

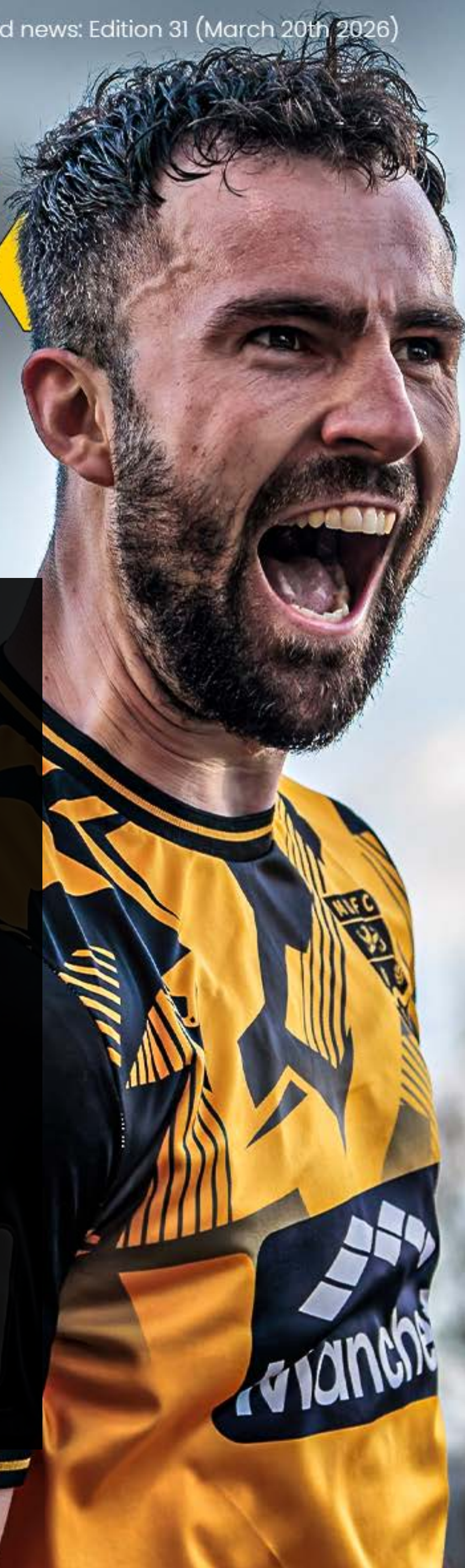
The **Back** Page

The book of John

**Moment of class
sinks Farnborough**

PLUS:

- MUFC women reach second final
- The Stones Quiz: comeback special
- The Steve Watt column
- Tom Rogers on Chesham and John Still's slip-ons
- The Back Page: a 'Club statement' special



The Back Page is a new, independent news resource covering Maidstone United.

The team is a mixture of professional journalists, experienced amateurs and aspiring newcomers. We aim to offer previews, reports, features, rumours and more.

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Meet The Team



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Steve Marshall at Hayes Lane in 2002.

A moment of class **6**

Gilbert channels Mark Hughes to see off Farnborough.

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Much as you might like to rewrite history, you can't.

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In 2002, Cray vs Maidstone United was a battle of the groundsharers. We were renting Sittingbourne, they were enduring a fifth season at Hayes Lane, Bromley.

The games were usually ill-tempered on and off the pitch and this was no exception.

Cray took an early lead through their player-manager Ian Jenkins and a bemulleted middle-aged man, about 5'3 tall, began to abuse the away fans on the unsegregated terraces.

However, Richard Sinden equalised just before half-time and Steve Marshall then curled in the winner

seven minutes after the restart.

Aside from Marshall (a big game player, according to then manager Jim Ward), the Stones players from left to right are Ross Edwards, Paul Foley and Barry Jeffreys.

At the end of April, Jenkins would score

a stoppage time goal for Cray against VCD that allowed us to win the Kent League title on the final day at Deal.

*** Paul Foley was subsequently manager of VCD when they were relegated for the width of a tarmac path. See page 24.**

'Hey! Can we have some f***ing quality?'

