cases we have been deservedly beaten.

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Once a team has a bad run it is indeed difficult to stem the tide ; each successive defeat makes it that much harder to strike a winning vein. Players begin to lose confidence in themselves—you have all seen it happen—and don't even want the ball. When the ball comes to them they try to get rid of it all too hastily ; inevitably, more often than not, it goes straight to an opponent.

A player knows when he is having a bad game, but there are times when people in the crowd rub salt into the wound as it were and make doubly sure that he knows. Most footballers accept this as part of the game. After all, the spectator pays his money and is entitled to have his say. But there are players who take adverse comment very much to heart. This is true especially of the young and inexperienced player. A couple of silly mistakes early on, followed by a few ill-chosen remarks from spectators, can finish him—for that game, anyway.

At Lower Mead, however, we seem pretty fortunate in our supporters. Most of those I meet—and it's always a pleasure to meet them in the Social Club after the game—are very fair and, above all, they want to see a good game of football. It's only natural that they should be disappointed when their team strikes a bad spell, but, believe me, they are no more disappointed than the players themselves.

While on the subject of supporters, I must make mention of Mr. Eric Metcalf. Eric is the gentleman who carries the colours of the "Stones" to every ground in the Athenian League and else-

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where. It is very heartening as we are "kicking in" before a game to see Eric in his colourful garb and his faithful band of supporters behind one or other of the goals. It's great to have supporters like these, who never (although perhaps almost !) lose confidence in the team.

From a player's point of view, we are also fortunate in having at Lower Mead a pitch and facilities which are second to none in the Athenian League. This adds enormously to the pleasure of playing for Wealdstone.

Although it's too late for us to achieve any honours this season, I can tell you that we have already started thinking about next season. Since October we have had the benefit of having Jimmy Bain as our coach and, more recently, Fred Welch, an old Wealdstone player who will be remembered by a good many of you, as our trainer. Mr. Bain certainly has plenty of ideas and the ability, we feel, to put those ideas into practice, while Fred Welch's enthusiasm and modern conception of physical training (he is an A.B.A. boxing instructor, by the way) make our Tuesday and Thursday training sessions very enjoyable.

It may be rather early yet, but I feel confident, and I know that the rest of the players share my feelings, that next season will see the "Stones" pulling themselves well and truly out of the doldrums and recapturing some of the glories of earlier seasons.



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by

BILL LEADBETTER.

Mr. W. G. Leadbetter is in his first season as the honorary secretary of Wealdstone F.C., but he has held several other offices with the club in past seasons and had considerable experience in amateur soccer before joining the "Stones".

If only for the reason that we haven't a lot of which we can feel particularly proud in the past few seasons, I want to take this opportunity of writing a few words about the future of the club. I can tell you that our plan is to build up a team in which youth is allowed to blend (happily, we hope) with experience.

Considerable progress has been made in this direction since Mr. Jimmy Bain joined us at Lower Mead as our coach. His vast experience as a player and as assistant manager of the Brentford Football Club is now at our disposal. Jimmy is working hard and we are co-operating with him to ensure that his plans will come to fruition at an early date.

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After Mr. Bain had had a chance to get to know the officials and, of course, the players really well, the committee set about revising their scheme for the future, being guided to a very large extent by the advice and suggestions of our coach. The sole aim is to intensify our efforts in order that Wealdstone F.C. shall become a power in the amateur soccer world, just as it was a very few years ago.

I have already mentioned youth, and I want to elaborate on that theme. We have found that our earlier decision to dispense with a third team (made up almost solely of youngsters) was not a wise one. The decision was dictated by financial considerations, but there is such a thing as false economy.

By next season we hope to have a ground on which our new third team can play its home fixtures. We are already in touch with something approaching 50 young local players of promise, and that is quite independent of the link we now have with the Harrow schools' football organization. The representative of that organization, Mr. Emerson, has been co-opted to serve on our own committee and he is proving a very useful acquisition. This arrangement, incidentally, is not intended to be a one-way affair, for we hope to be able to help the schools in a variety of ways.

We are glad that we have been able to get this association with the Harrow schools operating well in advance of next season, by which time some of the benefits to be reaped by such whole-hearted co-operation should become available.

Although playing strength must inevitably be our foremost consideration, there are many other things to occupy those of us entrusted with the conduct of the club's affairs. One of the most important of them is, of course, the playing field itself. Mr. Jim Nottingham, our groundsman, guided and assisted by Mr. Jack Holt and Mr. Ron Guildford, has done splendid work and the ground is in good condition, but there is much to be done when the season ends and this is a matter now engaging our attention.

