

Ron Rollitt's Watford Years 1955-1981



Cuttings collected by Alma Rollitt
Compiled by Linda Rollitt

New job 1955



WATFORD ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

FOUNDED 1891

Registered Offices: VICARAGE ROAD GROUND, WATFORD. Telephone: Watford 2759

Directors:

T. RIGBY TAYLOR, J.P., Chairman. J. HARROWELL, Vice-Chairman.
W. GRAVER. J. BONSER. J. STODDART. D. N. BROAD. D. F. LINDSAY. C. W. WHITE

Hon. Medical Officer: DR. ROBERT RENWICK

Secretary: J. C. DENNIS

Manager: L. A. GOULDEN

Trainers: P. MOLLOY, L. THOMAS

Saturday
February 19th
Serial No. 22

Watford v. Aldershot

Kick-off
3 p.m.

VOICE OF WATFORD

Good Afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

With two good victories against Southend and Leeds United behind them our first string should enter to-day's game with the knowledge that they have at last struck the form of which we all know them capable. A hard fight awaits them to-day and those of us who saw Aldershot's victory by 3-0 at Aldershot earlier in the season realise that they will have to pull out their very best. Our visitors have been successful three times and drawn twice at Vicarage Road since the war. They are a club who have always had a hard struggle against low gates and limited finances to provide League football at Aldershot and their management is to be congratulated on their success.

Apparently our win at Southend was well-cut and well merited and the whole team played well. The forward line had a happy day and their shooting was well on the target. Roy Brown in his new position at outside right did very well and his speed proved very dangerous to our opponents' defence. The defence is playing very tightly indeed these days and it is most encouraging to find the two youngsters, Colin Bateman and Bill Shipwright, settling down so well. Many supporters consider that the present rearguard is the best the club has had since the days of the "Happgood" defence which enabled the club to do so well against Preston North End and Manchester United. With Brian Atkinson making such a useful debut against Leeds United and Maurice Cook and John Meadows finding their best form, the younger members of our staff are certainly making the future of our club more rosy. In the reserve team, the teen-agers Chattin and Miller and Peter Walker are also coming along well.

When reading of the marathon between Doncaster Rovers and Aston Villa, one cannot help thinking of what might have been. In football of course this

is not a sensible thing to do. However one cannot help it in this case and when we think that against Doncaster we should have won handsomely our disappointment becomes deeper. However congratulations to the Rovers.

Now to what is to many of our supporters the vexed question of scouting and searching for players to strengthen our staff. We know that many of you are "browned off" by continually reading in the Press that Watford are interested in such and such a player, and then nothing happens. We can fully understand and sympathise with you, but there is another side to the question. Spare a thought for the manager, directors and others of our staff who since Christmas have between them travelled thousands of miles, not always in the best weather, to look at players who it is thought might fill the bill. You can understand their disappointment when the player has a bad game, he must be watched again. In fact the large clubs usually have a player watched six to eight times before they decide whether he is the man for them. It is a slow and often heart-breaking business. Often temptation has been great to sign a player for the sake of a signing. With what money we have available we must be doubly careful. At least half of every report is carefully analysed. Several forwards have been watched, but I think it fair to say that at present none of them have been considered better than the lads we already have on our books.

The club have appointed Mr. Rollitt of Bushey as their Secretary to succeed John Dennis. We wish Mr. Rollitt all success in his new job in which he will commence in three weeks' time.

To-day The Newark Imperial Carnival Band will entertain us and we hope that if you have enjoyed their show you will help to swell their collection boxes.

SMOKE

BOAR'S HEAD

TOBACCO

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This Week's Sports Talk

NEW SECRETARY IS NO STRANGER TO WATFORD

The new secretary of Watford Football Club is a Hertfordshire man who was born at Croxley Green, lived for some time at Hemel Hempstead and now resides in Bushey.

He is Mr. Ronald Edward Rollitt, of 63a Bushey Grove-road.

Mr. Rollitt, who is 33 years old and married, with one daughter, will be no stranger to Watford F.C.'s affairs. Since leaving school he has been a clerk with the Club's auditors.

He will take up his new duties on April 1, but in the meantime he will be spending odd moments at

the ground to "get the hang of things." Mr. Rollitt has been a regular supporter of Watford, generally preferring the terraces to the stands. He was chosen from a short list of six applicants.



MR. R. E. ROLLITT



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Watford v. St. Mirren

Kick-off
7.30 p.m.

VOICE OF WATFORD

lemen.

Scottish side for the first who flew South to play short tour and fly back

entry last Saturday was round with a light ball much for the players, ended the game. During if scoring chances which minute a great header by s from an indirect free n in the last minute hit mming up, our defence ell and trying to use the ard line is still lacking

relling over Easter. After Friday, they will leave g for Torquay to play afternoon, and return to ave again travel to ints'.

that with possible injuries it was best that they should be treated at home.

It looks as though Watford will be invaded on April 2nd when the leaders, Bristol City, visit us. We hear that a special train will be bringing hundreds of supporters to Hertfordshire, and according to one of their directors, they are a little worried over their visit.

Next Saturday our first team travel to Walsall and our Reserves are at Fulham, but supporters will be able to see a first class game at Watford. The Watford and District League meet Pegasus here and the visitors will be bringing their full eleven, including Mike Pinner, goalkeeper, Gordon McKinna, international full back, Ken Shearwood, centre half and captain, and Blythe, Scanlon and Tanner, forwards.

Stanley Matthews has accepted the Benefits Committee's invitation to play for the All Star XI on May 3rd.

We are awaiting a reply from Wilf Massey and Billy Wright. It will be some weeks before the final composition of the side is known but the Committee only want the "Stars".

Mr. Rollitt, our new Secretary commenced his duties with the Club last Monday week. John Dennis leaves us on the 1st of April and he will take with him our very best wishes. He has done a grand job for the Club.

NO SHORTAGE

LEICESTER directors won't be in a hurry to fill the job left by NORMAN RILLOCK. They won't have any competition of managers. Local fans have been quick to associate former manager TOM BROMLOW with the vacancy. But the Leicester board don't want to lose Tom as their chief scout.

EIGHTY-SIX applications for the managers' jobs at Plymouth and Colchester. Here's the news that there were 24 applications for there were 24 jobs at Watford. The secret. Despite applications from Leeds, Watford Bolton, and from Leeds. Watford have gone to Leicester, to succeed JOHN DENNIS.

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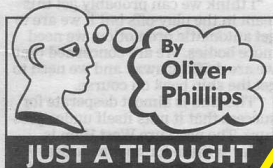
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Touring the new domain

“Make sure the hand in
your pocket is your own”

Forgetting obvious in search of loud speaker answer



I RECEIVED an e-mail from a fan who could not recall Z Cars being played during the Bill McGarry season of 1963-64. He pointed out that the half-time scores were put on pegs during the second-half and if they had a loud speaker system, they would have read them out.

It is funny how memory can play tricks on you but whereas I could not pinpoint the first season they had a loud speaker system, they most certainly had one in 1963-64.

I spent a lot of time on the terraces that season and I remember it quite clearly, with The Watford Observer journalist Pat Stodart as deejay. I can hear World Without Love and Peter and Gordon singing “Please lock me away” wafting over the airwaves before the big crunch match with Coventry City, as I type.

I think, back in 1957 or possibly ‘58, I heard the manager, Neil McBain come on the tannoy during half-time. He told us the lads were playing quite well and if we got behind them in the second-half, we would probably win the game.

We took this on board, never querying why he was not in the dressing-room at the interval, delivering the same message or imparting some of his tactical knowledge, but then we did not know he was

probably having a gin or four to give him the strength to face 45 alcohol-free seconds of half minutes.

That was the first time I can remember being conscious of a loud-speaker system but undoubtedly it had been in action before that August.

I contacted former doyen of Vicarage Road, Ron Rollitt, who was able to confirm the loudspeaker system was there when he took up the post as secretary on April 1, 1955. Ron was the first person to be associated with the system with his stentorian “keep off the pitch” instructions.

In fact, during the halcyon 1959-60 season, Ron made a statement that was to be long remembered. A Watford trader had shut up shop, put £200 takings in his pocket and headed for Vicarage Road to take in the Southampton FA Cup replay. A fan came up to him and threw his arms round the trader, while a colleague lifted the £200 from his back pocket.

Upon hearing that, Ron was asked to warn fans of pickpockets over the loudspeaker. He did so with the memorable: “Make sure the hand in your pocket is your own.”

However, that does not pinpoint when the loudspeaker system was in place. How many months or years before April 1955 had they been in place?

I racked my brains and decided I could not recall it being used for the big tie against Manchester United in 1950 but perhaps I wondered, when they introduced floodlights in 1953, they also installed a loudspeaker at the end of each stand.

It was open to question. Reg Stacey, who made his debut with the

Hospital broadcast commentary back in the 1954-55 season, can remember the loudspeaker system but cannot pinpoint when he first heard it.

I tackled former groundsman Les Simmons who worked on the greyhound track in far-off days. Did the Greyhound Racing Association, who became involved on the Watford board in the late 1940's, introduce the tannoy system?

Les could not recall precisely when the speakers were installed but does remember: “We had endless trouble with them.”

Either way, it had been used for some years by the time McGarry arrived at Vicarage Road and left instructions for the theme for his favourite TV programme to be played over the tannoy.

Watford played Z-Cars and embarked on a record-breaking 27 home games without defeat in the days of Pat Jennings, Duncan Welbourne, Charlie Livesey and George Harris.

Surprising then that a fan from those days not only forgot the music was played but also the existence of the loud-speaker system.

But I can understand how the memory eluded him. Following a tip from statistician Trefor Jones, I took a look at the Centenary History of Watford, which I actually wrote. And there it was. The loud-speaker system was first introduced at Vicarage Road in 1947.

I can forgive myself for not remembering back to 1947, but it is harder to come to terms with the fact I forgot I wrote all about it just 12 years back. Is that what they call a senior moment?



The two captains of Watford—the only club in the Football League with two—John Gavin and John Meadows with the club's mascots, David and Michael Rollitt, the two-and-a-half-year-old twin sons of Watford's secretary, Mr. R. E. Rollitt.

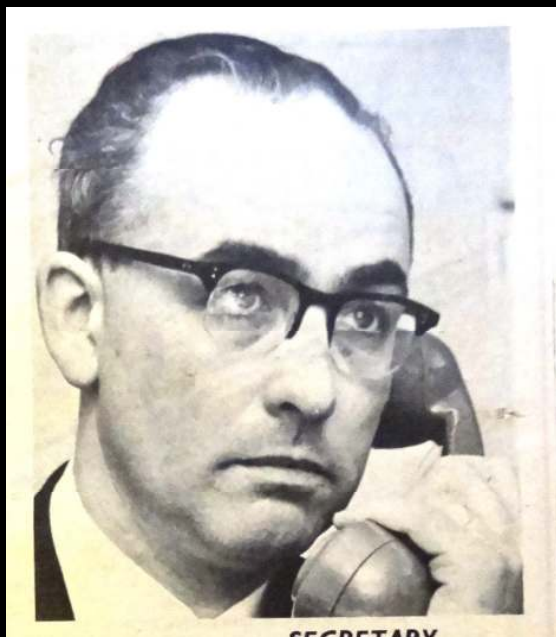
David & Michael Rollitt,
club mascots in 1958, then
Watford supporters for life

Football in
the genes...



Watched by his father, Watford manager Ken Furphy, eight-year-old Keith Furphy (left) trots out to play for Watford Fields School against St. Joseph's School, Oxley. With him is gaily-sweatered goalkeeper David Rollett, 10-year-old son of the Watford club's secretary, Ron Rollett. The match? Watford Fields won 3-1.

Keith Furphy
& David Rollitt
1966



SECRETARY
RON ROLLITT

WHATEVER the tempo, whatever the fervour, there's one man who can always be found at Vicarage Road with his finger calmly on the pulse—Ron Rollitt. The 46-year-old secretary has been a part of the Watford scene since April, 1955, and during that time he has served under six managers.

He makes no bones about the fact that Ken Furphy is undoubtedly the best manager he has served.

His work is varied and he often confesses that "you don't have to be mad to work here, but it certainly helps."

He takes the criticisms about the allocation of tickets for big games, answers a host of nonsensical inquiries with one hand and works out the PAYE tables with the other.

His announcements over the Tannoy vary from the harsh "Keep off the pitch" to the tongue-in-cheek "Make sure the hand in your pocket is your own."

Tape-recording record shows, booking meals and trains are just some of the facets of a never-ending job. Somehow though, he always keeps his temper.

So you want to be a League Club secretary?