MAIDSTONE UNITED 1

Gilbert 72

FARNBOROUGH 0

Attendance: 2,040
(unsegregated)

By Fred Atkins

Midway through the first-half of this match my phone hummed, with a message that read: "HEY! CAN WE HAVE SOME FUCKING QUALITY?"

It was an in-joke, a reference to an incident that took place in our final season in the County League at London Road, when Richard Monks, a striker who didn't lack self-confidence, berated his team mates for the lack of service, with those exact words. A few minutes later he missed a sitter, and almost the entire crowd shouted: "CAN WE HAVE SOME FUCKING QUALITY?"

The game may not have lived in the memory 25 years later, but that incident certainly did.

*

John Gilbert now leads the scoring charts by one from Deon Moore, another striker who didn't lack self-confidence. Moore's departure was announced on Thursday and it was strongly rumoured he was off to Farnborough, although his name didn't appear in their squad when it was announced at 2pm.

Christie Pattison was named in the Maidstone squad after his re-signing was announced on the morning of the game and for the first time this calendar year we had a full bench, with Malachi Mbogba back from wherever it was he'd spent the last three months.

Lexus Beeden was also back and the ex-Farnborough defender could be seen having a warm conversation with his former manager, Spencer Day, before kick-off.

A decent crowd saw an average first half and Corne left early with what looked like an ankle injury, which didn't help. Kargbo tried a couple of volleys that didn't come off, Farnborough dragged a couple of shots wide and there was nearly an own goal when Smith had to clear off the line from his own team mate.



An early blow as Sam Corne is forced off.



The corridor of uncertainty - a foretaste.



Hamzad heads wide.

Bramble shot over from an angle and Yila could have had a penalty when his shirt was once again yanked almost over head height.

The only rational explanation I can think of for this not being given is that so much shirt-tugging happens now the referee just assumed it was mutual - Helen Cooper's albums feature on average about a dozen obvious incidents per game.

That said, our XG from the penalty spot this season is 0.4 which might explain why no one other than Yila seemed that outraged. The second half was livelier and barely a minute old when Riley clipped the bar from a free-kick.

Duncan then made a full-length stop to deny Bramble from a Kargbo knock-down (the offside flag was up) and Kargbo had a penalty appeal for a push turned down, one which admittedly looked less convincing after watching the highlights.

Gilbert then played a brilliant ball down the left wing for Tanga, before taking the return pass and missing by about a yard.

"Robinson and Duncan had an 'after you Claude' moment ..."

That was his sighter. Around ten minutes later Hamblin drilled the ball into the corridor of uncertainty, just outside the area. Robinson and Duncan had an "after you Claude" moment (*ask your Dads, or even your Grandads in this case*) and Gilbert nipped in between them. His first touch took him wide of the keeper and his second was a brilliant left-footed clip that dipped just under the bar to make it 1-0.

It became very open: Pattison came on and shot just wide from 25 yards, before getting under a second effort that went well over the bar.

The highlights don't show Farnborough's best chance, a Bingham header that drifted just wide, but if you want a rough idea of how alarming it was, take a look at [this header by Christian Vieri against England in 1997](#) (at 6:20).

Day looked rueful afterwards, but came across as about 20 times more graceful than the soon-to-be-sacked Lee Bradbury had the previous Tuesday night. George felt we'd taken a touch too many in the first half, but was



A Mark Hughes-like finish from Gilbert.



There might be contact there ...

delighted we'd found a way to win and Pattison just sounded happy to be back, saying "I wanted to enjoy myself." He clearly did.

Sadly, Deon Moore, despite having one of the better seasons of his career so far clearly wasn't. At the time of publication he hasn't signed for another club.

* It's unlikely anyone will recall this game too fondly in the year 2051, but pretty much everyone agreed afterwards that the only thing that mattered was the result.

And just as an aside, the only goal definitely met the "fucking quality" criteria.



Mark Boruk makes his debut and Christie celebrates his return.





(Left) 1-0. Millie Waud bundles the ball over the line. (Right) Cara Davies thwarts Chatham.

