

From Claremont Road



To Memory Lane



A collection of anecdotes written
by football supporters for football
supporters

By Hendon FC Supporters Association

From Claremont Road to Memory Lane eBook

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PDF Edition

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Introduction

Every single follower of football has an anecdote (or a hundred) about their passion. They feature the characters we met, the journeys getting to games, the incidents and comments witnessed at games and so much more. They add to the magic of the 'beautiful game'.

This project was undertaken to try and raise funds for Hendon football club. Unfortunately, we could not garner enough content to create a commercial outlet for this. As a result it is being created for people to distribute freely. Please do not alter it any way.

Anecdotes

So Near Yet So Far

By Michael Cox

Wednesday, 9th January 1974 – Britain is in the midst of a miners strike with people on short time, strict power rationing, television services having to close down at 10.00pm.

On the previous Saturday Hendon had visited Newcastle United in the 3rd Round proper of the FA Cup and heroically thanks to a Rod Haider goal had achieved a magnificent 1-1 draw. In order to maximise income it had been decided to stage the replay at Watford's Vicarage Road ground rather than at Claremont Road. The replay was scheduled for Wednesday.

So far, so good. However, because of dear Mr Edward Heath's power restrictions, the game had to take place in daylight rather than under floodlights. Accordingly the match would kick –off at 2.00pm. Despite this inconvenient time from memory some 20,000 spectators turned up.

And me? Well as luck would have it, I was actually working in Watford within a mile or so of the football ground. So lucky soul you say – take a late lunch and ask for an hour or so off.

However, due to a series of bizarre circumstances, my employing company's annual Christmas Lunch had been postponed a couple of times but was now definitely scheduled for Wednesday, 9th January! As there were only half a dozen of us at the Company's administrative headquarters in Watford, my absence would definitely have been noticed, so I had to sit and suffer. Really a case of being so near yet so far!

We Want Our Bugle Back

By John Rice

On Saturday 19 November 1988, Reading FC hosted Hendon FC in the first round proper of the FA Cup. With my fellow fans we travelled to the ground, with the usual rush of adrenaline and hope. Cup excitement is an unparalleled feeling. On entry to the ground we occupied one end of the ground. A large number of loud (I think they had been drinking) supporters were already inside and singing loudly. They appeared unknown to us so we stayed at one end whilst they stood at the other. Suddenly, they started singing "Come and join us" and gesturing to us. I looked at a fellow supporter (I believe it was either Chris Hutton or Jimmy Rock), we shrugged our shoulders and headed over. Everyone followed. I later found out these were the Clitterhouse Boys. Our combined singing was compounded and with less support, to our ears, we outsang Reading. Before kick off Malcolm Graves, our famous bugler, came into the ground. He proceeded to tell us why his plastic bag was empty and why we would have to make noise without it. On arrival a copper had asked him to open the bag. When he did the following conversation happened:

Copper: You can't take that into the match

Malcolm: Why not?

Copper: Because it is an offensive weapon.

Malcolm: No it's not. It's a musical instrument.

Copper: Are you trying to be funny?

Malcolm: No. I am trying to have a rational conversation between two human beings.

The copper took offence at that for some reason. We were denied our rallying instrument. It made us sing even louder that day.

Oh! By the way, we lost 4 – 2. But still a great day out.

Denis Compton Was Right

by Michael Cox

Denis Compton, the legendary cricketer and footballer turned sports journalist, began his article in the Sunday Express on 24th April 1960 with the following words:

“The Amateur Cup Final will go down as one of the greatest, most thrilling and most breathtaking games I have seen – and that includes all the professional matches I have ever watched or played in. I feel privileged to have been one of the 60,000 people to have seen this titanic Wembley struggle.”

The game to which he was referring was, of course, the epic match between Hendon and Kingstonian played on Saturday, 23rd April 1960 which held 60,000 fans spellbound as it ebbed and flowed through 90 exhilarating minutes with Hendon eventually emerging as the 2-1 winners.