- You need sound knowledge of accountancy to prepare and present financial reports
- Draw up contracts, arrange signatures and witnesses
- Organise Board Meetings
- Attend to club correspondence
- Knowledge of Football League regulations (75), FA Rules (47) & rules of various Cup competitions
- Public relations, answering calls etc
- Notification of kick-off time to visiting team and officials
- Advertisements placed in local newspapers, programme prepared
- Travel arrangements for away games
- Match-day arrangements (turnstiles, stewards, police, attendance figures, tannoy announcements, bars stocked, rubbish collected etc)
- Information to League after match (results, team and match officials)
- Pool account money (4% nett gate + season tickets) to Football League for dividing between clubs
- Home club pays away club per attendee (minimum £400)
- FA Cup or League Cup matches bring bigger gates; press and TV may be involved
- In close season: arrange season tickets, repairs & decorations, match day staff appointments, fixtures lists, new contracts, programme advertisements, club handbook.

Rush for tickets at Vicarage Rd

WITH just two home games to go, it seems as though the whole of Watford wants to be at Vicarage Road to cheer the Hornets into the Second Division.

Says secretary Ron Rollitt: "It's just like a whirlwind here at the moment. The demand for tickets for the games against Plymouth on Tuesday and Reading the following Saturday has been tremendous. People are treating the games like Cup-ties."

The club have decided that the fairest way to deal with the unending demand is to sell the available stand tickets for both games at the ground this Sunday morning.

Two each

The first tickets will be sold at 10am and they will be limited to two per person.

They will sell at the usual prices of 9s for the centre stand, 7s 6d for the Shrodells stand and 6s for wing stands. There will be no reduced prices for children.

Season ticket holders, of course, need take no action at all. Their seats are guaranteed.

For those people without stand tickets, Rollitt's advice is "come early — especially on Tuesday evening."

And another plea from the Watford secretary: "Please have the correct money available if at all possible."

Hats off to Ron...

ONE man who is often overlooked when the business of running a football club is discussed is the secretary.

Take Watford's secretary Ron Rollitt, for instance, on the occasion of his club's FA Cup replay last Monday week against Manchester United.

On top of the usual problems which arise at any normal League game there was a record crowd of 35,000 to contend with, just about every pressman in the country wanting to be accommodated, crowds congesting the precincts of the offices and many V.I.P.s in attendance waiting to be dealt with.

Despite this frightening pre-match chaos, Mr. Rollitt aided by other members of the staff dealt calmly and efficiently with all the queries, announced the numerous team changes on both sides, gave the reason for Brian Garveys absence through injury in the home team, welcomed the B.B.C. contingent in a friendly and amusing manner over the public address system and found time to answer odd enquiries from people who couldn't either find tickets which had been booked or even their seats.

LONG WAIT

Then came the boys who had been separated from their fathers in the crowd and were lost. All this was taken in Mr. Rollitt's stride.

Mid-way through the game I asked him if he knew whether the receipts were a record or not. He smiled and said: "I

haven't had time to work them out yet but though the attendance is a record the Liverpool match two years brought in more cash."

He then went on to explain the reason for this, dealing with the complication of tickets issued at a League game before the Liverpool game at a higher cost etc., etc. Having given me a lengthy and courteous reply I felt rather sorry that I was taking up so much of his valuable time.

DELIGHTED

The unfortunate accident in which half a dozen spectators were injured was handled with the maximum of efficiency and minimum of fuss by staff, police and ambulance men.

At the end of the match Mr. Rollitt, who couldn't himself have seen more than a few minutes play, wished everyone a safe journey home.

Well done, sir!

Whirlwind demand for tickets in 1969

Watford medals for the loyal ground staff

WATFORD are having a commemorative medal struck to mark their first-ever season in the second division after 49 years of lower grade soccer—to be presented to some 80 turnstile operators and stewards. Said Ron Rollitt, Watford secretary: "The staff recipients all felt that such a medal would be of more intrinsic value than any other reward for their services in this great season."

Rollitt revealed that the rush for season tickets has trebled the 500 issued for the season just ended. There are only 2,000 seats available at Vicarage Road so the remaining 500 will be retained for sale at the turnstiles on match days and also for visiting clubs for Cup games.

Jim Bonser, Watford chairman, who has done so much to get the club into a bigger share of the spotlight, is Preston-born and a great admirer of the Deepdale club.

"It would be great if Preston were to be our first opponents in the Second Division at Watford on the opening day of next season," he said.

More ticket logistics in 1969

When the tickets went astray . . .

'PRISONERS' WERE GIVEN PRIORITY

A GROUP of Watford supporters spent the night at the police station on Monday . . . but they were not under arrest and were rewarded with the first of the Cup replay tickets returned from Manchester. It was all part of the incredible mix-up when 3,500 replay tickets were lost and later found.

Whenever the grand occasion comes to Vicarage Road, secretary Ron Rollitt takes the brunt of criticism, work and organisation, but few of the hundreds who queued for the tickets returned from Manchester, on Tuesday morning, knew that their wait had almost been in vain.

The 3,500 tickets unwanted by Manchester were lost on Monday evening! They had left Old Trafford in good time to leave Manchester Piccadilly early that evening . . . and Mr. Rollitt waited at Watford Junction.

The Manchester train came through but there were no tickets on board. A hurried check with Euston officials confirmed that the tickets were never put on the train.

"I had to get the Manchester secretary out of bed to find out if they had left the club. He said they had and should have arrived at the Junction later on Monday evening," related Ron Rollitt.

Returning to Vicarage Road, the secretary contacted the BBC and the Press Association to make announcements that tickets would be on sale on Tuesday afternoon and not in the morning.

Night in cells

"There were a number of fans already queuing by that time of night. I took their addresses and promised they would get priority. The police offered them a lift home but as they came from Harlow and Harrow, they were taken back to the police station for the night."

After erecting notices to inform the early-morning fans the change of plans, Mr. Rollitt returned to his Oxhey home. His sleep was soon interrupted by a call from the BBC confirming that the original call was not a hoax.

"I lay down on the settee after that but soon there was

another call. This time it was from Watford Junction. They had the tickets."

A quick check on the national papers revealed that there were no reports of the change of plan. A call to the BBC and Press Association to cancel the announcements was followed by a 6 a.m. trip to the Junction to collect the tickets.

After issuing tickets to the fans at the police station, Ron returned to the ground and set up the turnstiles.

Mr. Rollitt had to control the queues until the police arrived. Then it was business as usual as it had been on Sunday and Monday.

Stories that supporters were leaving Vicarage Road with bunches of eight or nine tickets on Sunday morning, were denied by the club.

"The queues were too long for anyone to go round twice, let alone nine times. They must have been bought from other fans," said Mr. Rollitt.

"Schoolboys were coming back for more at their turnstiles but this was discovered early on and we put a stop to it. If the spivs bought their tickets they could only sell them back to rich schoolboys!"

Friday, January 31, 1969

WATFORD OBSERVER FOOTBALL SPECIAL

Page 3



SUNDAY SELL-OUT

All-night queues for 25,000 tickets

"I am very happy about the way the ticket selling went. It was a very smooth operation. The queues formed in orderly fashion and the police did a wonderful job."

Mr. Ron Rollitt, Watford FC Secretary.

WATFORD went "one degree over"—drugged by a bug they call Cup fever—at the weekend. Unparalleled scenes took place at Vicarage Road on Sunday morning as over 22,000 people converged on the stadium.

By midday all the tickets had been sold and nobody was turned away disappointed, said secretary Ron Rollitt.

The police were also very happy at the behaviour of the crowd which contained many Manchester United supporters who had journeyed over from Lancashire. There were no incidents and traffic managed to flow along Vicarage Road, albeit slowly.

About 50 fans were queuing at the various turnstiles by midday.

First of the all-night queues were Mr. Keith Bruce of Little Bushey Lane, Bushey, and Mrs. Joan Goldard and her brother Mr. James. They were in the queue at 11.15 p.m. on Saturday.

They raced back from Old Trafford inside five hours, grabbed a bite to eat at home and cranked, complete with blankets, beer and buns to Occupation Road, getting into position by 11.15 p.m. on Saturday.

Mrs. Goldard, who has two children, said: "None of us slept during the night but the time passed quite quickly while you sat down, jacked and talked about the game. It was a mild night so it was worth it."

They were then joined by a Manchester United supporter Mr. Colin Arnold of Cranfield Road, Burnham Wood, and Mr. David Smith a Watford fan, who arrived from Hazelwood Lane.

BY DAVID BRIERS

with his two sons Nigel and Stephen all from Pinner.

One of the early-birds was not so fortunate. An ambulance was called to Occupation Road just after 7 o'clock when a man fainted. He was taken to Watford General Hospital.

When the turnstiles opened at 9.30 a.m. a man made head would itself three quarters of a mile—past St. Andrew's Hospital, past Tolpits Lane and into Kilmorland Crescent.

In the other direction the crowd reached a long Vicarage Road and beyond Clifton Road. At the Roostery End the chain stretched well

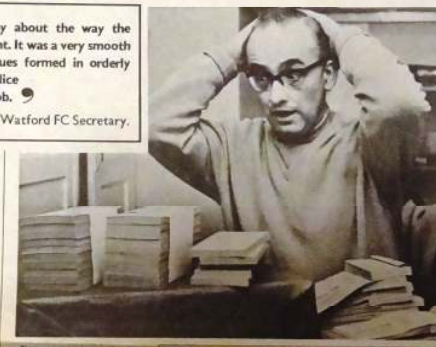
into Cardiff Road.

Many of the fans who queued outside Vicarage Road on Sunday morning were a little unhappy at the method of ticket distribution.

Said Mr. Balfour Ross of Church Lane, Gerrards: "The club ask for trouble. They have good support and then when about 1,000 people like us queue up for tickets they tell us that there are about 250 tickets available for a stand that holds almost 10,000."

Mr. Terry Fuller—a regular Watford fan who lives in Acton and who joined the queue at 4 a.m. with Mr. Ross—continued: "The club should run a ticket system in their programmes so that the real supporters get their tickets. A lot of supporters who made the journey to Manchester like to may not get tickets for the replay. If all these people here this morning are so keen why aren't they at Vicarage Road every time Watford play at home?"

FOOTNOTE: The arrival of Watford manager, Ken Cooper, on foot did not go unnoticed. He could not borrow through the six deeps but that edged towards one of the Vicarage Road end turnstiles and so had to jump over the fence of Vicarage Road Service Station and cheer and cheer of "Well done, Ken!"



Was one of the all-night queues outside Vicarage Road on Sunday morning? Mr. Rollitt says he was not there but he is sure he can find blame for the loss of the tickets.

The early bird catches the worm, so the saying goes. This group, certainly, made use of watching their Cup replay tickets. They were right at the front of the queue, having got to the ground well before midday, complete with beer of hot drinks, blankets and coats.

... is fact, about everything the overnight camper needed. But thank goodness it was a mild night! Was it worth it? They'll leave us Monday.

After the match...

Celebrating?

DROWNING YOUR SOUVENIR?

Watford v Man Utd in FA Cup 1969

Cup Fans Hurt

-AND
FIVE
ARRESTS



Watford emerged virtually unscathed as the masses flooded from Vicarage Road on Monday night after Watford's bold FA Cup bid ground to a halt at the hands of European champions Manchester

Riot-strength police, effecting lessons learnt from Liverpool's Cup tie here two years ago, quickly dispersed the record 34,099 crowd, and incidents were few and far between.

READER'S QUOTE (1)

Declares "Football Laver" (name and address supplied):
 "We experienced over two hours of the worst load of filth I have ever heard, emitted from the foul mouths of the Watford louts posing as Watford supporters. Not once was any constructive reference to soccer heard, the nearest being the someone to break the legs of George Best and Bobby Charlton."

“Young women and children were trapped in this unruly crowd both before and after the barriers collapsed, but while the injured were being stretched away the loots continued to jump about, causing the crowd to sway dangerously while the mob still shouted and cheated their dishonesty, including ‘We are in need of help!’ Children were crying, women and men were shocked but it made no difference.

"Could the club not use money earned from these sun-ties to put plain-clothed police into the crowd to point out the main offenders to uniformed police?"

"The hooligan element could be removed, banned from the ground, and brought to court for using obscene language in a public place."

READER'S QUOTE (2)

And Mr. J. B. Leat, of 81 Travellance Way, Garston, writes:

"One hears so often of violence on the football terraces that we tend to take it for granted."

"Nevertheless it was a frightening experience to be caught up amongst it at Vicarage Road on Monday."

"A group of..."

A group of possibly 250 youths, many included, were delighting in the foulest of words and indulging in the pastime of pushing each other down the steps. Ultimately people were injured, and not by accident as the daily papers stated.

What many people would like to know is why must the police and officials wait until

"In conclusion, we noted many of the same crowd at Watford Junction after the match intent upon attacking Manchester youths on their way home.

"Good clean fun and high spirits I suppose!"

***The good,
the bad
and the
ugly...***

THE good, the bad and the ugly followed on the heels of Sunday's sell-out at Vicarage Road.

As if commanding an invisible road block, the cops stopped all panthers by offering to purchase or sell them all but priceless pieces of paper. Secretary Ron Rollins, returning from a short lunch break, was offered a pair of stand tickets for \$12 by one tout. Down in the heart of the club, harassed officials had to turn away a steady stream of ticketless enthusiasts.