Stones send Chats packing to reach final

MAIDSTONE UNITED 4
Waud 15, Wilkinson 61,
own goal 75, White 84
CHATHAM TOWN DEV 0

The Stones Women are through to the final of the Kent Plate after they eased to a 4-0 win in Sunday's semi-final.

Having already beaten the same opponents 5-1 here in a League Cup quarter-final the Stones were heavy favourites and their first chance came in the fourth minute, when Kylie Manktelow had a one-on-one saved by the Chatham keeper.

Manktelow then shot just wide in the ninth before Chatham started to threaten at the other end, hitting the post a couple of minutes later.

The Stones took the lead after a quarter of an hour when Manktelow's cross was fumbled by the Chatham keeper and Millie Waud bundled the ball over the line.

Chatham could have equalised five minutes later but were unable to get a decisive touch after a cross flew across the face of goal.

Annie White thought she'd headed in the second from Neve Platt's cross, only for the goal to be ruled out by a post-



Platt (15) celebrates with Wilkinson after setting her up for the second, just after the hour.

humous offside flag and Cara Davies had to make sharp save in a one-on-one to ensure the Stones led at the break.

Chatham continued to threaten after the restart, but they were undone by some showboating deep in their own half. Kelsi Wilkinson robbed the defender, and although her initial shot was saved, Platt was first to the rebound and Wilkinson tapped in her cross.

Platt looked lively throughout and was eventually the victim of a reducer from

a Chatham player who was astoundingly lucky not to have been sent off after a clear stamp that incensed the Maidstone bench.

The third came via an own goal, after a communication breakdown between the Chatham right back and goalkeeper and the fourth came when White's header looped over the keeper, six minutes from time.

The Stones are away to Kings Hill in a league fixture this Sunday, kick-off 2pm at the Kings Hill Sports Park.



No sympathy from Manktelow after a blunder leads to the third goal.



4-0. White's header loops into the net.

Upcoming Commentaries

Chesham United (A) Sat 21 March 2026 @ 1500 – Chris Bechervaise & Adrian Sharpe

AFC Totton (H) Sat 28 March 2026 @1500 – Alan Thatcher & Alex del Valle

Dover Athletic (A) Fri 3 April 2026 @ 1500 – Chris Bechervaise & Tom Rogers

Hornchurch (H) Mon 6 April 2026 @ 1500 – Alan Thatcher & Alex del Valle

Horsham (A) Sat 11 April 2026 @ 1500 – Darren Styles & Sean Scurr

Worthing (H) Sat 18 April 2026 @ 1500 – Joe Parkhouse & Nigel Seager

Bath City (A) Sat 25 April 2026 @ 1230 – Chris Bechervaise & Fred Atkins

Stones Live! has been providing radio commentaries of Maidstone United matches since the 2008 -09 season, way back when the club was a fraction of the size it is now, playing to crowds of 200 in Sittingbourne. Founded by Stones fan Chris Bechervaise, its audiences grew steadily at first and then rapidly when the club returned home after the end of its 24-year exile in 2012. The Back Page editor, Fred Atkins, is a regular commentator, as are a number of this publication's contributors.

It's run by volunteer supporters who have a background in professional broadcast radio and funded independently from the football club by volunteer donations or through sponsorship and advertising. Stones Live! is a not-for-profit service and any monies raised are put back into the radio station to pay for various broadcast licences and to renew worn or broken equipment.



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The
Back
Page

Managerial demands, shirt-pulling and rewriting history in Africa ...
It's **STEVE WATT'S** latest column ...



Watt's Occurring?

Management is a full-time, part-time job

One of my former players, Liam Friend, parted company with Herne Bay last week.

It's hard to say if he got a fair crack of the whip or not, but if you have a bad run this is always a risk.

I think at one point this season Ashford were in the relegation zone and Herne Bay were challenging for the play-offs, but since Craig Stone, one of my ex-Maidstone team mates, took over they've risen up the table and have overtaken Herne Bay.

You don't know what Liam's remit was for the season, but if a club's targeting the play-offs and they know they're not going to get there, they're entitled to make a change.