Saturday dawned bright and the morning passed quickly as we attended to the usual weekend shopping chores with alacrity. My father and I left home at around 1.00pm and made our way to Finchley Road Station to catch the Metropolitan line train – next stop Wembley Park. This was to be our first visit to the historic Wembley Stadium and, as we joined the crowd thronging Empire Way, the excitement was palpable. People in Green and White mingled happily with those in Red and White – the atmosphere was much lighter and less confrontational in those long ago days.

Then it was through the turnstiles -I can't remember what the admission charge was, but it wouldn't have been more than 7/6d (37p!). Then to get the prized programme for 1 shilling (5p) containing team photographs, club histories and brief biographical notes on each player.

So eventually we found ourselves packed in the standing enclosure behind one goal breathing in every bit of the wonderful atmosphere. On the near sacred turf we were entertained by the Central Band of the Royal Air Force followed by a gymnastic display. At 2.50pm the two teams came out on to the pitch to deafening roars of welcome. Sadly, no

member of the Royal Family was in attendance and the teams had to make do with being presented to the Earl of Derby. Everybody lustily sang the National Anthem and then at last it was time for the kick-off!

In 1960 Hendon were still playing in the Athenian League whilst Kingstonian were members of the (allegedly) superior Isthmian (now Ryman Premier) League and had won the Amateur Cup back in 1933 at, of all places, Darlington. Hendon, of course, memorably played in the 1955 Final losing 2-0 against mighty Bishop Auckland in front of 100,000 spectators with many more watching on flickering television screens across the nation. Hendon's eleven (before the advent of substitutes) against Kingstonian was: Peter Shearing, Ron Widdowfield, Jeff Harris, Laurie Topp (age 37 and in his 18th season), Bill Fisher, Charlie Murphy (who for reasons long forgotten was club captain), Mike Candey, Brian Figg, Miles Spector, Jimmy Quail and Terry Howard. The coach was the legendary recently retired Dexter Adams.

The game was played at a cracking pace with no quarter asked or given. Hendon went for the opposition like bats out of hell and for the first 20 minutes or so threatened to overrun Kingstonian but the 'stones defence held out and eventually the game became much more even. Five minutes before half-time tragedy struck for Hendon when the out of his depth Murphy limply headed an intended clearance straight to Harris. The winger then delivered an inch perfect cross which was superbly headed home by Whing past a helpless Shearing.

The goal seemed to completely knock the wind out of the Greens' sails and until mid-way through the second half they became timid and half hearted in their efforts. We could see the game slipping away with Hendon looking likely to be the bridesmaids again, until suddenly they regained control again and once more put the Kingstonian goal under intense pressure once more.

With time fast slipping away and with the keeper Groves seemingly unbeatable, Hendon finally got the deserved breakthrough in the 87th minute. The under-rated Mike Candey took off down the right wing and pulled the ball back for the unmarked Laurie Topp to gloriously crash it into the roof of the net.

Almost from the re-start Hendon were on the attack again and this time it was the speedy and elusive left winger, Terry Howard, who collected a long ball out of defence and went on a mazy dribble leaving bemused defenders in his wake before planting the ball firmly beyond Groves.

We were now in the 90th minute but there was still enough time for one last moment of heart stopping excitement as Kingstonian made one last desperate attack; Oakes shot, the woodwork quivered but the ball stayed out and Hendon supporters breathed again. Then the final whistle sounded and our joy was unconfined.

Charlie Murphy collected the Cup and the celebrations began in earnest. It was fitting that Laurie Topp should crown his illustrious career in which he won every available honour including almost 40 international caps, many as captain. As Denis Compton said in his newspaper article, there were many heroes on the pitch that April Saturday afternoon but the greatest of them all was Laurie Topp and not even the most dyed in the wool Kingstonian supporter would begrudge him this highest of honours.

Locally celebrations went on late into the night and, although Hendon were to lift the Trophy twice more including beating the old enemy Enfield 12 years later, the 1960 victory surely remains as their finest never to be forgotten hour.