The telephone never stopped ringing. The claims for special treatment were endless. "I'm 74 and I cannot stand," "I'm a shareholder," "I was working on Sunday morning," "I've never missed a match."

Cup fever had reached boiling point. The rumours spread throughout the town. Endeau was out of Endeau was in. The players came back from training - the Cup draw was announced. The cameras clicked, pens moved quickly over notebooks. -Will you

The deeds of Walford's 12 on Saturdays reaped a whirlwind on Monday. It was like Liverpool all over again but the atmosphere and activity of those three weeks were cramped into less than three days.

Cup-tie ingredients
Heads, anticipation, urgency, enthusiasm, disappointment. All the ingredients of Cup-tie are there.

And on the Tuesday morning the stream continued. BBC cameras again filmed Watford's medical talk.

"The Hornets were go" as they say before.

Every fever, however, has its antidote, and it was left to Tom Wallis, who had fluffed out George Best just 40 hours earlier in being a worse in-

Returning quietly to the dressing room at lunchtime on Monday after a trip home to Cameroon he made his way through the hordes of camera men and slumped happily on the bench.

Somehow the idea of a man who had turned one of the world's most dangerous jobs into a full-time occupation, creeping around the globe in search of knowledge, the collector of secrets, the man who was right piling his war against the world's unforgotten evils, this thing

**So close to
tragedy**

WATKINS came close to a major miracle and before the interval in Monday evening's match saw a section of the crowd go wild. The young blond ground sweeper made the evening crowd of

Forty-nine thirty came, no matter where they were, although several people were hurt and several sustained head injuries. The crowd suffered a broken foot.

But on the two scores from the aftermath of the incident in the top corner two of the men got away with a full night's rest, treatment, while below St. John Ambulance men helped a number of young ladies and another young man who was hurt.

—Globe Photo 4217 and C-28



SIN MATT BUSBY, the United manager, said afterwards: "It was a hard game. Watford played well. I thought they gave more tonight than I thought they gave. Trafford if we get to Wembley we'll have it any tougher than Watford will give for us."

■ **LOUIS EDWARDS** (United chairman): "Had Watford got a goal when the ball hit trouble we would have been in real danger."

■ **GATE:** The 34,999 crowd that watched the replay for a Village Road record. Watford beat the 33,653 who watched Watford hold Liverpool 1-1 in January 1967.

■ **BIRTHDAY BOY:** Referee Bill Handley had a double celebration. It was his birthday and he was appointed referee for the Football League Cup final at Wembley.

6 Watford & West Herts Post, Thursday, February 6, 1986

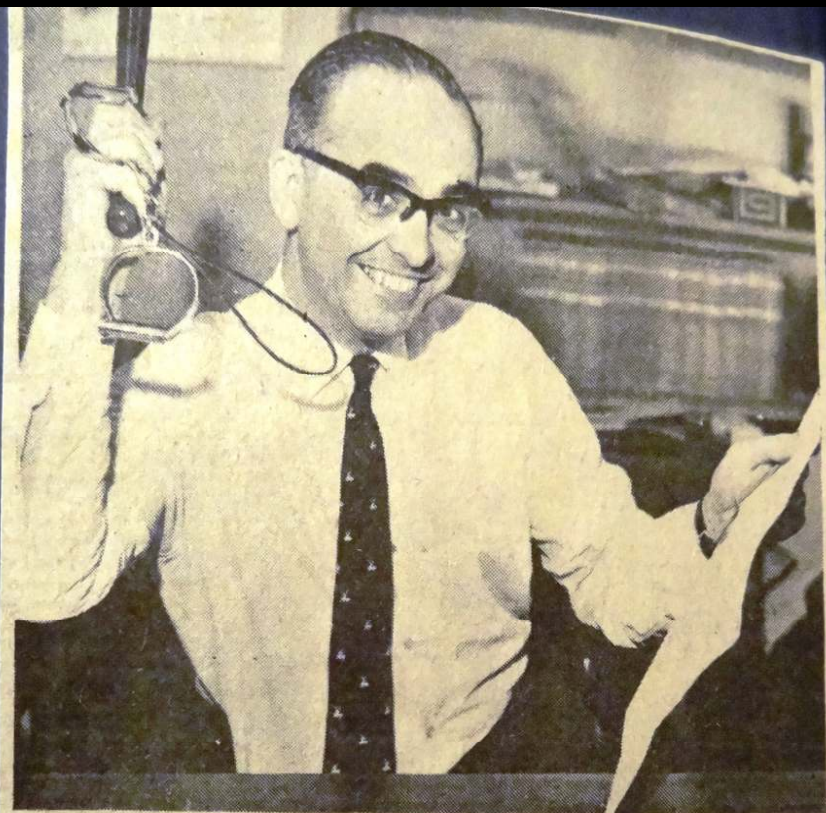
Time to outlaw ticket touts

the name of Watford has been sung loud and clear. Watford's manager, Harry Redknapp, has appeared daily in the headlines to every national newspaper. Redknapp is a regular face on television. He has impressed the best of the nation with his knowledge of the game. He has a surge of television appearances. He has been in the Watford this past week has been news. Big news. The town has been in the glory of the silver cloud. The fame and fortune have come in a regular flow.

...the spiv.
...of Spurs, Arsenal, Chelsea and the
...the gauntlet of the ticket touts.
...h Watford hitting the big-time, so have
...was munched in on Watford's success.
...who has travelled down Vicarage
...last week can have failed to be sickened
...tures clutching their handfuls of replay
...opped and pestered well-nigh every-
...had business at the Vicarage Road
...e the prices they asked were as
...of course some of

...the seamy side of big-business sport
...not been seen to the same degree
...before
...says when supply fails to satisfy
...criticism of the supply—in this
...Yet it's not from the club that
...obtain their supply. Business
...life don't

Secretary Ron Rullitt.



THERE is a "policeman" permanently on duty during office hours at Vicarage Road. The Club Secretary has been appointed officially as the "Ron Rollitt Police Force—such force to have an authorised strength of one officer and to be amalgamated with the Watford Division of the Herts Constabulary."

Ron, pictured above with a truncheon, has a document to prove it as well. Drawn up at the Watford police station in pseudo-legal form, it incorporates the names of nearly all the players who took part in the Watford-Manchester United replay in the text with some clever play on words.

The Watford secretary was made an extension of the long arm of the law after organising the crowds when the replay tickets, returned from Manchester, went on sale at Vicarage Road on the Tuesday morning.

Police, delayed in arriving because of the heavy traffic, thanked Ron for his efforts, which brought the quick reply from the secretary: "Give me a truncheon and I'll join the force."

And now Watford Police have taken him at his word. Ron Rollitt is now an honorary member of the "fuzz."

Furphy: Now for the title

IT WAS business as usual for Watford boss Ken Furphy today. While the Watford players rested after their promotion celebrations of last night, Furphy started a hard day's work at 8.30am.

From his Vicarage Road office he said: "I've successfully completed the job I came here to do. My first aim was to win promotion for Watford."

"Now we are aiming at the championship. The lads badly want to win the gold medals that go with it. After getting promotion I am sure we will relax a little and now I know we can do it."

■ Club chairman Jim Bonser: "This is the high spot of the club's history. I have been waiting 11 years for this, and now I am delighted and very, very proud."

■ Secretary Ron Rollitt: "It's just great. This is what we've always wanted."

■ Skipper Keith Eddy: "Now we want to be champions. This has been a great team effort. Everyone here has worked very hard for it."

■ Roy Sinclair, who scored the vital goal: "I wasn't sure the ball had gone over the line, but that was the most important goal I ever scored."

■ Pat Dunne, Plymouth keeper: "I was sure the ball didn't go in the goal. I thought it bounced on the right side of the line and I was amazed when the referee gave a goal."

■ Bert Slater, coach who has played a big part in Watford's success: "This is a great night for us. It is just what we all wanted. Now we can go on to do anything."

■ Doug Hewish, Supporters Club official: "It's just marvellous. Ken Furphy has done a marvellous job in producing the team to get us promotion."

Ron joins the fuzz and it's Happy Hornets 1969

Feverish!

Already, as Vicarage Road officials prepare for Watford's last two home games, interest in the club is reaching fresh heights. Secretary Ron Rollitt reports that the atmosphere is "like a Cup-tie." Watford have made their seating accommodation for the matches with Plymouth (Tuesday) and Reading (next Saturday) an all-ticket affair.

"I think we have good reason to expect something in the region of 25,000 'gates'," he told the "Observer."

In the meantime the happy Hornets, flushed with their 2-1 success at Plymouth on Tuesday evening, are enjoying the sea breezes at Weymouth.

The Town pays tribute

WATFORD FC RECEPTION

THE curtain was rung down on Watford Football Club's most successful season at Watford Town Hall on Thursday. Watford Borough Council, on behalf of the townsfolk and all who wish the club well in Division 2 staged a celebration dinner and dance, attended by 500.

It was a fitting tribute to a memorable achievement . . . to the men who had made it, by the town that had waited and prayed for it.

The climax of the evening was when Football League representative, Mr. Michael Gliksten, chairman of Charlton Athletic, officially presented the Division 3 championship Cup.

"I think it came as no surprise that Watford, after 49 years, have at last gained full membership of the League. This has been on the cards for some time. The only surprise was that it has taken so long to do it."

"When your chairman takes his place as a full member, he can hold his head high. I feel Watford and Swindon will make a marked impact in the Second Division next season."

Presenting the trophy, to the accompaniment of a fanfare of trumpets, Mr. Gliksten concluded: "Congratulations on a wonderful achievement. You not only won it but won it well."

Order of the night

Congratulations were the order of the night, starting with those of Swindon Town, the club who will join Watford in Division 2 and Luton Town who made such a valiant bid to win promotion.

The Mayor of Watford (Alderman Alec Merrifield), before adding his congratulations and proposing the toast to Watford FC, read telegrams from both clubs.

Breaking his speech down into three parts—the directors, the manager and the team—the Mayor said: "They have put their hearts and souls into the games and played as a team. No skipper could want more than 100 per cent effort. That is what we have had from these boys at Vicarage Road this season and it has been wonderful."

The Mayor also paid tribute to the fine example the team had set the youngsters of Watford. "The youngsters look upon the team as people they can emulate not only on the sports fields but in their private

'Marked impact in Division 2'

lives. The team set a fine example.

"Not only have we a good team of players but a good public relations team as well," he added.

Referring to Ken Furphy, the manager, the Mayor said: "I have often heard the chairman say—and I know he means it—that Ken is the best manager we have ever had at Vicarage Road."

Addressing his remarks to the manager, the Mayor went on: "I have met you often and seen the way the boys respond to you and seen the way visiting clubs hold you in esteem and the quiet way in which you go about your job. . . . Sincerely, on behalf of everyone here tonight—congratulations, well done. I think you can take tremendous pride that you have had the 100 per cent effort from the team."

To the chairman and directors, the Mayor said: "We are pleased and proud that you had the courage to do the job. Thank you for what you have done and we give you three years to get into Division 1 and five years to win the FA Cup."

Chairman Jim Bonser said that the moment of triumph was well worth waiting for. "All the work of planning in the board room counts for nothing unless we get success on the playing field, and here I must pay tribute to our manager whose complete dedication to his task has brought reward. His total dedication and young ideas make him one of the outstanding young managers in the game."

"I know you will all be pleased to hear that on July 1 Ken will sign a new five-year contract as manager of Wat-

ford and not Manchester United," added Mr. Bonser. He went on to compliment the players. "They were a credit to themselves and the Watford club."

Finally, he welcomed the guests which included representatives from Millwall, Bristol City, Queens Park Rangers, Swindon Town and Luton Town.

Calculated planning

"No words of mine can adequately express the great satisfaction I know we all feel. Winning the championship was no hit-or-miss affair. It was achieved by calculated planning on and off the field," explained manager Ken Furphy.

The manager offered his thanks to the many people behind the scenes who have contributed to the success of the club.

The final response to the toast was by Keith Eddy, the Watford skipper.

Following the speeches the players were presented with their medals and each also received a reproduction Georgian tankard from the Corporation.

The chairman was presented with a silver cigarette box and from his fellow directors he received an inscribed silver salver.

A further presentation was that of a cake made by the students of the catering department of Cassio College.

. . . And so to Division 2.