A word, too, about the work of the Lower Mead Social Club. Mr. Eric Bryant and his colleagues, who are tireless in their endeavours to ensure that the social section of our club shall be an asset to all who wish to make use of its amenities, have fresh plans in hand.

What are our prospects? In football it's never easy to answer such a question, but we confidently believe that next season is going to show a very marked improvement in the club's fortunes.

### CHAMPIONS !

Wealdstone won the Athenian League championship in the 1951-52 season, when Hendon were the runners-up. In the following season Hendon headed the table, the "Stones" having to be content with the second place.



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## INTERVAL TALK

by

“ NEDRAC.”

The year 1922 is a notable one in the history of Wealdstone F.C., for it was at the start of the 1922-23 season that Lower Mead became the club's ground and headquarters. The first game on the ground, on August 26th, 1922, was with a Clapton Orient eleven and Arsenal were our opponents a week later in the second of the two special fixtures arranged to celebrate the opening of Lower Mead.

Since then, of course, Wealdstone have met professional teams on many occasions, but it is of interest to recall that the minutes of a committee meeting held on October 28th, 1912, record that it was agreed to accept an offer by Chelsea F.C., made earlier in the season, to play a friendly match at Wealdstone for a guarantee (to Chelsea) of £3. The match was played on November 3rd and it brought the then record "gate" of £5 3s. 7d. The result?—Wealdstone 0, Chelsea 2. In those now far-off days the club was playing on a ground in Belmont Road, Wealdstone.

Of the many matches played between Wealdstone and professional opposition, surely none will be remembered longer than our games with Colchester United and Port Vale in the 1949-50 season, which was, appropriately, the club's golden jubilee year.

Do you remember those thrilling F.A. Cup-ties leading up to the visit of Colchester United to Lower Mead on November 12th? The great run of success started with a 4-0 away win over Hendon on September 17th, and a fortnight later there was a goalless draw on the Enfield ground. The replay gave the "Stones" a 2-0 win and earned them the right to meet St. Albans City on the Isthmian League club's ground. The only goal scored was sufficient to put Wealdstone into the next round—away to Edgware Town. As in the previous round our success was by the narrowest of margins, a goal to nil. But what did that matter, for Wealdstone were through to the last of the qualifying rounds!

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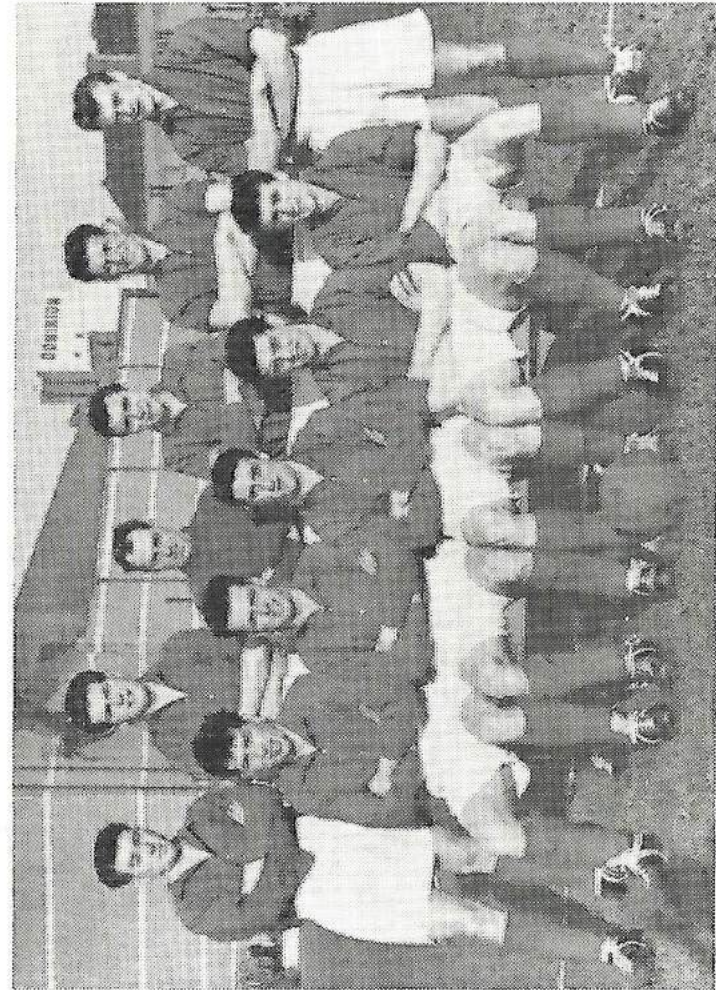
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Seated (left to right) : George Knox ; " Paddy " Glennon ; Ivor Harper ; Michael Conroy ; Vivian Evans.