Whenever I've been in jobs I've always said I wouldn't criticise a club if they wanted to get rid of me, because that's their choice. If I'm top of the league and you sack me I might have a few questions to ask, but I wouldn't stay in a job if I didn't think I was the right man for it. I'd resign.

And it is a full-time job, even at that level. My wife will tell you, I was basically full-time at Hythe.

You're constantly on the phone, you're constantly planning, training sessions and any spare minute of the day you've got is taken up.

You've lost this player, you need to get another player in. This player's available, I need to speak to him... Training tonight, how many numbers have I got?

"Any spare minute of the day you've got is taken up. You've lost this player, you need to get another player in. This player's available, I need to speak to him ..."

I'd be shocked if any manager said he was doing it part-time, I really would. It's basically a full-time job in a part-time situation. The only way is to give it your all and in any spare minute you've got, you're trying to improve.

You can't do that if you're only going to commit between 7pm and 8.30pm on a Tuesday, or 3pm to 5pm on a Saturday. You're not going to be successful.

I'm sure if you ask any successful manager, I'd be astonished if they didn't say it takes up the majority of their time.

Any spare time they have, they give to the club and you have to be committed, because you're dealing with players who make huge sacrifices to play for you.

I've known players who might be up at six for a full day's work on a building site, then be with you at 6.30 for a 7.45 kick off, before going to a night shift - Sonny Miles famously had to get up for work a couple of hours after he went to bed following the Stevenage replay.



Join our facebook group

Was it a shirt pull? Yes, but it's not a penalty ...

There was an incident about half an hour into the Farnborough game on Saturday when Jamie Yila almost had his shirt yanked over his head by the defender.

As it was inside the area, it could have been given as a penalty, but if you give them for that you're going to have four or five penalties every game.

When I saw it, I was thinking: 'why is he pulling the shirt anyway?' The defender is actually in possession and if you look at it he's got his body in between Yila and the ball. He wasn't pulling him back, or impeding him in any way, in my opinion.

Now this is a contact sport and I love the fact it's a contact sport. In this country, our game is, or at least was, based around physicality. Obviously we're changing with the times, but I just think in the boxes there's going to be a bit of shirt-pulling and physicality, because that's what the game is.

I think we've thrown so many new rules into the game that it's like we're trying to reinvent the wheel, and the product of football is suffering because of it.

There's a fine line between being physical and impeding an opponent. If a player's running away from you and about to score a goal when you pull his jersey then, yes, that's a foul, but there has to be an element of physicality allowed in boxes at set pieces because that's what set pieces are.

There's a big uproar about shirt pulling, but with all the obstruction going on at set pieces, you'd have to knock off all those goals as well.

And I'm not critical of that approach; I love it. I love the technical detail that goes into set pieces: you have specific players who aren't even going for the ball, they're just there to block players.

In open play that's a foul, but attacking teams are being really clever in how they foul and I like the game being physical as long as it's safe.



Shirt-pulling is inevitable on a football field: giving penalties for every infringement could ruin the game.

It's tempting to rewrite history- but you can't

I've never known anything in my life like the decision to award the Africa Cup of Nations to Morocco, two months after Senegal beat them 1-0 in the final.

When Juventus had titles stripped I understood that to an extent because they were tampering with referees, but if they were going to punish Senegal they should have done it there and then: if you walk off, ok, you've forfeited the match.

I can see why they didn't do that because there would have been an uproar, but instead an entire nation celebrated and now they've been stripped of the trophy on a technicality.

There are lots of games where I wish history could be rewritten. If I could pick a single incident it would be when I was playing for Swansea

and I made a sliding tackle against Nottingham Forest and dislocated my shoulder, because that changed everything.

That also meant I couldn't play in the League One play-off final between Swansea and Barnsley in 2006; if there was one game where I could alter the outcome I'd pick that one because it was a pivotal moment in my career.

I can still close my eyes and picture everything now, like all the key moments in the game and the two penalty misses from Akinfenwa and Tate.