Fog Off

By David Coote

On Sunday 15 November 1998 Hendon played Notts County in an FA Cup first round tie at Claremont Road. The match ended in a 0-0 draw, although Hendon had enough chances in the first half to have won comfortably.

In those days I rarely missed a Hendon match and certainly would not contemplate missing an FA Cup replay against League opposition on their own ground. However, on the day after the first game I flew out to Australia to see England's first two matches in the 1998/99 Ashes test series and was therefore unable to attend the replay.

Nowadays, with the advent of the internet it would be easy to follow Hendon's scores even if you are on the other side of the world. However in the late 90's the internet was less accessible and even if it had been I would have had problems as I was not particularly tech savvy! Consequently I had no choice other than to contact Notts County by 'phone.

On the night of the replay I set my alarm clock at an extremely early hour to enable me to contact Nottingham to find out the half time score. When I did ring it seemed an eternity before someone answered. When they did I asked for the half time score. There was a brief pause before a bemused lady said "the game was postponed because of fog - didn't you know?" I said I didn't as I was ringing from Brisbane!

Fast forward a few days I went through the same procedure, only this time I had to wake up even earlier as I was ringing from a different time zone (Perth, WA). I think the half time score was 0-0 but when I rang again I was told that Hendon had lost 3-0. To complete my day England had just been beaten by the Aussies in three days. Some things never change!

We're Going To Win 5-4

By Michael Cox

Northwood FC – 31st August 2005. Off to Chestnut Avenue, temporary home of our greatest pals, Wealdstone, for an Isthmian League clash. It was a balmy summer evening and we were treated to a barmy exciting game.

Hendon kicked downhill in the first half attacking the cemetery end goal. In the line up for (I think) the first time was a promising young player by the name of Belal Aite-Ouakrim and popular favourite, Eugene Ofori, playing possibly his last game for the Greens. The pace was fast and furious and it seemed that every time Wealdstone attacked, they scored. So a few minutes before half time, although by no means outplayed, Hendon found themselves 4-1 down. We pulled one back to make it 4-2 at the break and as we changed ends passing the triumphant Stones fans, we defiantly chanted (with more hope than conviction) "We're going to win 5-4!"

Well to everybody's disbelief, WE DID!

Keep The Noise Down

By David Coote

Back in the late 70's and throughout the 80's we regularly played league games against Croydon FC. I never looked forward to these games as win lose or draw they were rarely entertaining. I especially dreaded the away games as Croydon played at the Croydon Sports Arena which had an eight or ten lane running track around the playing area. Coupled with the fact that Croydon had one of the lowest attendances in the league there was little or no atmosphere in the ground.

One particular game which was played on a freezing cold afternoon in December or January was even more tedious than usual. There were a few Hendon fans standing in front of a thinly populated main stand and during a break in play, Malcolm Graves (who older supporters will remember as possessing a very loud and penetrating foghorn type voice) shouted at the top of voice to the few people in the stand "IS THERE ANYBODY ALIVE UP THERE". I remember that some of the players and even the referee looked over to see what was happening. Unsurprisingly, there was no response from the stand!

Silence is Beholdent

By John Rice

My brother and I were going to see Hendon away. We got in touch with a couple of friends and offered them a lift. They were chuffed and so all four of us set off in the car to drive from Harrow to Purfleet. The journey took one and half to two hours. Despite the duration we kept talking all the way. It was the first game of the season. A new manager was in charge. There is a real camaraderie between football fans. It is very tribe-like. Especially on the opening day of a new season. Friendlies don't really cut it. The competitive nature is what fires us up and why we are so passionate about the beautiful game. Our record against Purfleet was not the best. However, new season, new start and we felt we could break the bogey. We arrived at the ground. Had a pint and a burger beforehand. The game was OK but success eluded us that day. A sky high shot on goal in the first minute. An early booking. A penalty denied. An early booking. We felt hard done by but in reality were unlucky. Some days it just does not go your way. That is football. The final score – Purfleet 2, Hendon 0. All four of us walked back to the car. We drove home in silence. Four of us who could not stop talking all the way there uttered no words for the entire journey home. The only words we did speak were "Thanks for the lift" to my brother as we exited the car. The scenario has been played out by so many people for so many games. Highlights how much we love our team.