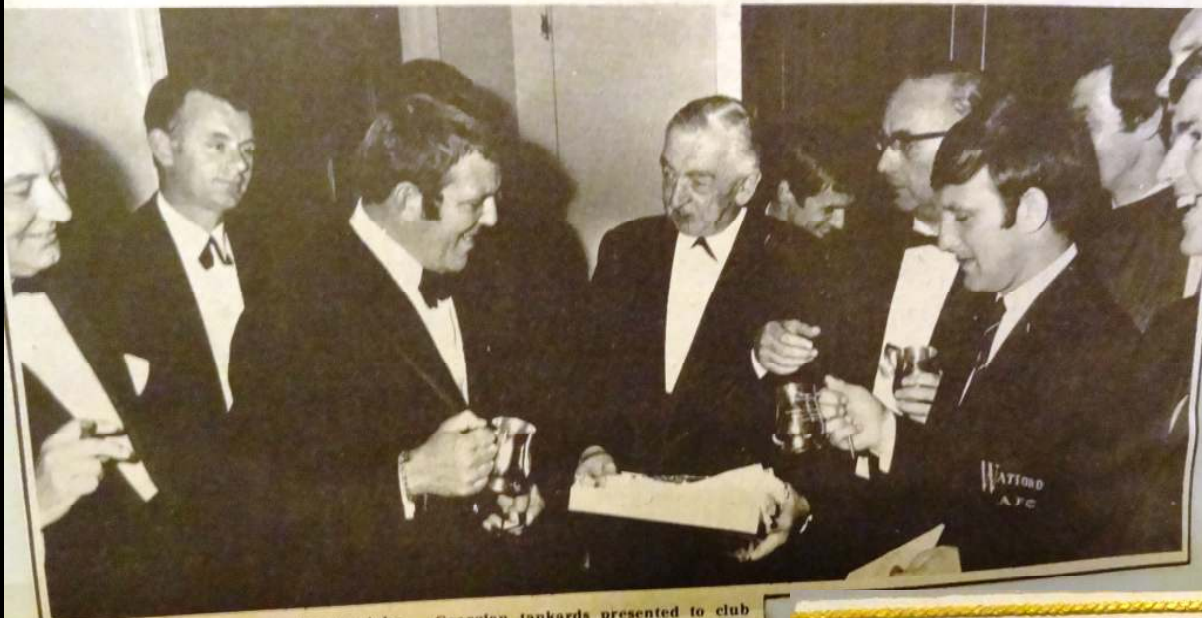
Watford officials and players received reproduction Georgian tankards from Watford Corporation on Thursday evening.

In the picture are Mr. Doug Broad (Director), Mr. Ken Furphy (Manager), Alderman Alec Merrifield (Mayor of Watford and President of Watford FC), Mr. Jim Bonser (Chairman), Mr. Ron Rollitt (Secretary) and Dixie Hale (player).

In the background (left) skipper Keith Eddy talks to Bert Slater.



Watford fetes the happy Hornets

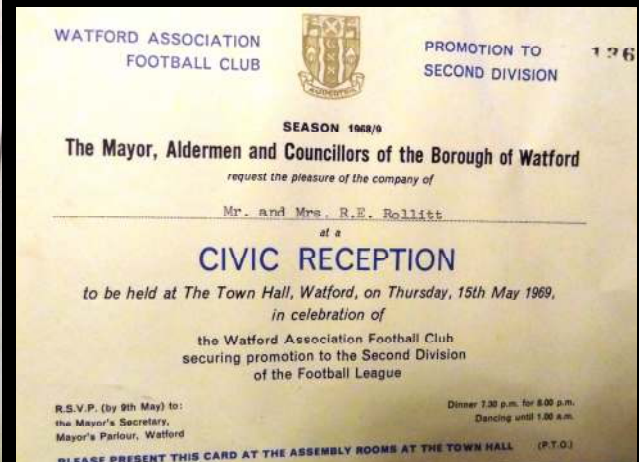


COMEDIAN Terry Scott shares a joke with officials and players of Watford Football Club, who have certainly got plenty to smile about. Last night they were guests of Watford borough council at a dinner and dance at the Town Hall to celebrate their winning the Third Division championship. Terry is holding one of the silver

Georgian tankards presented to club members while Mr Jim Bonser, club chairman, shows him gifts he received. Also in the photograph (from left) are Doug Broad (director), Ken Furphy (manager), Ron Rollitt (secretary) on Mr Bonser's left, and players Dixie Hale and Duncan Welbourne.

PICTURE: BERNARD MITCHELL

Terry Scott, ex-Watford Fields schoolboy



Celebration Dinner & Dance

BY THE WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
IN HONOUR OF WATFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

Champions of the Third Division
of the Football League — Season 1968/69

HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, WATFORD
ON THURSDAY, THE 15th MAY, 1969

MOST OFFICES have windows. But not those beneath the stands at Vicarage Road. Here lies a broiler world of artificial lighting. And hatches. One hatch — at the end of the bare entrance corridor — is labelled "Enquiries". Press the bell and state your business.

Through the gap you may glimpse another hatch in the far wall. On this side is Ron Rollitt's office on the other side Ken Furphy's. Round these two men — secretary and manager — revolves the whole daily working life of Watford Football Club.

These jobs are different. One executive, perhaps, the other administrative. But the match provides a speedy, convenient, and necessary communication between them (they carry a huge load of the club's responsibilities).

If the story of professional soccer hangs on success or failure, then there is no doubt where the major responsibility lies.

Ken Furphy, 37 years old, match fit, but grovelling at the temples, is the only one of the four non-playing full-time staff to admit to a week of sleepless nights in last season's promotion battle.

"It was Easter week," he told me. "After playing Crewe and Hartlepool at home over the weekend, we had to leave for the West Country and play Plymouth on Tuesday and Bournemouth on Saturday."

"I realised these were really crucial matches. Two seasons earlier we missed promotion because of the number of points we dropped at Easter. Now I just couldn't get to sleep at all."

Work and worry

Furphy is no stranger to work worry, and of the two he can probably cope with work better. Born in Stock-on-Tees in 1931, he was brought up in one of the areas most hard-hit by the Depression. His father was a steel moulder, alternately in and out of work.

Rough from the start, he wanted to be a professional footballer, spending hours kicking tennis-balls round streets and coal yards — or works and coal yards — or visiting Middlesbrough to watch his First Division heroes.

But he also worked hard at school, had a chance of going to grammar school, thought it was too snobbish, and won himself a place at the secondary grammar.

To his horror he discovered the school played rugby. "At the school I refused to go at all," he recalls. "I was half-way to a nervous breakdown and for nine months my mother had to take me to school every day."

pitch with the rest of the players at the start of a match, dressed in the Hornets colours.

Ken takes Doris to many of the evening functions he attends every week. Especially with last season's success, he has been inundated with invitations to speak at meetings, present trophies, or attend dinners.

Mrs Furphy told me: "We try to have one evening to ourselves in a week — sometimes I have to remind him that he is trying to cover too much. And even when we do go out, we usually end up watching a match, either our reserves or perhaps our rivals."

When there is no definite engagement, Mrs Furphy has to run the house almost by guess work. "People ring us up and ask when Ken will be in. They don't seem to understand that I often don't know myself," she says.

Mrs Furphy has a morning job in Watford to prevent boredom while the children are at school. It also gives her a chance to meet Watford people and get to know the town.

She misses the Cumberland scenery round Workington and regrets that it takes so much longer in Watford to get out into the country. "I have a driving licence, but I've never

dared to drive our big Rover round this area. There's so much traffic."

Ron Rollitt has been Watford's secretary for 14 years. He was 31 when he left a firm of accountants in the town and he has never regretted the decision.

"I've got a notice in my office. It says: 'You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps.' The life would be quite intolerable for anybody not interested in football."

But Ron admits he hardly ever watches a match. "I have only seen four games this season. The rest I have just glimpsed in snatches. During a game I'm having to attend to a thousand and one little problems — answering telephone calls, checking security, seeing to the gate staff, sale of tickets, attendance figures and receipts, making announcements over the loudspeaker, attending to lost children — everything."

His week is a full one, right from the start at 8.30 every Monday morning. First off are reports to the Football League on the Saturday match — the result, the players taking part, the reports on match officials, the financial return.

Correspondence of all kinds is one of Mr Rollitt's

most time-consuming concerns. There are always 20 or 30 letters a day to be answered, and with last season's success the figure rose to 150 a day.

Ron has a part-time secretary to help him, otherwise the correspondence would never get done. Some of it is fan mail. "We get 30 or 40 photographs a day with requests to get them photographed by the players."

But most of the mail is more concerned with business. Ticket requests for instance. These multiplied staggeringly towards the end of the season. "We were selling 2,000 tickets pre-sale."

No thought of moving

"Normally it might be only a couple of hundred. It got to the stage where people ad to apply in person or by post. It was too much for telephone bookings."

And there were more than 1,500 written requests for season tickets. On Tuesdays, Ron has to finalise details for the reserve team matches, and there are programmes to be prepared. On Wednesdays he must attend to wages. "If I took the wages work home, it would only take a couple of

hours," says Ron. "But with all these interruptions here it takes all day."

On Thursdays the wages are paid and on Fridays come all the preparations for Saturday, plus preparing programmes and writing some of the notes.

Then it's Saturday again, and a day of instant action. In return for this and working two or three nights a week as well, Ron gets just two weeks holiday a year. The closed season is no rest cure.

But Ron is not complaining. "Everybody knows how quickly managers come and go in this game," he muses. "But I was looking up the figures the other day — in my 14 years at Watford 60 per cent of the league's secretaries have changed. Well the directors may feel differently, but certainly I have no thought of moving."

Pat Molloy, Watford's physiotherapist, has been at Vicarage Road even longer than Ron Rollitt — longer. In fact, than any of the staff. He was 40 when he arrived as trainer-coach, after a playing career with Fulham, Cardiff, QPR, Stockport, Carlisle and Bradford City, and a spell as player-manager for Kettering Town. His last job was coaching in Turkey.

Now he is 38. He stopped

being trainer-coach four years ago, soon after Ken Furphy's arrival. He admits that he is getting a bit past joining training sessions.

But you have to be careful when mentioning Pat Molloy's fitness. "I feel like a young man of 30 and I'm the same weight now as I was in my playing days 30 years ago," he says proudly.

It is just as well, for his working week is a long one — seven days in fact. Treatment sessions last from 9 to 11 in the morning and 2 to 4 in the afternoon.

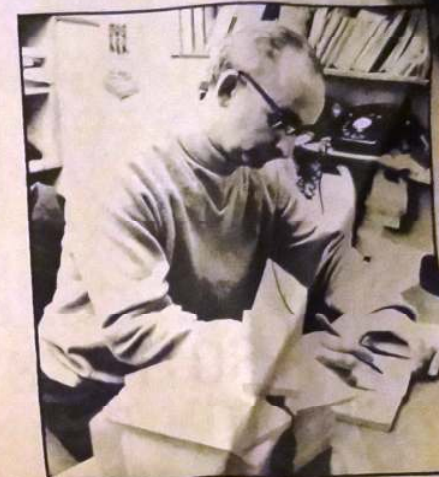
"I used to be a carpenter," he says. "So if I can't repair the players I can help improve the facilities."

Pat, a Lancastrian, says he has always been happy in football, but promotion has been a special thrill.

"We've done it with the eighth manager since I've been here," he says. "Eight's my lucky number." But Pat doesn't like to tempt his luck. "I remember saying once we were lucky for having no injuries in a season — and within nine weeks three players — Bobby Bell, Johnny Fairbrother and George Cutler — had broken their legs," he recalls ruefully.

TOMORROW: When the boys need a mum...

Manager Furphy at home with wife Doris and children Susan and Keith — football and family life run together



ABOVE: Secretary Ron Rollitt — 150 letters a week

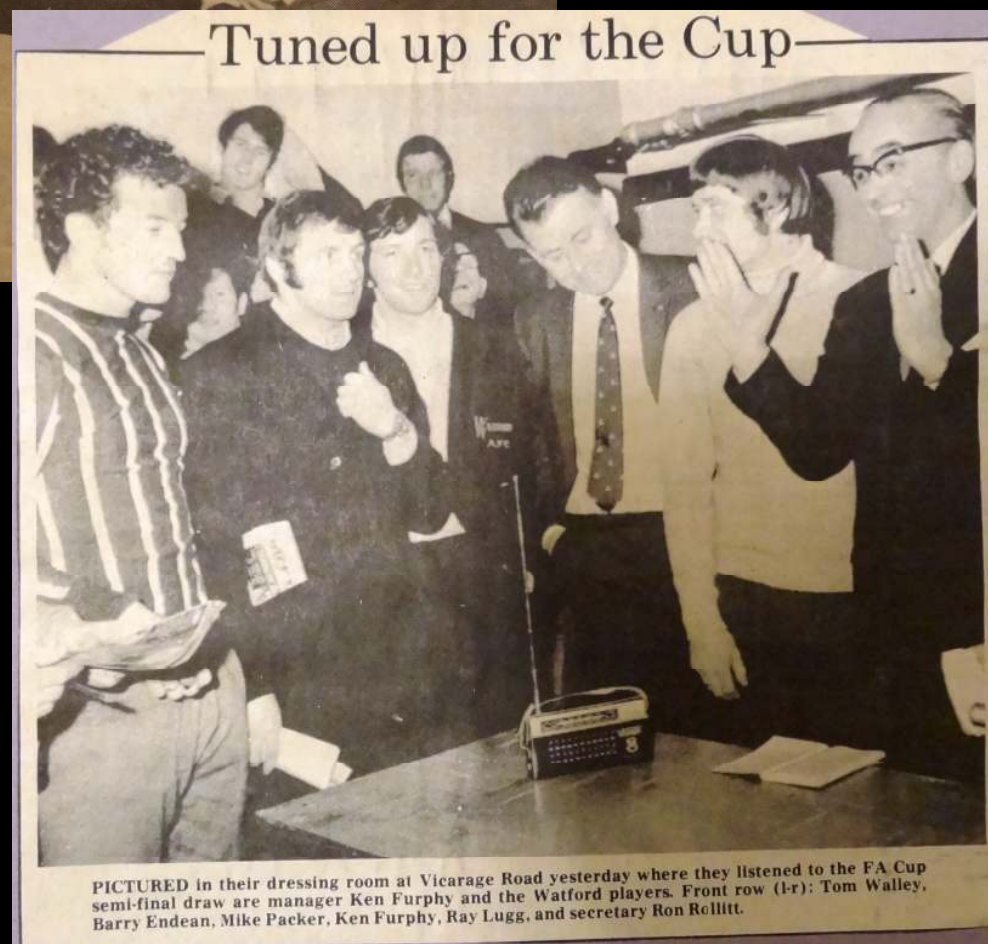
BELOW: Trainer-coach turned physiotherapist Pat Molloy treats goal-scorer Barry Endean



The close season - July 1969



Tuned in for the FA Cup draw 1970



Watford v Chelsea in FA Cup 1970

IT'S A SELL OUT!