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## Mr. Hensley Rowsell

OPTICIAN

5, HIGH ST., WEALDSTONE, HARROW.

So far, the draw had taken us away from home for each round, but our luck changed and we were at home—to Colchester United, a club then on the threshold of its entry into the Third Division and one which had built up a great reputation for itself in the F.A. Cup (remember Colchester's victories over First Division Huddersfield Town and Second Division Bradford only two seasons before they visited Lower Mead?).

Nearly 10,000 were on the ground to see the "Stones" triumph, while many thousands of other people saw the game through the B.B.C. Television Service. Many of us who still spend our Saturday afternoons at Lower Mead will remember the result of that game—surely the greatest battle yet fought at Lower Mead—but do we all remember readily the name of the man whose goal put Wealdstone into the draw for the first round proper? The all-important goal was scored by Bill Saunders.

It was not until the following Monday afternoon that the "Boys in Blue" knew against whom they would have to match their skill and strength. Was there a man, woman, boy, or girl in the Harrow and Wealdstone area who did not display some emotion on learning that their local football team had been drawn to meet Port Vale at Hanley? The defeat of Colchester United had done much to bring local enthusiasm to a peak.

Much has been said and written about that epic in the Potteries. But great days in history are worth recalling and no excuse need be offered for referring once again to the greatest day in the history of the Wealdstone Football Club.

## J. D. MADDEN

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Who were the eleven lads from Wealdstone who fought so gamely against heavy odds? In goal, of course, Danny Wiltshire, whose performance on that occasion was equal to any goalkeeping most of us are ever likely to see. Our backs were Fred Haydon (who went to South Africa at the end of that season) and our old friend Charlie Barker. The halves were Gordon Norman, who continues to play in our colours, George Shailer, and Edgar Francis. The Port Vale match, incidentally, was an unhappy one for Edgar, who received a painful ankle injury shortly before the interval. He nevertheless refused to leave the field and played for the whole of the second half on the left wing. Bill Saunders was on the right wing at Hanley, his partner being Bert Dyke. Bill Roberts, now serving as an official of our friends and neighbours, Harrow Town F.C., was in the centre, with Peter Rogers and Eddie Smith on his left. Yes, the same Eddie Smith who became a professional with Chelsea, Watford, Northampton Town, and, more recently, with Colchester United, for whom he is playing so well this season.

Port Vale scored once—25 minutes after the start—and the goal enabled them to go forward into the second round. Disorganized as they were by the injury to Francis, the "Stones" fought every inch of the way and for every minute of the match, and it was good to see the way in which Port Vale players and officials congratulated Wealdstone's weary but smiling lads as they left the field to the sound of as fine an ovation as any defeated side has ever received.

### WITH PROFESSIONAL CLUBS.



Four ex-Wealdstone players are now playing in the first, second, and third divisions of the Football League. They are Tommy McGhee (Portsmouth), Phil. White (Leyton Orient), and Eddie Smith and Bertie Hill (Colchester United).

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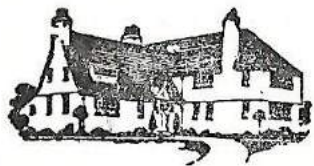
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The premises were opened by Mr. Doug. Insole, the Essex and England cricketer, who was accompanied by two of his colleagues, Mr. Trevor Bailey and Mr. J. Bailey, and in the comparatively short time that the club has had its elegant premises great strides have been made in providing a full programme of social events. Dancing is popular at Lower Mead, and in this connection mention must be made of the old-time dances held on alternate Thursdays with Mr. Harry Wright as M.C. Whist drives and darts matches are other features of the programme, which is in the capable hands of a sub-committee.

A fully equipped kitchen makes it possible for both teams to enjoy a three-course hot meal after the matches. Many of the players usually stay on into the evening to make full use of the two excellent billiards tables and the other amenities at their disposal.

The club is open every evening of the week and a cordial welcome is extended to all members who care to avail themselves of the cheery atmosphere. The club's activities are, of course, continued during the close season. Why not make Lower Mead the meeting place for you and your friends? We look forward to seeing you.

Patron : Her Majesty The Queen. President : H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester

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