I Don't Support THAT Team In Green and White

By John White

I was on my way to St. Albans for a belated F.A. trophy replay against Cambridge City in the 2001/2 Season. The Match was played at St. Albans because Claremont Road might not be playable.

I boarded the Train at St. Pancras. A group of Plymouth fans got on the train on their way to Luton for their league game that same afternoon. As I was wearing my Green and White Scarf they sat with me thinking I was a fellow fan. They started talking to me like I was an old friend. They asked 'What's our chances of beating Luton?' and 'How was your journey to London?'. I tried to explain that I am a Hendon fan. They possibly could not understand my London accent. But my being a Hendon fan fell on death ears. Then I was asked if I was going to Tranmere or Rochdale to cheer the boys on in 2 weeks time. The train arrived at St. Albans. I got up to get off, only to be told by a Plymouth fan in a broad Devon accent, 'Hey pal your getting out at the wrong stop'.

'No I said, I've got the right stop'. Maybe then the penny dropped. I don't support THAT team in green.

We won the Game 3.0.

My Free FA Cup Final Ticket

By Mike Cox

My one and only trip to the old Wembley Stadium on Cup Final day came about courtesy of Alan Turvey and the Isthmian League.

The 1991/92 season was over and the Chairman, Victor somebody, was not over the moon with the Club's (paid for) allocation of seats for the Final, which were high up at one end of the stadium. Naturally as the humble Club Secretary I was not selected by the Chairman to receive one of these sought after tickets.

Imagine my delighted surprise to receive at my home address a free ticket with the compliments of the League. I duly attended the game in an almost centrally located seat, with a perfect view, not a million miles from the Royal Box! The Final (Liverpool v Sunderland) was hardly a classic but having a better seat than my illustrious boss made it a memorable occasion. (I never had the heart to tell him).

We Want Our Trumpet Back

By John Rice

Prior to our game against Chelmsford in the FA Cup in 2010 we found out that musical instruments were banned from their ground. After discussions about attempting to smuggle in a biscuit tin lid and a pencil and other equally implausible ideas I could find no way round it. We did not take instruments to games in those days but the rebellious nature meant being told not to do something drove us to want to do it. We arrived at the game, usual cup match anticipation and buzz on the terrace. The match started and some singing ensued. Then Bryan Roberts, in an attempt to neat the ban, produced an instrument from his bag – a small plastic child’s trumpet. He gave a couple of toots and we were in stitches. Maybe we were ‘beating the man’. He tooted it a few times after the steward had walked past and hid it when the steward turned round. Eventually the steward, who looked embarrassed, confiscated a small plastic child’s trumpet, because it was classed as a musical instrument. The boos and derision aimed at the poor sod was highly comical. Our resolve kicked in and we raised our voices even louder. Amongst our many (You weren’t there. You don’t know if we only had a couple) songs a new one was added “We want our trumpet back”. The light hearted songs often become louder. Oh! By the way, we lost 3 – 2. What happened to the trumpet? We never saw it again.

It Really Wasn't My Fault!

By Michael Cox

Tuesday, 17th April 1973 – Hendon were closing in on their finest season since the *annus mirabilis* of 1964/65 and would finish as League Champions winning a record 34 of 42 games and getting a record points total of 74 (equivalent to 108 at 3 points per win). In addition they had won the Barussi Cup and would also win the Middlesex Senior Cup beating Enfield in a replay after the 2 legged final had finished all square.

I was fresh home after a 2 year contract in Hong Kong and made my still jet-lagged way to Claremont Road to see the Greens (already comfortably champions) play their 39th league game of the season against Walton & Hersham. I had been kept up to date on Hendon's majestic progress thanks to my Dad who posted me match reports from the *Hendon & Finchley Times*.