If we'd won and gone up I think my career would have evolved differently, but you can't go back. If I was one of Morocco's players I really don't know how I'd feel about winning a trophy in those circumstances.



THE SPITFIRE



Launching in March 2026

A new media outlet dedicated to independent coverage of Kent Cricket is coming in 2026.

The Spitfire will be run by Fred Atkins, who has followed Kent since the early 90s and has covered them for the ECB and Wisden since 2021.

Expect expert storytelling, colourful matchday writing, insightful analysis and in-depth interviews, as The Spitfire takes coverage of the club to new heights.

Everyone who signs up to the site's mailing list prior to launch will get a special discount on membership.

The site, which offers a modern reader experience and a commitment to zero intrusive advertising, will be up and running in March.

The Spitfire is the eighth county cricket outlet to be

confirmed on CounterPress ahead of the 2026 season, as part of a wide-reaching project designed to revitalise written digital coverage of our domestic summer sport.

Other outlets announced so far include The Hawk (Hampshire), The Rey (Surrey), Lanky Lanky (Lancashire), Up The Middle (Middlesex), From The Sea End (Sussex), Cider Press (Somerset) and The Chester (Durham).

Further sites are still to be released.

CounterPress co-founder Sam Morshead said: "The Spitfire promises to be the go-to place for proper cricket writing on events at Canterbury and Beckenham."

To register your interest visit our [website](#).



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Disbelief all over the faces of Chesham's supporters during our 2-0 win in the FA Cup in 2023-24.

Still can't afford slip-ups. Still can't afford slip-ons.

By Tom Rogers

Having found enough to get past Farnborough last Saturday by a goal to nil, we travel to Chesham in pursuit of another three points to stay in the promotion picture.

Much like us, our hosts are on the periphery of the playoffs, with their chances being dealt a serious blow after they collapsed against Totton on Tuesday night, conceding twice in stoppage time to fall to a 2-1 defeat.

The Generals have enjoyed a decent second season in the National League South and are currently sitting 11th after a respectable 13th place finish last time out.

A joint-management team of Michael Murray and James Duncan have led the club for seven and a half years now, notably earning them promotion to the National South as Champions and getting the club to the First Round Proper of the FA Cup in the 2023-24 and 24-25 seasons.

Alex Horne, the creator of Taskmaster, is a director of the club and his gameshow is the primary sponsor of the club's shirts.

Our only successful outing against Chesham in recent times was when we ended our hosts' cup run with a 2-0 win back in 2023-24.

We were a tad lucky that day as Chesham rattled Lucas Covolan's woodwork a couple of times, but the late Devonte Aransibia's first half goal, followed by a second from a partially fit Levi Amantchi was enough to secure progression to the 2nd Round.

Since then, our following three meetings have been frustrating affairs. We let a lead slip deep into stoppage time back in September of 2024, drawing 2-2 after Blair and Coulthirst had gotten us ahead, before losing the reverse fixture 2-0, ending a nineteen-game unbeaten run in the league.

Our meeting at the Gallagher this

"I'd argue the biggest issue that year was that John Still used to wear slip on Lonsdale trainers, a shoe that should only be worn by extras in problematic cop shows repeated on ITV4..."

season is best forgotten, a dire game was made even more miserable when Ruben Carvalho's tame stoppage time penalty prevented us from stealing all three points in a miserable 0-0 draw.

Among the current ranks at Chesham is former Stone Matt McClure, a semi-prolific striker for us during the forgettable second coming of John Still.

The Northern Irishman was one of Still's better signings that year, which also brought us greats like Clovis Kamdjo, Danny Devine (who never played a league minute) and Lewis Knight, whose dad once attacked a metal fence at St Albans in a fit of rage during a 1-0 loss.

I'd argue the biggest issue that year was that Still used to wear slip on Lonsdale trainers, a shoe that should only be worn by extras in problematic cop shows repeated on ITV4.

In a rare development we actually filled our bench against Farnborough and Lexus Beeden is back with the squad; however, you'd assume George will stick with a defence that has been winning matches.

David Agbontohoma is now clearly over David Sesay, on the grounds that he gives us more height at set pieces.