Whether camping out in the cold to get tickets or (right) helping to get the terraces cleared of snow for Friday night's match, under the watchful eye of Ken Furphy, Watford's young fans demonstrated equal enthusiasm.

Graphic Photos 86530/86507

—And touts move in

IF you haven't got a ticket for Saturday's FA Cup Semi-Final between Watford and Chelsea then your chances of seeing the game are nil.

"All sold" signs went up at Chelsea, Watford and the staging club Tottenham, yesterday (Tuesday).

Watford's allocation of 18,000 tickets was nearly all swallowed up by the 20,000 fans who queued at Vicarage Road on Sunday morning. Less than 50 unsold ground tickets were left over. They found buyers on Monday morning and Watford's Secretary Ron Rollitt reported yesterday that unclaimed season tickets had also gone.

While there were some estimated 20,000 fans at Vicarage Road on Sunday morning, the supply was far in excess of the demand at White Hart Lane, where Tottenham sold their 18,000 ticket allocation. Spivs promptly dashed down the M1 and started selling tickets to the unsuccessful Watford fans.

Keen demand

"People are blaming us for this but we kept rigidly to one ticket per person," says Ron Rollitt. "Personally I think it is disheartening that the staging club gets a third of the tickets—but there it is."

Said one Watford season ticket holder: "I bought 14 tickets at Tottenham and the only reason I didn't buy any more was because I had no money left in my wallet."

The whole arrangements for the sale of tickets were made by the FA. They fixed the prices and the allocations.



Despite Watford's good intent, some did manage to beat the system. The club issued vouchers guaranteeing tickets for fans who used the stands during Friday evening's game with Hull City. In some cases fans left with handfuls of vouchers and collected a similar number of tickets on Sunday.

"Naturally no system is completely perfect, but this was a relatively smooth operation. We did catch the odd season ticket holder who came back for a second ticket after collecting his entitlement of one, but as we had rubber-stamped each book, we were able to stop this," commented Mr. Rollitt.

Rumours that more tickets are going to be sent back to Watford from Tottenham were discounted by the local club.

WATFORD RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs. M. JOHNSON,
Clerk to the Council

TELEPHONE:
RADLETT 4628

Your ref.
Our ref.

58 Shenley Hill
26 CRAIGWELL AVENUE
RADLETT,
MIDTS



HERTFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Hon. Assis

Dear Mr. Rollitt,

Just over a year
to you on behalf of the Par
Club on the splendid perfor
Manchester United. Again I
the Parish Councils congrat
wishing them every success
matches this year.

Telephone

HOME: Hemel Hempstead 55523

Dear Ron,

May I on behalf of the
the Watford FC players on the m

Jim Harrowell and I we
FA Trophies would be resting in
a marvellous effort that would

Best wishes for the re
and League. My great disappoi
produce in this County do not c
trials. What a pity!

Please pass on to your
semi-final match. We wish you

R. E. Rollitt, Esq.,
Watford Association Football
Club Ltd.,
Vicarage Road Ground
Watford.



SECRETARY
ALAN HANDAKER

THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE LIMITED

ANY REPLY TO THIS LETTER
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE
SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING
REFERENCE QUOTED

AH/BGA/922

R.E. Rollitt, Esq.,
Secretary,
Watford Football Club
Vicarage Road Ground
WATFORD.

Dear Mr. Rollitt,

I have received
of the French Footba

"On behalf of the
please convey our
to Chairman and
Club for qualific
F.A. Cup, and co
delegates last y



HERTFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

SOUTH-WEST DIVISIONAL COMMITTEE

Hon. Secretary:
W. A. C. STRUGNELL

Telephone—Watford 29904

9. DENEWOOD CLOSE,
WATFORD,
HERTS

11th March, 1960

R.E. Rollitt Esq.,
Watford Association Football Club Ltd.,
Vicarage Road,
Watford.

Dear Mr. Rollitt,

As the body responsible for the administration of the
affairs of the Herts F.A. in this area, the Chairman and members have
asked me to write to you to offer you their warmest congratulations on
the wonderful achievement of the 'Hornets' in reaching the semi-final
of the F.A. Cup, and to send you very best wishes for further success,
not only in this competition, but also in their remaining fixtures in
the Football League.

Yours sincerely,

W.A.C. Strugnell
W.A.C. Strugnell,
Divisional Hon. Sec.

Heartiest congratulations...
Magnificent victory...
Wonderful achievement...
Splendid performance...

The £. s. d. of a Cup run

IT'S NOT A FORTUNE!



—that's what Watford find after counting the costs

CONTRARY to popular belief, Watford FC are not making a fortune out of their FA Cup run.

So far they have picked up about £11,000 and although the receipts from the semi-final with Chelsea are expected to total around £45,000, Watford's share will be a little under £10,000.

"We are glad to have the extra money a Cup run brings in but we are certainly not going to become Charlie Clores overnight," commented Watford secretary Ron Rollitt.

If my calculations are right, Watford can expect to net £24,000 from the Cup if they are beaten by Chelsea on March 14. That's a few thousand less than they received when they sold Tony Currie to Sheffield United a couple of seasons ago!

For people who are wondering why Watford will earn only £10,000 from the semi-final, here is a break-down of where the money goes.

For a start, the expenses of running the game — printing, stewards and police, referee and linesmen — will come to about £1,000. Then the club staging the game, Tottenham Hotspur in this case, will receive a percentage of the gate, which will be in the region of £4,500.

This leaves approximately £39,500 of which 25 per cent goes to the Football Association, 25 per cent to each competing club and 25 per cent to the Cup pool. So Watford's share of the gate money will be about £9,900.

by MIKE GREEN

The money in the pool is divided equally between the 92 clubs in the Football League and it works out at about £3,000 apiece. Add this sum to the receipts from the semi-final and the other four rounds and you arrive at a figure not far short of £24,000.

But this does not take into consideration the money the club spends preparing the players for a Cup match. For example, keeping the players together in a hotel the night before the game would cost in the region of £100.

Taking the players away for a week's training and special preparation means a lay-out of about £1,000.

But, as manager Ken Furphy points out, this is a case of speculating to accumulate. Nobody can say that the money spent on preparing the team for the Cup-ties has not been wisely spent so far.

The players also have written into their contracts that they will receive a fixed sum of money for appearing in the semi-final and final, while the bonus for a win in the semi-final is £20 per man.

Of course, if Watford beat Chelsea and move into the Cup Final, their profit from the run could double. Last year receipts for the final totalled £128,000.

It's anybody's guess what the cost of staging the final works out at, but Watford would receive 25 per cent of what was



RON ROLLITT

remaining after expenses had been deducted.

Unfortunately for supporters, the allocation of tickets to clubs competing in the final is nothing like as high as 25 per cent. Remarkable though it may seem, Watford's allocation of tickets for the final would not be much higher than 16,000.

"The further you go in the Cup, the fewer tickets you receive," explained Ron Rollitt. "Against Liverpool, our allocation was 26,000, for the semi-final we will receive 18,000 tickets and if we get to the final, our share will be only 16,000.

"The final is regarded as a social event and every member club of the FA gets a ticket.

"Personally I think that the two clubs playing in the final should get at least 50

per cent of the tickets, but there you are," he went on.

"It encourages black market dealings, especially if a London club gets into the final as will happen this year.

"An allocation of 16,000 would not be sufficient to satisfy our supporters so imagine what problems clubs like Chelsea and Manchester United have."

■ Tickets for the semi-final with Chelsea go on sale at Vicarage Road on Sunday and members of Watford Football Club Supporters Club, who are guaranteed a ticket, are reminded that they must produce their membership card when claiming their ticket.

And press secretary Doug Hewish warns: "Tickets will only be available on Sunday. If any member can't get to the ground then, he should make sure that he gets a friend or neighbour to queue up with his card otherwise he won't get a ticket."

New members have until 9pm tomorrow to join the club and no postal applications will be accepted.

Members of the other supporters club — the Watford Football Supporters Club — are not guaranteed a ticket.

■ British Rail have laid on five special trains to take Watford supporters to the match at a cost of 8s. It will also be possible to travel by normal service from Watford Junction to Euston and then by London Transport service to Seven Sisters Station. The return fare will be 9s.

Sunday Mirror Giant-Killer Cup 1969/1970

The Editor of the Sunday Mirror
has pleasure in inviting

MR. R. Rollitt.

to a celebration dinner
in honour of Watford Football Club
on Tuesday, 7th April
The Red Lion Hotel, Radlett
Reception 9.30 p.m. for 10.00 p.m.
Informal dress

R.S.V.P. The Editor, Sunday Mirror, 33 Holborn

Celebration Dinner

In Honour of Watford Football Club
Winners of the Sunday Mirror
Giant-Killer Cup 1969/70
Red Lion Hotel Radlett 7th April 1970



This is the squad that kicks off the 1970-71 season

■ Left to right — back row: Bernard Lewis, Ken Owen, Stewart Scullion, Dixie Hale, Ray Lugg, John Pearce, Stuart Lowrie, John Farley, Ernie Talbot, Colin Franks, Terry Garbett. Centre row: Barry Endean, Ron Wigg, Walter Lees, Mike Packer, Bill Jennings, Derek Edmonds, Mick Walker, Ray Hyde, John Williams, Richard Payne, Ron Walker, Roy Sinclair, Larry McGittigan. Front row: Charlie Woods, Bert Slater, Duncan Welbourne, Ron Rollitt, S. A. Lepard, Ken Furphy, Jim Bonser, James Harrowell, Keith Eddy, George Aitken, Garry Hayes.



Club Officials

Top: left to right—S. A. Lepard (Director), D. N. Broad (Director), J. Bonser (Chairman), J. Harrowell (Director).

Bottom: left to right—G. Aitken (Trainer), K. Furphy (Manager), R. Rollitt (Secretary), P. Molloy (Physiotherapist).



A well-deserved reward for dependability
and tireless work 8 Aug 1971

ROLLITT STEPS UP



RON ROLLITT

by MITCHELL PLATTS

RON ROLLITT, for 16 years secretary of Watford Football Club, has been promoted to a position that will make him now both general manager and secretary of the Vicarage Road club — a move that will leave George Kirby, who commences his duties on Monday, to deal strictly with team affairs.

Rollitt was informed of his new double-role last night when, following the AGM, the Watford board held their usual meeting when both the chairman and vice-chairman of the club resign.

After he had been re-elected as chairman Jim Bonser told me: "George Kirby has come to us as team manager and we have made Ron Rollitt the

Secretary Ron is appointed general manager

general manager of Watford Football Club.

"This is a trend that I believe will become general in football. Rollitt has been with us 16 years and knows the club from top to bottom. But managers come and go.

"A team manager has enough to do in the training of his players, the selecting of his team and the buying and selling of players. These men are tremendous

at that job but they do not have the experience of the other side of the business, such as the running of the club and ground improvements.

"Ron Rollitt knows all about this. He is generally in the picture and knows the way I think."

While Rollitt prefers to assume his new title with the smallest amount of fuss, his promotion is a reward for his dependability and the tireless amount of work he puts in for the club. He deserves some kudos and, with this title, receives them.

The creation of this new role also paves the way for Kirby to enter the club with no other headaches. His job will be simply to lift Watford up the Second Division.

While Bonser was re-elected at last night's meeting of the board, it is also announced that the vice-chairman for the coming year will be Mr D. N. Board.