Needless to say the Greens were to suffer their first league defeat of the season, 1-2, and guess who got the blame! Hendon lost their next league game too (I didn't see this one!). I did, however, see matches 2 and 3 of the Middlesex Senior Cup Final saga at Enfield and Finchley respectively – although I received no credit for this victory!

Where For Art Thou YouTube

By David Coote

One of the more bizarre goals I have seen Hendon score in all the years that I have followed the team occurred in April 1985.

It had been another season of struggle hovering around the relegation zone and Hendon were desperate for points. The visitors were Harrow Borough who were relatively safe in mid-table.

In the second half, with Hendon attacking the clubhouse and the game evenly poised at 1-1, Hendon were awarded a free kick a few yards outside the Harrow penalty area.

The Harrow goalkeeper(who I think was Andy Pape) lined up his defensive wall as is the norm and as he was doing this he asked the referee if the free kick was direct or indirect. I was standing behind the goal and I was fairly sure I heard the referee reply "it's direct". Steve Wilkins (brother of Ray) who had a sweet left foot and was involved in most of the free kicks that Hendon were awarded in the opposition half lined up the shot. He took the free kick and curled the ball over the wall and towards the goal. The ball was heading for a spot about a yard inside the near post, a decent effort, but a straightforward save for most 'keepers.

However, in one of those "time stands still" moments, the Harrow 'keeper stood rooted to the spot and seemed quite unconcerned as the ball sailed past him and into the back of the net. The referee awarded the goal and pandemonium ensued as the Hendon players and fans celebrated and the Harrow players went berserk and surrounded the referee.

It transpired that the Harrow 'keeper thought that the referee had said "indirect" as opposed to "it's direct"! It is a shame that YouTube wasn't around in 1985 as I am sure that someone would have recorded the moment for posterity.

It may have been a bizarre goal but it also turned out to be a vital goal as Hendon finished just three points above the relegation zone that season.

Memories of '66

By John Richardson

FA Challenge Cup 1st Round Proper Hendon v Reading Saturday, 26th November, 1966

Nineteen sixty six has always been known as the golden year of English football and Wembley Stadium was the venue of the greatest day in English football history. On that day, Saturday, 30th July 1966, captain Bobby Moore held aloft the Jules Rimet trophy to proclaim England champions of the World.

Nineteen sixty six was also a good year for Hendon Football Club, three months before England's triumph over West Germany, Hendon appeared at the national stadium in the final of the FA Amateur Cup.

Although Hendon lost the final 3-1 in front of a 45,000 crowd to near neighbours Wealdstone, they had already been rewarded to automatic entry into the following seasons FA Challenge Cup 1st Round Proper. FA competition rules granted the two FA Amateur cup finalists exemption from the qualifying rounds of the following season's FA Challenge Cup.

Hendon started the 1966-67 season on the crest of a wave having been to Wembley in the FA Amateur cup final the previous two seasons and now they had the luxury of knowing they were again in the hat for the FA Cup First Round draw.

After the fourth qualifying matches had been played Hendon went into the draw with the Football League third and fourth division clubs together with the non league qualifiers. The draw was made as usual at Monday lunchtime. There was an anxious wait for the first editions of the London evening papers. Would they draw a big one ? Last season's draw at the same stage had been unkind with an away tie at Midland League Grantham.

Then the exciting news broke. YES it was good news, a home tie against Third Division high fliers Reading.

This was really a 'Big Draw', only once before in 1952 against Northampton Town had Hendon entertained a Third Division side in the FA Cup.

Hendon immediately announced the match would be 'All Ticket' with terrace tickets at 4 shillings (20p) and a limited number of stand tickets at 7 shillings (35p).

There was much anticipation regarding the expected attendance. A crowd of 5,489 had tested the capacity of the Claremont Road ground the previous February for an FA Amateur Cup quarter final tie against Wycombe Wanderers.

Would this match draw an even higher attendance?

Walking to the ground from West Hendon on the day of the match I remember the AA had put their yellow traffic direction signs at Staples Corner, 'Hendon FC left at lights'. If there was any doubt everyone knew there was a big match on this afternoon.