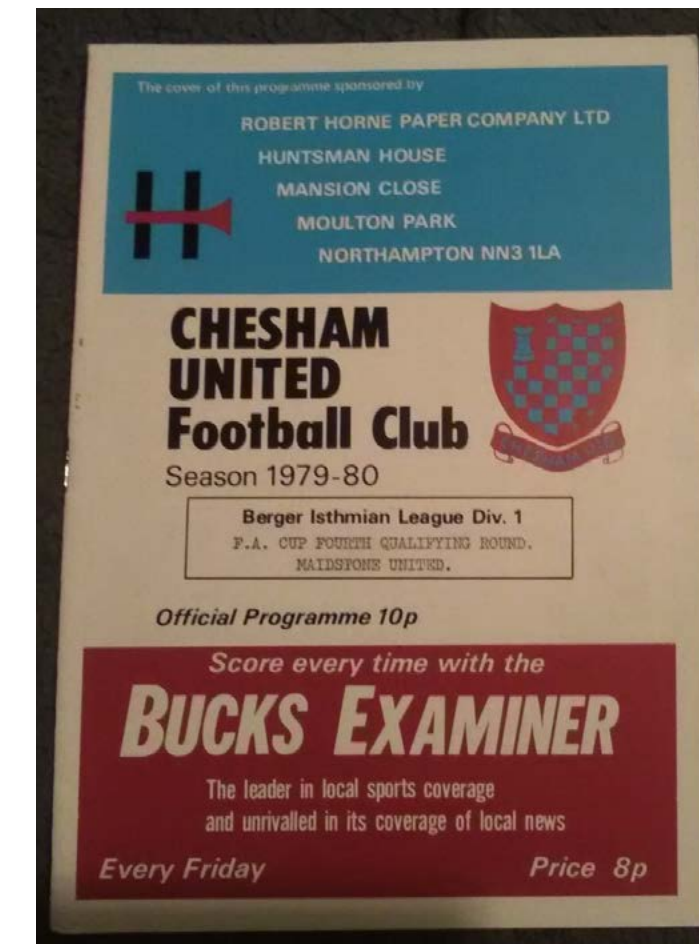
Ruben Carvalho has been dealing with a niggle, which once again kept him out of the squad last weekend, but the likes of Pattisson and Yila give us sufficient cover in attacking areas though.

Winning here would go a long way to killing Chesham off and would see us make up ground on plenty of our rivals, as many of the sides who have still not confirmed their top seven spot face each other in big games.

The big concern is still games in hand; bar Ebbsfleet we have played between one and three more games than every other contender. We are joint-top of the form table for a reason though, so the hunt is still very much alive.



Join our facebook group



Sandwiched between the two famous FA Cup runs of 1978-79 and 1980-81, we suffered an upset at the hands of Chesham in November 1979.

We entered the competition at the 4th qualifying round stage and fell at the first hurdle, losing 3-1 to a side who were then two leagues below us.

The Stones' squad was: Dickie Guy, Chris Kinnear, Kenny Hill, John Hutton, Billy Edwards, Graham Knight, Norman Fusco, Glenn Aitken, Dave Wiltshire, Andy Woon, John Daubney and Alan Budden.

Chesham saw off Boreham Wood, Haverhill and Bedford, the latter two after replays before knocking us out. They then won away at Minehead, and in a replay at Merthyr before losing 2-0 at home to Cambridge United in the third round. **FA.**



Carvalho's penalty is saved in stoppage time, earlier this season



Derek Bellotti: RIP

We were saddened to hear of the passing of former Stones keeper Derek Bellotti last week, at the age of 79.

Derek had two spells with Maidstone in the late seventies and also played for Gillingham, Southend, Charlton and Swansea, as well as several non-league clubs in the south west. He later became the owner of Kingfisher Print and Design in Devon. In 1994 his son Ross became Exeter City's youngest ever keeper at the age of 16, when the Grecians first choice, the current Bromley manager Andy Woodman, was sent off against Scarborough. Our thoughts are with his family.