Elton John concert for the Hornets



POP star Elton John's interest in Watford (see front page story) could result in bringing a bevy of showbusiness personalities to Vicarage Road. Already mentioned as likely to join Elton and show business impresario Vic Lewis as vice-presidents, are Liverpool singer Cilla Black and songwriter Don Black of Born Free fame.

Cilla Black lives in Denham, Vic Lewis lives in Finchley and Elton John is currently moving house in Virginia Water.

Explains Mr John: "A group of us are very interested in sport. Vic runs the Showbusiness Cricket XI. We were talking about becoming more closely involved with a football club and someone suggested Chelsea.

"Well I have been a Watford fan since the age of four. I remember watching them when they played in blue. I wasn't interested in Chelsea and suggested Watford. I can assure you that I am completely genuine in wanting to help the club," he added.

Organised

Elton John arrived at Vicarage Road just before dashing off on the commencement of a ten-week tour of America. Wearing his famous platform-heeled shoes and with bright mauve dashes of colouring in his hair, he was introduced to club chairman Jim Bonser for a meeting organised by the Watford Observer.

Both Elton and Vic Lewis were given a conducted tour of the ground and buildings and offered honorary vice-presidencies. They declined, offering to pay the normal subscription.

"I used to run across this pitch many times when I was a youngster," Elton told that frequent. "Keep off the pitch" announcer, Ron Rollitt.

"I was a fan of Sammy Chung's and latterly Denis Bond and Duncan Welbourne. I'm glad to see them among the line-up this year. I suppose one has to admit that my all-

POP MAN ELTON JOHN FOR WATFORD BOARD?

First again, from the Watford Observer last May.

knowingly set Elton John on the path to involvement at Watford is a diehard Hornets' fan and shareholder who wishes to remain anonymous. He remembers Elton John when he was a toddler called Reggie Dwight who used to visit relatives next door to his home in Springfield Close, Croyley Green.

"He and his cousin Susan used to pop in regularly until they left the area when he was about five or six. I was a Watford fan but I don't know if I indoctrinated him then," he recalls.

"He used to live in Pinner. The whole family was keen on football." His cousin of course was quite a player. Roy Dwight who played for Nottingham Forest in the Cup Final."

Concert for the Golden Boys in the year of *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* (1973)





CHRISTMAS is one of the busiest times of the year for footballers. While the rest of us are eating, drinking and being generally merry, they are preparing for two matches on successive days.

So Christmas at a football club has to be celebrated early and Watford held their party at the YMCA centre, Charter House, last night.



Of course, when a club has a man like Elton John as chairman, any party is bound to be a bit special. Elton engaged Roy Castle as the cabaret and he kept everyone amused with a string of jokes about the Watford players.

But after last night's celebrations it was back to work today when the players were put through a strict training session.



As for Christmas itself, the players have been instructed to report to an hotel on Christmas afternoon in preparation for the following day's match, at Vicarage Road against Northampton.

And after that game, they leave immediately for Torquay where they play on the Tuesday.

Above, Elton with a new-look hairstyle jokes with Roy Castle on the bagpipes. Manager Graham Taylor, left, and secretary Ron Rollitt, right, join in the fun.

Picture: MIKE DELLOW

Elton's
Watford
party
piece

The latest stepping stone to a 'super' club

WATFORD TOOK their latest steps towards the building of a "super" club this week when, after a board meeting on Monday, they decided to advertise for an Executive Manager.

Just how great the powers of the new man will be, no one at the club was prepared to say. But it is generally believed that he will be the man to oversee the planned re-development of the Vicarage Road stadium.

And as the club have advertised for a man with company secretary qualifications and experience in football affairs, it would appear that executive manager is possibly another term for managing director.

I understand that the salary for the job is negotiable and the board have shown in the past that they are not inclined to scrimp when it is a question of getting the right man for the job.

And there is no question of a current member of the Watford staff going to make way for him. He is expected to work hand in glove with general manager Ron Rollitt.

The idea is that Watford should operate with a First Division backroom set-up from the earliest possible time. They aim to be ready for the big time long before it actually arrives.

Graham Taylor also set about improving his coaching and scouting staff this week by welcoming Hemel manager Dennis Gibbs and Hitchin boss Andy Williams to the fold.



ag... Nobel...
of the Nobel...
warded to Maircad

Watford FC relegation!

**WHO?
WHY?
HOW?**

The Watford Observer analyses the facts and points a few fingers in a close-season series starting this week!

Sheffield Utd. at Watford

VICARAGE Road sets aside the traumas and recriminations of recent weeks, for a first team friendly with Sheffield United this evening (Tuesday) in aid of the John Williams testimonial.

Ken Furphy is bringing a full first-team squad including old favourites Colin Franks, Tony Currie, Keith Eddy and Terry Garbett and will probably give a first-team run-out to his son Keith

Furphy, who is a United professional and, of course, an ex-Watford ball boy.

Before the game, the presentation will be made to Watford's Player of the Season — the player you voted to receive the Watford Observer Trophy.

It will be Williams's farewell to Vicarage Road after ten years with the Hornets and he will be keeping his fingers crossed that the recent disappoint-

ment over relegation will not seriously affect his "gate."

One person who is likely to attend and perhaps play in one half is ex-Watford striker and FA Cup Final winner, Billy Jennings.

● Watford will be selling Elton John tickets for the Wembley Concert at Vicarage Road on Saturday morning between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Watford have an allocation of 5,000 at £3.50. Requests for large orders have to be made direct to Wembley, however. Fans will have a choice of arena or stand tickets.



Club general manager Ron Rollitt could have chosen a happier night to mark his 20th anniversary with the club. Club chairman Jim Bonser presented him with a memento of the occasion after Tuesday night's defeat by Walsall. From left to right: Ron Rollitt, Vic Lewis, Geoff Smith, Mike Keen, Jim Bonser, Muir Stratford and Jim Harrowell.

Twenty years with the club (1975)

DOWN AND OUT HORNETS

THE ANXIOUS FACES TELL THE STORY OF A GRIM NIGHT AT VICARAGE ROAD



Watford are trailing relegation in the face... the grim expressions in the directors' box and on the trainers' bench tell the story of last night's match. With Mike Keen on the bench are Les Simmons, David Woodfield and Pat Molloy



Watford defence, Buckley was in the clear. He cut inside the penalty area, and although Rankin parried his shot, George Andrews nonchalantly blasted the rebound into the net.

IT WASN'T the end of the world of course, but it must have seemed pretty close to it if you were a Watford supporter at Vicarage Road last night.

There were tears from player and supporter alike, as the awful realisation sank home that next season Watford will be in the Fourth Division.

Watford had to beat Walsall to stay up. They gave everything they had to give, but in the final reckoning, it wasn't enough.

Just as manager Mike Keen feared, Walsall took advantage of the fact that Watford were forced to throw extra men forward by grabbing three goals in quick breakaways.

Watford didn't deserve to lose last night, but then relegation wasn't decided by one game alone. Points thrown away in September and October by silly mistakes proved, in the long run, to be decidedly costly.

Watford have, at times, played some fine football this season, but a side can

I didn't know what to say to the players, admits Keen

Watford 2 Walsall 3 by MIKE GREEN

only be judged on its record. And the hard fact is that Watford have won fewer games than any other club in the Third Division.

On that basis they did not deserve to claw their way above Aldershot, the side who eventually pipped them for the last place on the lift-rail. After all, Aldershot were only in that position because an administrative error led to them being fined a point at the beginning of the season.

MISTAKES

Even so, it must be said that Watford have had more than their share of bad luck with injuries this season. As a despondent Keen said last night, "I admit I have made mistakes and that we haven't played as well as we should have done on more than one occasion, but I still

rejoice the fact that we have been against us all along."

"I have never been relegated before and it's a hell of a feeling. I just didn't know what to say to them in the dressing room afterwards. I certainly could not fault them for effort in this game."

And it was the senior players who rose to the occasion last night. Keen has been a bit critical of the more experienced members of his playing staff on occasions, but Dennis Bond and Stewart Scullion, in particular, were quite magnificent last night.

Scullion, who took the Walsall defence apart without getting a morsel of luck, was in tears as he left the field. Bond was close to crying too.

"It just wasn't meant to

be, was it," said Bond. "How can a side have as much bad luck as we did in the first half?"

Bond was referring in particular to an incident shortly before Walsall took the lead in the 30th minute. Greenhalgh ran in the rear post, to kick head, a long throw by Garner and the ball ran along the line, struck the far post and rebounded straight into the arms of astonished goalkeeper Kearns.

"It just couldn't happen — but it did," ground Bond. "Any other time the ball must have gone into the net after striking the post in that position. And if it had rebounded out any other way than it did, Scully would have pushed it home."

But even before this incident, Watford should have been a couple of goals up. Greenhalgh was unlucky when the ball bounced unkindly after he had

THE FINAL RECKONING

Aldershot 46 18 17 21 23 82 29
Watford 44 18 17 19 22 72 27
Preston 45 12 21 43 57 28
Tranmere 44 15 12 31 58 32
Huddersfield 46 11 19 23 47 74 32

chipped down a Bink free-kick, causing him to miss his shot. But he should certainly have scored with a couple of headers.

The miss of the night came when Coodey rose to head a free kick by Williams across goal and Greenhalgh, with the goal yawning in front of him, headed over the top.

Walsall's first goal was a classic case of what happens when an offside trap doesn't work. Watford held the ball out of the penalty area, but someone was slow to move up, and when Fry chipped it back over the heads of the

Watford defence, Buckley was in the clear.

He cut inside the penalty area, and although Rankin parried his shot, George Andrews nonchalantly blasted the rebound into the net.

So it was 1-0 to Walsall at the interval and early in the second half, Bond was booked for a crude tackle on Andrews when the Walsall man looked clear again.

Bond then found that the ball would not run with him as he tried to burst into the penalty area, but the crowd, who were magnificent throughout, really got behind their team now. And in the 48th minute there was dancing on the terraces.

WASTED

Scullion, inevitably, beat two men, just outside the area, and when he swung the ball across, Greenhalgh flung himself full length to bullet a header into the net.

It was Greenhalgh's first goal since joining the club, and it should have been the signal for a tremendous surge by Watford. But strangely, they went off the ball for a spell after this, and not even the arrival of leading scorer Ross Jenkins, who substituted for Mayes, could get them going again.

A tremendous drive by Scullion had Kearns leaping across to save, but Rankin

had to make an equally good one to stop Andrews from getting a second, and in the 86th minute, Walsall did regain the lead.

A weak headed clearance from a right wing cross went straight to Spinner, who wasted no time in hitting a thunderous shot into the roof of the net.

Scullion again raised the hopes of Watford supporters by intercepting a bad back pass and standing the ball wide of Kearns and across the goal, but it was Harrison who got there first for Walsall.

And in the 86th minute, Spinner struck again with a low shot into the corner of the net and that was that.

It mattered not that Scullion successfully converted a penalty in the last minute after Clarke had handled a Garner header on the line. There wasn't even time to restart the game, and Watford were down.

As the final whistle sounded, a mass of supporters raved across the ground to gather in front of the stand and chant "Burner out".

But the chairman again

made it quite clear that he had no intention of resigning after the game.

The one happy spectator at the end was Aldershot boss Tommy McInerney, who admitted that it had been 90 minutes of torture for him.

"I would rather have stayed in Aldershot and played golf, but my chairman wanted to come. I feel sorry for Watford for they are one of the most hospitable clubs I know, but there just can't be any sentiment in this game, he told me."

And McInerney then revealed that he had tried to sign Terry Spinner, whose two goals ultimately condemned Watford. "He is an Aldershot boy, but I wasn't able to tempt him. I'm glad he went to Walsall now."

Watford: Rankin, How, Gonderes, Carter, Williams, Bond, Jolly, Scullion, Mayes, Greenhalgh, Coodey, Fry, Jenkins.

Walsall: Keane, Fry, Harrison, Rankin, Bennett, Jenkins, Cartwright, Andrews, Spinner, Buckley, Bush, Sub, Clarke.

Referee: T. G. Rowe (Wilton, Walsall).

Attendance: 8,475.



The disappointed Watford fans make their feelings known at the end of last night's match... with some demonstrating for the resignation of chairman Jim Bonser



One bright spot on a bleak night... chairman Bonser makes a presentation to general manager Ron Rollitt to mark his 20 years service to the club

YOU can use either set of clues for this puzzle. The answers for both are the same.



EASY CLUES

Across: 3. Musical of 1970s, now being staged in London.



WATFORD'S effort to sign former centre-half Tom Walley hit a snag over the weekend. The Welshman saw manager Mike Keen on Friday but was unable to agree terms.

Walley has been on Division Two wages since leaving Vicarage Road and has given their manager George Petchey good service over the past four years. It is because of this that Orient decided to ask only a nominal fee for the central defender — believed to be £3,000 — hoping that Walley can better himself through terms.

"We've had a couple of problems but I am still hopeful that these can be overcome and we can make the signing," said Keen on Monday.

● On Friday night, Elton John, Watford's new chairman, accompanied by his band, gave a two-hour performance at Bailey's for Ron Rollitt's testimonial.