Hendon had a large fan base from West Hendon and there was quite a trickle of people walking up Brent Terrace all bound for Claremont Road, as no one in their right mind would want to visit Brent Terrace with its' breakers yards guarded by fierce dogs and a rubbish incinerator with endless lorries going to and throw. It was always good to reach the calm of the Cltterhouse estate from here you could hear the public address system broadcast from the one tall loud speaker at the Cricklewood end of the ground.

Arriving at the ground before 2.30 pm I remember ticket holders being ushered in through the large exit gate from the car park and cash admission was being taken through the turnstiles.

We took our places four or five steps up from the front to the right of the goal at the Cricklewood end.

The vocal Reading fans with their blue flags and banner were already camped on the covered side terrace officially known as the Gordon Raymond Stand. They probably chose to stand there because they were use to standing in a covered side terrace at their own Elm Park ground.

The ground began filling up in the minutes leading to kick off. In the event, although Reading had brought a large following they had brought nowhere near the amount that Wycombe

had brought. This meant that Hendon fans were clearly dominant in the crowd, while against Wycombe, the Buckinghamshire fans had taken over Claremont Road.

This official attendance was set at 4,050 this was second highest attendance I had been in at Claremont Road. I believe only the 1952 Northampton Town FA Cup attendance can beat the Wycombe and Reading figures.

As the Hendon team took the field the Hendon signature tune 'Wheels' was played and we sang the new Hendon FC song from our sheets distributed with the programme, "We're the greens, the boys from Hendon, we win cups and we defend them".

Well, we sang the first verse and then an almighty chant of HENDON! HENDON! rang out from the green and white scarfed supporters banked on the Cricklewood terrace. The atmosphere was tremendous as Hendon kicked off attacking the Cricklewood end.

Although my school boy memory of the actual game is now a little hazy forty seven years on. I do remember Hendon attacking in the early stages with Danny Lakey launching himself with a horizontal dive to try to connect with a cross into the Reading goal area. Then there was a great chance when Tony Harding had a point blank header brilliantly saved by the Reading keeper.

The professionalism of Reading began to take control and they rushed into a two goal lead. Hendon were not dispirited and John Swannell was at his very best when he tipped over the cross bar a vicious dipping free kick which I think was taken by Reading's star centre forward Pat Terry.

When Reading scored their third goal the Hendon supporters applauded a well taken goal mirroring the Kop at Anfield by appreciating good football.

Half time came and we changed ends. It took the best part of the ten minutes of half time to reach the far end weaving through the thick crowd. Passing the Reading fans on the way there was no more than good humoured banter. This was still the golden age of English football, the dark ages were yet to come.

In the second half the Hendon fans were packed more tightly in the narrow confines of the North Circular end terrace.

Eric Wilby the peanut seller still walked through the crowd with his cry, " Fresh Roasted Peanuts" and latter on a newspaper seller yelled, "Classified half time results".

Hendon pushed Reading back for most of the second half and when centre half John Ashworth the king pin of Hendon's defence moved up in support and hammered in Hendon's consolation goal, a goal they truly deserved, the Hendon fans responded with the loudest cheer of the afternoon as a green streamer sailed from the back of the terrace on to the roof of the net.

At the final whistle the Hendon supporters went home satisfied that their team had done well against a good third division team which went on to only just miss out on promotion to division two.

On the one and half mile walk back to West Hendon we were able to reflect on a fine game of football and look forward to a more realistic route to Wembley, the FA Amateur cup. Would it be three years in a row for Hendon ?

If it was a good omen the guard dogs looked happy as we passed or maybe they had just been fed!

SKEM Utd - FA Amateur Cup semi-Final 1966-67

By John Robert Richardson

It is said as you get older many memories become buried in your subconscious and can only triggered to the surface by an event.