MAIDSTONE UNITED

2025/26 SQUAD

M



George
ELOKOB
Manager

1



Nathan
HARNES
Goalkeeper

13



Lenny
HOLDEN
Goalkeeper

2



David
SESAY
Defender

3



Leo
HAMBLIN
Defender

4



Lexus
BEEDE
Defender

5



George
FOWLER
Defender

6



Thomas-James
BRAMBLE
Midfielder

7



Jephthe
TANGA
Midfielder

8



Sam
CORNE
Midfielder

10



John
GILBERT
Midfielder

11



Jamie
YILA
Midfielder

12



Dajon
GOLDING
Forward

15



David
AGBONTOHOMA
Defender

17



Riley
COURT
Midfielder

19



Ruben
CARVALHO
Midfielder

20



Christie
PATTISSON
Midfielder

21



Malachi
MBOGBA
Midfielder

22



Muhammadu
FAAL
Forward

23



Hamzad
KARGBO
Forward

24



Taylor
FORAN
Defender

30



Christopher
SWIFT
Goalkeeper

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Comeback Special

This week's quiz-master is SEAN SCURR and he's marking our first come-from-behind victory in a year, last week against Dagenham, with the greatest Comeback Special since Elvis appeared in Vegas.

Q1-Salisbury March 2025: The Stones led early on before falling behind, but which TikTok sensation scored the eventual winner that afternoon?

Q2-Aveley Home April 2024: Mo Faal's winner sent us into a semi at Worthing, but who scored our equaliser that night?

Q3-Dartford Home Jan 2024: the winner was scored by the answer to Q2, but which current Weston man scored the opener for the Darts?

Q4-Barrow Home FAC Jan 2003: who scored the winner after Captain Nose Plug put us level?

Q5-Slough Home August 2023: In our first game back in NLS after that year in the National League, the answer from Q1 equalised, but which current Slough player scored the Stones winner?



Q6-York City Home August 2022: Our only come back win (and what felt like our only win) this season. Who scored a late quick fire brace to send us "joint top" on opening day?

Q7-Hungerford Home March 2022: We all remember Jack Barham's late winner, but who were the other Stones scorers that day? (Bonus point if you can name the future Stone who scored for Hungerford).



Q8-Concord Rangers Away January 2022: Another impressive win of god only knows how many in the title winning season, but which future Maidstone player scored the opener for the Beach Boys?

Q9-Welling Home December 2021: Dipo Akinyemi opened the scoring for the Wings, before the Stones eventually won 4-1. Which two Stones, at the time one former and one future, played for the Wings that afternoon?

Q10-Ebbsfleet Away November 2021: Future Farnborough forward Rakish Bingham scored twice this evening and ended up on the losing side, which three ex Stones, two former, one future, featured in the squad for the hosts that night?

Answers to Edition 30: Guess The Year

- 1) It's a bad year for tyrants as Muammar Gaddafi, Osama bin-Laden and the *News of the World* are all killed. In happier news, Jay Saunders becomes Maidstone's manager. **2011.**
- 2) The Berlin Wall is torn down, communism collapses and more importantly, Maidstone win the GM Vauxhall Conference. **1989.**
- 3) Chernobyl explodes, the US Space Shuttle Challenger blows up and, almost as catastrophically, EastEnders' Nick Berry gets to number 1. But there's happier news from Mamfe, Cameroon, where George Elokobi is born. **1986.**
- 4) The Germans invent the aspirin, 15 years before they stimulate demand for far stronger painkillers. The second Boer War breaks out, and Maidstone United win the Kent League for the first time. **1899.**
- 5) A global catastrophe unfurls as The Spice Girls' career is launched. England's most overrated midfielder, Paul Gascoigne, emulates Iran's Iraj Danaeufard and New Zealand's Steve Woodin by scoring a goal against Scotland in the group stages of a tournament. And Maidstone Invicta become Maidstone United again. **1996.**