Elton John: "It makes a change to perform for a senior citizen" — with Mr Ron and Mrs Alma Rollitt after the concert.


Ron's Testimonial (1976)



Editorial, Advertising, Watford 42211, Classified 22323

Ron Rollitt prepares to make a presentation to his new boss. "As a well-preserved but slightly deaf senior citizen," said the Watford secretary after the two-hour performance.

The new Elton

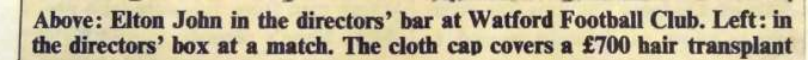


It was a new look Elton John who saw Watford beat Colchester 2-0 in the second round of the FA Cup on Saturday.

... And it was a "chuffed" Elton John who watched the draw for the next round on television and saw Watford paired with West Ham.

"If we had to be drawn away then it could not have been better," declared Watford's super star chairman. (See page 26.)

"If we had to be drawn away then it could not have been better," declared Watford's super star chairman. (See page 26.)



★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Elton John has always seemed an unlikely pop star. Even in hoola-hoop spectacles and sequinned suits, he never looked the part. He was always too short, too plump, too thoughtful. He's still earning £7 million a year from pop, but at 30 he's also the successful chairman of Watford Football Club. Now he's changing his image, facing a career without live shows, and lamenting his neglected private life: "You do so much for your career, what do you actually want for yourself?"

Chairman & secretary (1977)



Ron's Round-up

In my last notes I did indicate that we hoped to have the tickets for the game with West Bromwich on sale today. I understand, however, that there are difficulties from their end particularly as at the present time they are dealing with four all-ticket matches. It will be nearer the 8th October before we actually receive the tickets, but it is in order for you to apply by post now if you so wish. The tickets are priced £2 for the stand and £1.50 for the enclosure seats and again, it would be appreciated if a stamped addressed envelope was enclosed with each application. As I mentioned before, the ground admission will be £1 on the day, with no half price admissions at all.

To assist everyone, supporters and staff alike, I would like to repeat the telephone numbers which you should ring for certain information. For any enquiry in connection with the Pools office or Away Travel, the number to ring is Watford 25761. An additional number for Away Travel is that of Roger Fleming at Milton Keynes 74681. For the Social Club the number is 20714. If it is tickets or any other information you require, the numbers to ring Monday to Friday are Watford 21759 and 24729. On match days the number to ring to book tickets is 24729 as our answer set is connected 21759 which initially gives out match information concerning the availability of tickets etc., and from the time of kick off gives the latest score.



Ron's Round-up

I have recently had several telephone calls from Supporters who wanted to know whether the Club had an allocation of tickets for a concert to be given at Wembley in November by the Chairman. The answer to those who enquired is that we did not have an allocation and I am informed that all tickets have in fact been sold.

In case these notes are read by someone who did not see last Saturdays programme, the tickets for the match at West Brom will not be available until 8th October. Postal application can be made now accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope and the appropriate remittance. The stand seats are £2, enclosure seats are £1.50.

The Club is organising another of the popular Race Nites in the Vice Presidents lounge. This will be on October 27th and admission including Refreshments is £1 and tickets are available from the Club Office. In addition to the Races there will be a showing of the Film of Pele's New World at 7.30 p.m.

In view of the fact that England are playing Italy at Wembley on November 16th a new date is being sought for the reserves match at Peterborough.

For several reasons, not the least of which is the success enjoyed to date on the field, slight alterations will be made to the method of entry to Shrodells Stand. We will in fact be reverting to the system used some time ago whereby Adults and children will be able to go through the same turnstile. Tickets will be issued as you go through the 'stile. The date on which this will take place depends on how quickly the tickets can be printed.

Talking of tickets, a reminder that these can be booked in advance either by calling at the office or by telephone up to three hours before the time of kick off. If you fancy having the same seat for every match you can of course buy a season ticket or have your name placed on our permanent booking list. For further information of this latter scheme give me a ring at the Club.



the memories...

Watford are in Division 4 in the summer of 1958 but a youthful Ron Rollitt can still raise a smile (note the trees and telegraph poles at Vicarage Road). Inset: Ron 20 years later.

Boss Jenkins and Roger Jollyns, two of the club's hardest workers, lead the championship celebration past the Rookery End.

NINE-YEAR ITCH

THREE men who have been associated with the club during all three promotion exercises, are Jim Harrowell, Pat Mulloy and Ron Rollitt. How do the seasons compare?

SPANNING THE YEARS

Pat Mulloy 1959-1978

Jim Harrowell 1959-1978

COMPARISON CHECK

Season	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	HOME				AWAY							
								D	L	F	A	Pts	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Wtd '59-60	46	24	9	13	92	67	57	17	2	4	62	20	36	7	7	0	30	39	21
Wtd '68-69	46	27	10	9	74	34	64	18	5	2	39	7	37	11	5	7	39	27	27
Wtd '77-78	46	30	11	5	85	38	71	18	4	1	44	14	40	12	7	4	41	24	31
Lin '75-76	46	32	10	4	111	39	74	21	2	0	71	15	44	11	8	4	40	24	30

Season	OVERALL		Average	HOME		Average	AWAY		Average
	Total	(League only)		Total	(League only)		Total	(League only)	
1959-60	447,674	574	8.74	283,519	12,227	1959-60	9		
1968-69	522,794	11,366	312,475	13,586	1968-69	14			
1977-78	404,782	8,799	281,038	11,348	1977-78	17			
Lincoln	313,376	6,813	121,471	7,455	Lincoln	7			

NR: All records were recorded in Division 4 except the 1968-69 season, which was in Division 3.

1968-69

Ron Rollitt agrees. "It's a fairly different game now. The Hutton era was more entertaining and possibly there was more excitement in the Fulham team. Possibly Ken's team would have the edge of all three sides but this current one is the most professional of the lot. They have wrapped it up so efficiently and so quickly."

1977-78

Jim Harrowell admits a slur to the Hutton era, being an "old man". "The football was more entertaining then and of course Hutton was the best striker we've ever had. I'm not used to the new stuff. This season was exciting because we kept winning like we've never done before. I think that the team has the potential in Division 3, to be better than Ken Fulph's team which was a very good one."

Watford won their title at Southampton. It took a series of great individual and team performances to take them to that point. The manager, Jimmy Meadows, was a key figure in the team's success. The team's performance was exceptional, and they were able to secure the title in a convincing manner.

Praise from ex-bosses

Watford's championship success was founded largely on a squad of 16 players. Three had been signed by the club, three were ex-Watford players and ten were ex-Luton players.

Elton, Rod in harmony

SUPERSTAR Rod Stewart joined Elton John in cheering on Watford in their game with Hartlepool yesterday.

Rod was a guest of Hornets chairman Elton John and from the way he jumped to his feet to cheer when Watford scored the winning goal seven minutes from the end he has obviously become a firm supporter of the Hornets as well.

Rod, who knows plenty about the game, having played as an amateur for Brentford a few years back, was among the 17,000 crowd at Vicarage Road.

Division Four champions 1978

Watford aim to crack the crowd record ROLL UP FOR THE SEASIDE SPECIAL

A 20,000 crowd could be hailing Watford as Division Four champions when they entertain Southend a week on Saturday.

Tickets for the game have been selling ever since Graham Taylor's men clinched promotion with a 2-1 win at Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Now Watford need just two points to clinch the title. The club have two away matches before they play at Vicarage Road again so it looks as though the championship will be won on foreign soil.

The first chance comes on Saturday, when the Hornets visit Scunthorpe, followed by a trip to Grimsby next Tuesday.

But whatever happens in those two games, there is bound to be a carnival atmosphere at the ground the following Saturday to face second-placed Southend.

The demand for tickets has been so great that the club have had to say that they cannot accept telephone applications.

"Personal and postal applications are fine," said general manager Ron Rollitt. "But we cannot have the situation where 1,000 fans are queuing for their tickets on match day."

Watford's best home at-

tendance this season came on January 2, when 16,842 fans saw Hartlepool beaten 1-0.

But although that figure is almost certain to be beaten, the club record of 34,099 for the FA Cup tie against Manchester United in 1969 is unlikely to be topped.

Record

Even if Watford do seal the title before next Saturday there will still be plenty of targets to aim for.

Lincoln's Fourth Division points record, set when Graham Taylor was manager, stands at 74 and the Hornets can only afford to drop one point from their last seven games to beat that.

Lincoln also hold the record for the most number of wins in

a season — 32. Watford's tally stands at 28.

The revival at Vicarage Road can be seen in the fact that the new floodlights will be installed tomorrow night and the lamps fitted next Tuesday.

Already half of the total cost of about £15,000 has been raised through donations.

And the prospects for next year look bright. The sale of season tickets is going well and interest in the club has rocketed.

Taylor will probably choose from 12 men who beat Bournemouth for the game against Scunthorpe, his home-town side.

Skipper Sam Ellis still has his leg in plaster and the



GRAHAM TAYLOR



RON ROLLITT

prospects of him returning before the end of the season don't look too bright.

So Taylor's only major decision is the now familiar one of whether Brian Pollard or Luther Bissett starts the game.

The chances are that Pollard, who scored on Tuesday night, will keep his place and Bissett will again be substitute.

■ Watford Reserves were in action yesterday, earning a 0-0 draw at Peterborough in the Midweek League.

Elton's cup of cheer!



IT'S OURS! Watford FC chairman Elton John and general manager Ron Rollitt show off the Fourth Division Championship trophy at a Press conference at Vicarage Road today.

The Hornets made sure of the title with a 1-0 win at Scunthorpe. The fans will get their first glimpse of the trophy before Saturday's top-of-the-table clash against Southend United.

Memory man to the rescue

ROLLITT RECORDS HELP US OUT

WATFORD secretary Ron Rollitt (left) came to the rescue with information about a letter sent in after the Evening Post-Echo had asked readers to recall their favourite moments at Vicarage Road.

Mr Rollitt's memory goes back a long way — as do his records and those of Johnny Hartburn, the club's commercial manager and a former player.

They have programmes and scrapbooks relating to the Hornet's exploits of the past and were glad to help out this week.

On Thursday we published a letter from Mr Seymour Izzard, who described a fourth round FA Cup clash between Watford and Manchester United.

Mr Izzard, of Pentland Road, Bushey, could not recall the year or the crowd



at Vicarage Road but secretary Ron was quick to answer.

He remembers standing in the crowd of 32,419 on January 28, 1950 and still has the match programme. And he tells us that record gate receipts of £4,500 were taken.

Ron says the disputed goal scored by Watford winger Taffy Davies, but disallowed by the referee went in. "I was in line with the posts. There was no

doubt about it — the goalkeeper jumped up and the ball was well over the line before he scooped it out," he said.

Watford lost 1/0 to a last-gasp Jack Rowley goal, but the game was something to savour.

As Johnny's scrapbook shows, the Press hailed Watford's third round replay win at Preston which earned them a crack at United. Almost 29 years later Watford drew the Red

Devils in the League Cup at Old Trafford... and won.

Don't forget to keep those letters rolling in. Address them to the Sports Editor, Evening Post-Echo Limited, 31 Mark Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7BU and you could be in line for a £10 prize. There are also runners-up prizes of £5.

And if you have any old Watford soccer pictures, we'd be glad to publish them. They would, of course, be returned.

Soccer boss hurt in crash

RON ROLLITT, general manager of Watford Football Club, is in hospital with a broken leg after a car crash at the weekend.

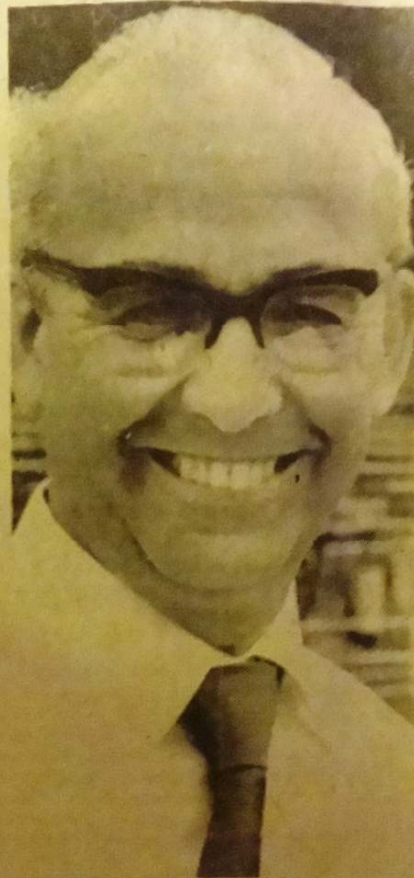
Mr Rollitt who has been with the club for about 25 years, is in a "comfortable" condition at Huntingdon County Hospital.

He was driving his Ford Cortina accompanied by his wife Alma when the car hit black ice on the A1 at Alconbury, Cambridgeshire, and went out of control, slid down an embankment and rolled over into a field.