This happened to me a few years back when my wife and I travelled to Lancashire to visit our middle daughter who was then a student at Edge Hill University in Ormskirk. We stayed overnight at a motel just off the M6 near Wigan. The following morning our plan was to drive on to Ormskirk.

It is only a fifteen minute drive by using the M58 but I thought it would be a good idea to use the back roads and see a bit of West Lancashire.

Studying the map I saw the best route would take us right through a town called Skelmersdale. I had never been to Skelmersdale and would have probably avoided it, as it looked rather an insignificant place. There was something in the back of my mind that drew me to that town.

Driving into Skelmersdale around the endless roundabouts that typifies new towns I found the whole place depressing. There were large open green areas between housing strewn with rubbish including burnt out cars and the signs of vandalism were everywhere. There was a huge bonfire ready for 5th November. It could have been Belfast preparing for the orange day celebrations.

I was driving on auto pilot, my mind had gone back to the morning of Saturday, 18th March 1967, I was thinking what was this place like then. It would have been a happy place suffering from cup fever. The town's football club were on a crest of a wave they had beaten highly rated Slough Town in the FA Amateur Cup quarter final on their own Whitemoss Park ground in front of a record 7,000 crowd and were now playing in the Semi Final against a top London Amateur club.

At the same time there was equal cup fever two hundred miles South.

I remember that morning as a thirteen year old walking from West Hendon with my mate Paul dressed in our green and white scarves. There was a spring in our step we were, 'Up for the Cup'. Would it be Wembley three years in a row?

Approaching Staples Corner a coach from Cronshaw-Venture of Kingsbury pulled up and the driver seeing our scarves beckoned us aboard. The driver told us that ten coaches were travelling up to Derby for the Semi-Final. A twinge of excitement hit me, this was going to be no ordinary match where we might take three or four coaches to an away league match like Tooting & Mitcham or Sutton United.

The ten coaches were all lined up in the car park. A board with the coach number was stuck on to the front side window of each coach. Supporters decorated the coaches with balloons, streamers and printed 'Hendon for the Cup stickers'.

The coach stewards, who were committee members of the Supporters Association were each allocated to a coach. Our coach steward was John Hutton, who had his famous bell. This was only brought to big games. I think it was on the way back we passed a car with newly weds. John opened the coach door and rang the bell to wish the couple well.

It was an impressive sight when the coaches headed north in convoy to join the M1 at Mill Hill. The coach radio was broadcasting the popular Sandie Shaw song, "Like a Puppet on a String". Some of the men sitting near had started a card school. With a pen and paper my friend and I just content on joining the squares playing 'Battle Ships'.

Everyone was happy, there was a great atmosphere.

Further up the M1 the coaches suddenly pulled over on to the 'hard shoulder'. One of the ten coaches had broken down. Supporters on the failed coach were ferried along the hard shoulder in groups and placed on each of the good coaches. An operation you could 't imagine happening today without police supervision. The volume of motorway traffic was so much less then. The plan was for all the coaches to make for what was then known as 'The Blue Boar' service station. This was one of the few service stations operating at the time. Today it simply known as the Watford Gap services.

Here a replacement coach arrived, presumably from a nearby town and the supporters who had been crouching in the aisle could now go back to a comfortable seat.

We continued up the M1 and on to the A6 signposted for Derby. We were nearly there. With excitement mounting we entered Derby. This was first time I had ventured in to Industrial England. It was real life Coronation Street with back to back narrow terrace streets and sprawling factories belching out black smoke. Right in the middle of all this was the Baseball Ground home of Derby County FC.

We alighted from the coaches in to the narrow streets. The Skelmersdale fans had already arrived in their thousands. It seemed the whole town had travelled to Derby. There were families with children and even a coach full of old ladies dressed in blue and white with home made rosettes with the words SKEM UTD pinned on. It was though the town was on a Lancashire Wakes week holiday to Blackpool and had come to Derby instead.

As we waited for the turnstiles to open the rival supporters sang and chanted. "She's a lassie from Lancashire", came up from the Skelmersdale contingent. We replied " We will be running round Wembley with the Cup" and then chanted "Tony, Tony, Tony" in honour of Hendon's star forward Tony Harding. It was all very innocent then, we were in the autumn of the golden summer of English football.