- 6) The Battle of Stalingrad begins, Casablanca and Bambi are released and future Maidstone United legend Bill Williams is born in Esher. **1942.**
- 7) Russia invades Crimea, Ebola breaks out in West Africa, Scotland narrowly votes to stay in the UK and Frannie Collin heads Stevenage out of the FA Cup. **2014.**
- 8) The Septics invade Grenada and *Return of the Jedi* is released, as is UB40's excrementitious *Red Red Wine*. Exeter's Peter Taylor gets booed by Maidstone fans when his side are knocked out of the FA Cup at The Athletic Ground. **1983.**
- 9) The Twin Towers collapse and the UK charts include the talents of Shaggy, Bob The Builder and Robbie fucking Williams; Michael Owen scores a hat-trick in Munich and Maidstone United return to senior football after nine years. **2001.**
- 10) Elon Musk calls a man who rescues 12 boys trapped in an underground cave a paedophile; Newcastle's owner orders a 15-man death squad to assassinate a journalist; Russia commits murder in Salisbury; and Harry Wheeler is named Maidstone manager. **2018.**



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You can't put shit back in the donkey

CLUB STATEMENT

It's been another great week for fans of the phrase "club statement," the two-word headline, usually accompanied by a stock picture of a corner flag, that telegraphs peak non-league behaviour.

To date 3.6 million people have seen Wealdstone's post about Sak Hassan appearing in the *Baller League*.

"Sak and his representatives are aware he's in breach of his playing contract by choosing to feature in the *Baller League*," explained club chairman Rory Fitzgerald.

Two questions arise. (1) How many representatives, plural, does a Wealdstone player need? And (2) why are so many people stunned that Hassan would rather double his money to play in a televised tournament, than travel to Gateshead midweek to represent an outraged fan base full of people who have Glasgow Rangers flags and "I love my kids" in their bios?

ACRIMONIOUS ACRONYMS

Meanwhile in Altrincham, Manchester's equivalent of Beverley Hills, the natives have formed a pressure group, called *Residents Against Football Traffic*, or "RAFT." An anonymous letter tipped off the club about an "afternoon of disruption" planned to coincide with tomorrow's game with Southend.

The Robins have been playing at Moss Lane since 1910, so a better name for residents who buy houses next to football grounds and then complain about the consequences might be the *Campaign to Unite Nimbies Together*.

WILD BEAN COUNTERS

Followers of Kieran Maguire's Twitter feed will know this is a busy time of year for bean counters. This week alone we learned that



Stones fans at Altrincham in 2022, before the radicalisation of the 'Residents Against Football Traffic' group. Note their lovely houses.

Aldershot burned through over half a million last year, to come 16th in the National League.

Worthing lost £360,000 last season, when we dumped them out of the play-offs and Radcliffe FC somehow lost £807,000 when they finished 20th in National North. As Barry Fry once said: *"aaaaaaah much?"*

And yet as soon as any club signs a player they blatantly can't afford, a foetus with a Twitter account will announce they've "smashed it out of the park".

THAT'LL TEACH 'EM

The authorities aren't immune from the prevailing madness.

The late Paul Foley, who was the Stones' double-winning skipper in 2001-02, never quite got over the Ryman League's decision to relegate his VCD side after they'd finished eighth in the North Division.

The league measured the width of the tarmac around VCD's pitch and found it was only a metre. VCD went down and Harlow, who came bottom, were spared, despite being docked ten points for going into

administration. What Foley would have made of Chelsea escaping with a slapped wrist after greasing their way to seven trophies, is something we can only guess.

SMOKEY UNDER THE HAMMER?

At the other end of the scale, the CAF decided to award the Africa Cup of Nations to Morocco, two months after they lost 1-0 to Senegal in the final, ruling that the Senegalese had forfeited the game by walking off before Brahim Diaz's injury-time penalty.

Where does this end? Will all comparable injustices be avenged? Can the FA overturn the result of the 1990 Division Four play-off semi-final, when Cambridge United were awarded a phantom penalty that ultimately sent them to Wembley at our expense?

Could we sue for compensation after being denied a shot at Division 3? Would Mark Gall now be presenting *Homes Under the Hammer* instead of *Dion Dublin*?

As Tony Soprano once said, you can't put shit back in the donkey.