Mr Rollitt, who was not wearing a safety belt, was thrown from the vehicle and broke his right thigh bone.

Mrs Rollitt, who was wearing a safety belt, remained in the car and although badly shocked, was not injured.

The couple were on their way to Newcastle to visit Mrs Rollitt's parents.



RON ROLLITT
'Comfortable'

Rollitt injured in car crash

WATFORD's general secretary Ron Rollitt is in hospital following a car crash on Saturday. Mr Rollitt and his wife Alma were travelling to visit relatives in Newcastle when their car skidded on ice just outside Cambridge.



RON ROLLITT

The long-serving Watford official was thrown from the car as it turned over four times and ended up on its roof.

"He has fractured a thigh bone and is likely to be in hospital for ten days," said Chief Executive Eddie Plumley.

RON'S IN CHIRPY MOOD

RON Rollitt, secretary at Vicarage Road for more than 25 years when he was severely injured in a car crash in November continues to recover well.

He saw a specialist on Thursday to discover that his broken hip has not quite healed completely. "But it's well on the way," reported Ron.

"Bearing in mind the hip was snapped right across progress seems to be good. I can't yet put full weight on my leg but I'm hoping to do that after I've seen the specialist again in a month."

Ron is keeping active. He's seen Watford's last three home games, visits his physiotherapist each morning and enjoys a walk in the afternoon.

Excellent news is that plate and pin inserted in his injured hip have knitted in well. "I feel a little bionic, but I assure you I'm okay," he joked.

NOW WATFORD SET SIGHTS ON HOME RUN

MANAGER Graham Taylor is relieved that Watford are looking forward to three home matches in the next four outings, and also happy that his team have more than held their own during seven awaydays in the last nine League and Cup fixtures.

Unbeaten in six games and with three clean sheets immediately behind them, the Hornets meet First Division Wolves in the FA Cup fourth round at Vicarage Road on Saturday.

Then comes a home Second Division clash with Cambridge and a trip to Preston before entertaining Shrewsbury.

For a side yet to win a League match on their travels, Watford have done well of late in gaining draws at Derby, Orient, Blackburn and Bristol City last weekend, besides winning in the FA Cup at Colchester.

"We've established a base and must make use of it," said Taylor, happy to see his club 14th in a table that boasts open promotion and relegation issues.

"In the last nine games we have only had home matches with Grimsby and QPR, so looking at our fixture list I consider us to have collected a reasonable return bearing in mind our away record was not very good at the start of this run.

■ Tonight at Cambridge Ian Bolton and Martin Patching continue their comeback towards full fitness with Watford Reserves, who visit Abbey Stadium for a Midweek League fixture.

The intention is to play both men in the first half and withdraw them at half-time whatever the score may be. Bolton (back) and Patching (knee) have only recently resumed normal training after gruelling solo work along the

By GEOFF SWEET

hard road which followed long-term injuries last September.

"Irrespective of the score we shall bring them off," said Taylor. "We don't want to rush them or do anything silly.

■ Ron Rollitt, due to retire after almost 26 years as secretary at Vicarage Road, has recalled a trip he made to Molineux, home of Wolves who visit Watford on Saturday.

During George Kirby's reign as Hornets' manager, Rollitt went to the Midlands to finalise the signing of defender Doug Woodfield.

"Time was running out and the player and his wife couldn't really decide whether or not to sign," said Rollitt.

"Kirby issued an ultimatum—sign now or forget it—and I rushed up to Molineux, where there were more problems over whether the fee was a net or gross figure.

"Eventually Woodfield signed and I dashed up to Lytham St Annes to register him just in time for the weekend.

"The sad thing was that after 53 minutes of his first game he went up for a ball and was injured and never played in the first team again."



■ RON ROLLITT... soon to retire as Watford FC secretary but well on the road to recovery following a car crash before Christmas

CLUBMAN MAY HAVE TO RETIRE EARLY

RON Rollitt, general secretary of Watford football club could face early retirement — after 26 years with the club.

The club's chief executive Eddie Plumley confirmed today that negotiations about pensions were in progress between Mr Rollitt and the club's directors, and early retirement for Mr Rollitt was possible.

He agreed that Mr Rollitt, aged 58, was scheduled for retirement in 18 months time, but he would not comment on negotiations.

Mr Rollitt broke his thigh in a crash in November. Since then, said Mr Plumley, Mr Rollitt has been unable to work, although he did come in frequently.

ROLLITT AND WATFORD TO PART COMPANY

RON ROLLITT, 58, faces early retirement. The former Hornets' general manager is currently recovering from a car crash sustained in November, but his 26-year Watford career is expected to end in the near future.

Neither Rollitt nor the club would confirm or deny rumours that have grown steadily over the past few weeks on the subject of the general secretary's future.

Five years ago Elton John donated his services free of charge in a special benefit concert for the club secretary who at one stage ran the administrative side of the club almost single-handedly.

Pension

Promoted from secretary to general manager towards the end of Ken Furphy's time with the club, Rollitt has filled something of a supporting role since the steady increases of staff on the administrative side have come into effect.

Three years ago, in a change of titles, Rollitt was redesignated as general secretary while Chief Executive Eddie Plumley became company secretary.

It is understood that had he chosen to, he would have been scheduled for retirement in 18 months time when the Secretary, Managers and Coaches Association pension, to which he subscribes, comes into effect.

Mr Rollitt, it is understood, had hoped to continue at Vicarage Road but this now seems unlikely although negotiations over his future are still going on.

In November, he and his wife Alma were involved in a car crash and while his wife escaped without a scratch, the general secretary broke both his thigh and hip.

"It will be eight weeks before I can think of putting my foot on the ground but Bertie Mee has given me exercises and I am making good progress," he said.

Tougher



Sims stands by for City recall

STEVE SIMS had the stitches removed from the operation on his fractured cheekbone yesterday and Graham Taylor will make a late decision on whether or not to play him at Ashton Gate tomorrow.

Sims for Terry would otherwise be the only change in the team with John Ward again taking the substitute shirt.

"I know people may think in terms of me having a striker as substitute but as I

have pointed out before, John is an intelligent player and experienced enough that if called upon to defend, he would do the job," said Taylor.

Ward of course "did the job" when it came to blotting out Forest's John Robertson.

While the manager was pleased with Steve Terry's performance, the liability of having two inexperienced youngsters at the centre of the defence, no matter how promising players they may be, is one which is best solved

ed by the return of the experienced Sims.

"We have drawn at Derby, Blackburn and Orient. We have played three teams out of the top seven and at varying times looked like winning the game. We have lost just once and that somewhat unfortunately at Swansea — another club from the top group, so we are making progress," said Taylor.

He feels that the team is gaining in confidence and that first away win could be just around the corner.

Escape

"As for Bristol City, they are not the sort of side who pulverise you and press you back. They don't give many goals away but don't score many either," said the manager.

City possess the second worst away record in Division Two along with Watford; their neighbours Rovers having the worst.

"Actually with a third of the season left, I still think City could well escape relegation. They have the players and have gradually picked up the results," he added.

But with one of the relegation places as good as filled by Bristol Rovers, Watford, in common with a number of clubs, have only two places to worry about. And with the Hornets making progress they could put these fears behind them over the next few weeks but a result at Ashton Gate would be extremely helpful in obtaining that position.

If Watford are to beat last season's points total, they have to average a point a game in the final third of the season. While some fixtures look tough on paper, Watford's growing stability and confidence makes this a feasible achievement.

• Former Watford favourite Andy Rankin, who fractured his skull in Huddersfield Town's 3-0 home defeat in the FA Cup third round against Shrewsbury, came out of hospital this week. He is expected to be out for a further month.

Rollitt is retiring

AS we exclusively revealed in these columns, Ron Rollitt is leaving Watford. Official confirmation came through this week, that the story we printed on January 16 was in fact true.

Months of negotiations have now been completed and the former Watford general manager retires from the club at the end of next month.

Said the 58-year-old Ron Rollitt: "Naturally I'm a bit sad after all that while — it's a lifetime really. But now the discussions are over and things have been worked out, it's just as well. I will be looking for work and I have had one or two inquiries."

Rollitt, who has been at Vicarage Road for 26 years, will be making a presenta-

tion to the Juniors for finishing runners up in the South East Counties League, of which he is the chairman, during the interval tomorrow.

"I will continue to follow Watford. There was talk of me becoming an honorary VP but I have not had the final letter from Watford," said Ron who is making steady progress in his recovery from a car crash.

FAREWELL RON

SIR, — Your report concerning Ron Rollitt's "early retirement" will cause a good deal of sadness to many supporters of Watford FC. For many he has epitomised the club as a club of integrity, and his retirement marks the end of an era.

It is surely insensitive of the club to announce his retirement while he is off work because of an accident and even more so since your report indicates that he could

retire anyway in 18 months' time.

What few people will know is that several years ago, when Watford FC were at rock bottom, Ron Rollitt received a very lucrative offer from a club in a much higher division. He was tempted but he resisted the temptation and remained at Watford. Such is loyalty and such is the price of loyalty!

Some of us who continue to support the club as they seek higher status are not unmindful of someone who once said: "What does it profit a man (a club?) if he should gain the whole world but lose his own soul?" — The Rev. Barrie Haafford, King Edward Avenue, Aylesbury, Superintendent minister of the Aylesbury Methodist Circuit.

WATFORD

Football at Vicarage Road

FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIV. 2
CAMBRIDGE UNITED
SAT., JAN. 31
Kick-off 3 p.m.

Tickets — not sold out yet

PEOPLE WHO MADE NEWS IN THE PAST YEAR



MR RICHARD GODMAN... former Watford owner was 98 in January. He died in February.



MR FRED HOUSEGO... a busy year for the taxi-driver Mastermind winner.



MR RON ROLLITT... left Watford Football Club after 26 years as secretary.



MR ROBERT MAXWELL... print magnate who came to the rescue of Sun Printers.



MRS BARBARA WOODHOUSE... controversial television switch from dog-training to horse-training.



MRS JOYCE SMITH... Grafton housewife record-breaking women's winner of the London Marathon.



MRS DOROTHY MATTHEWS... new chairman of the National Association of Women's Clubs.



COUNCILLOR TED AMEY... the Watford Mayor who came to office without a mayores.



COUNCILLOR MIKE JACKSON... became the new chairman of the Watford Labour Party.



THE REV. BERT CHIVERS... long-serving Rector of Bushey left for Australia.

Ron says farewell to the fans

VICARAGE Road is sure to warm to Ron Rollitt at half-time tomorrow when he presents the Watford juniors with their South East Counties League runners-up trophies, writes Geoff Sweet.

The Hornets' general secretary of 26 years standing officially retires on May 13 following a car accident in November which has caused him to miss work ever since with a broken hip.

Tomorrow Ron wears his South East Counties chairman's hat for what is likely to be his last public duty while still a Watford official.

It comes as a great pleasure for Ron to hand over

medals to the juniors for few of his years on the South East Counties committee have coincided with Hornets' success at this level.

The juniors also reached the FA Youth Cup fourth round and three of the team — Jimmy Gilligan, Colin Hull and Paul Franklin — will be turning professional next season.

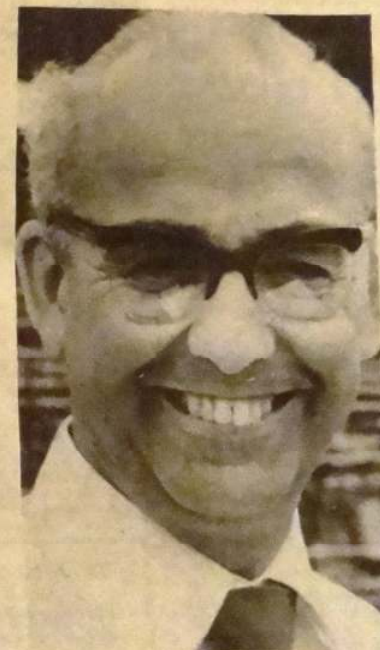
Ron, meanwhile, continues to move towards full fitness and is aiming to find another job in the accountancy line.

"It shouldn't be too long before I can walk normally,"

said the man who, incidentally, was appointed on Valentine's Day and took up his Watford post on April Fool's Day in 1955.

"I'm getting stronger all the time — the knee has been causing the most trouble. I've still not got total freedom of movement and when I switched from crutches to a walking stick recently I couldn't put full weight on my leg.

"Since the accident I've had to rest and be patient and as someone with outdoor hobbies it has been a bind. Still, I've been able to get out and see some football."



RON ROLLITT



THE BEGINNING

AND THE END ...

AFTER a lifetime at Vicarage Road, Watford's former general manager, Ron Rollitt, says farewell on Saturday and as chairman of the South-East Counties League he makes the official presentation to runners-up Watford Juniors, watched by chairman Elton John and a proud Juniors' manager Tom Walley, to celebrate their success. For Ron Rollitt the end of an era; for many Juniors the beginning of a professional career.