The eight hundred or so Hendon fans congregated behind one goal. The other three sides of this compact Victorian football ground were full of Skelmersdale fans. A huge Alsatian police dog was sat on the centre spot as a warning not to invade the pitch.

The match was a real rearguard action by the Hendon defence as the young Skelmersdale team launched attack after attack. The final line of defence was the brilliant John Swannell.

Was this John Swannell's finest game ?

I was not at Sunderland twelve months earlier where John Swannell was reported to have produced one of the best goalkeeping displays ever seen at Roker Park for the Semi Final against Whitley Bay. Perhaps Hendon supporters who were at both games can answer that question.

List of Publications

Hendon FCSA Publishing have created and released two ebooks to raise funds for Hendon Football Club. Every penny of the sales goes via the Association to the club.

Twitter Titters Volume 1

We scoured Twitter and collected over 3000 of the funniest tweets we could find into one volume. So you can sit and read joke after joke created using no more than 140 characters. You will love this book if you love one liners, quick fire gags, jokes, funnies, humour, rib ticklers or just love a blooming good laugh.

Available via Amazon for the Kindle.

Amazon UK - Click [here](#) for more information.

Amazon US - Click [here](#) for more information.

Twitter Titters Volume 2

The follow up to 'Twitter Titters 1'. People love the first book so much we created a second one. This is yet another collection of more than 3000 bloody funny tweets. Twitter has unearthed some genuinely funny people and tweet stealers and given them a platform.

Available via Amazon for the Kindle.

Amazon UK - Click [here](#) for more information.

Amazon US - Click [here](#) for more information.

Hendon Football Club

[Hendon Football Club](#) has an illustrious and proud history, dating back to its formation in 1908, as Christchurch Hampstead. In the very first season, the Club finished as champions of the Finchley & District League Third Division.

Names may have changed – it was Hampstead Town until the 1930s and Golders Green until 1946 – but Hendon Football Club has become one of the most recognisable names in non-league football. Amongst the Club's claims to fame are the first winners of a floodlit cup tie in England – beating Arsenal at Highbury – European amateur champions and three-time winners of the FA Amateur Cup.

Unfortunately, Hendon Football Club was forced to vacate its Claremont Road home of 81 years and has been in a groundshare arrangement with near neighbours Wembley FC since 2008. Now wholly owned by a supporters trust, Hendon FC needs to raise funds to remain in existence.

To learn more about Hendon Football Club, visit our website - [here](#).

Follow us on Twitter - [here](#).

Follow us on Facebook - [here](#).

Hendon Football Club Supporters Association

[Hendon Football Club Supporters Association](#) celebrated its 80th season in 2013–14. Throughout its 80 years, the Association and its members have worked tirelessly to raise funds for Hendon Football Club, as well as continuing to carry out matchday duties.

HFCSA's aim is to not only promote but also introduce new revenue streams for the benefit of Hendon Football Club. It would be fair to say that without the Supporters Association's vital assistance, Hendon FC probably would not exist today.

Visit our website www.HendonSupporters.com or follow our Twitter account - [here](#).

Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust

Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust was formed with the mission statement:

“The Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust will do everything within its power to ensure the continuation of Hendon Football Club playing at the highest level of football consistent with its financial position.”

Hendon Football Club is wholly owned by the Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust. The Club’s current home is Vale Farm, Wembley FC, in Sudbury, in sight of the iconic arch of Wembley Stadium. From the start of the 2013–14 season, however, Hendon FC will be based at Earlsmead, the home of Harrow Borough FC. For more information on the Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust, please visit our dedicated website at www.hfctrust.co.uk.

Ultimately, the aim of the Supporters Trust is to work alongside Hendon FC Supporters Association to raise funds to finance the running of Hendon Football Club in north-west London. The Football Club’s survival is dependent on raising sufficient funds to enable it to play at the highest possible level.