

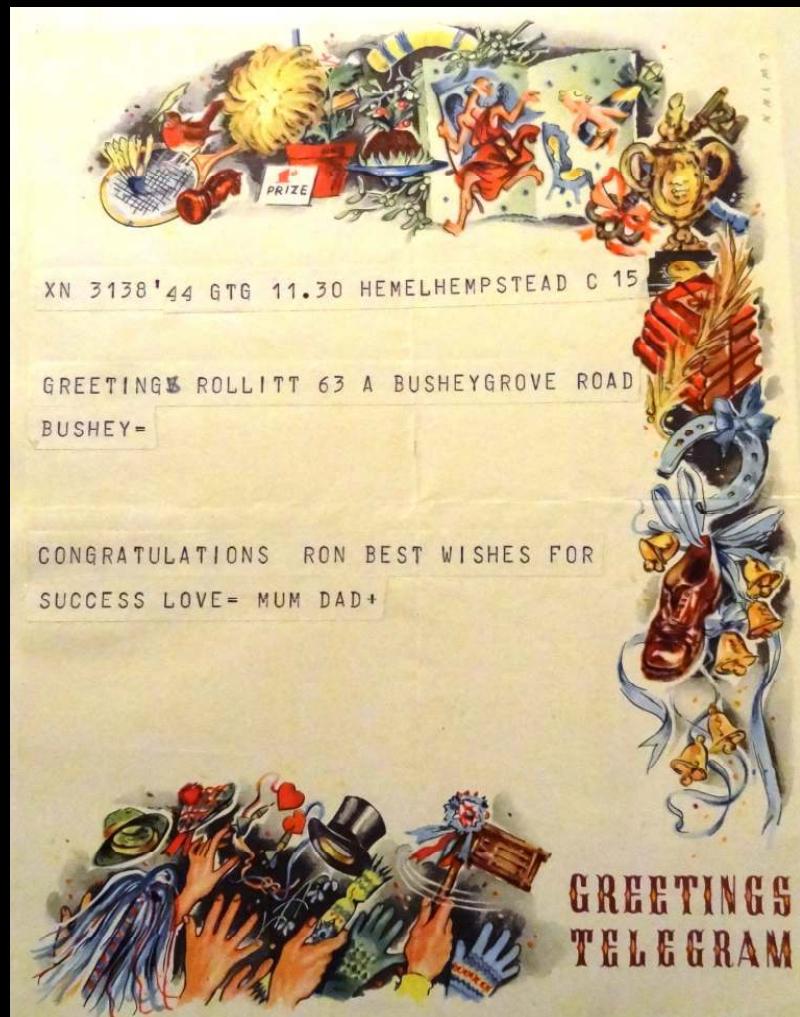
Ron Rollitt's Watford Years

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
Secretary:	J. C. DENNIS	Hon. Medical Officer: DR. ROBERT RENWICK
		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 a dozen clubs are covered every week and every report is carefully analysed. Several awards have been watched, but I think it fair to say 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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L.M.R. SIDINGS, CROXLEY GREEN

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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.

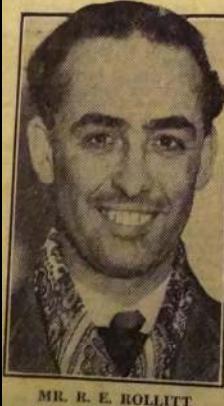
He is Mr. Ronald Edward Rollitt, of 63a Bushey Grove-road.

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



Touring the new domain

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Secretary: J. C. DENNIS Hon. Medical Officer: DR. ROBERT RENWICK

Manager: L. A. GOULDEN

Trainers: P. MOLLOY, L. THOMAS

Kick-off
7.30 p.m.

Watford v. St. Mirren

VOICE OF WATFORD

lemen.

cottish 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 from an indirect free in the last minute hitting up, our defence ell and trying to use the ard line is still lacking

elling over Easter. After Friday, they will leave for Torquay to play afternoon, and return to again travel to the Saints.

W. M. MATTHEWS

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 Manning and Billy Wright. It will be some weeks before the 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.

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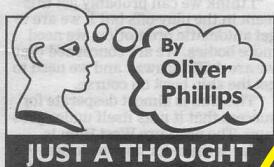
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“Make sure the hand in your pocket is your own”

Forgetting obvious in search of loud speaker answer



By
Oliver
Phillips

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 Stoddart as deejay. I can hear World Without Love and Peter and Gordon singing “Please lock me away” wafting over the airwaves before the big crush 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 the 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.

Watford played Z-Cars and embarked on a record-breaking 27 home games without defeat in the days of Nat 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 loudspeaker 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?

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 Nat Jennings, Duncan Welbourne, Charlie Livesey and George Harris.



The two captains of Watford—the only club in the Football League with two—John Cavin 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...

IT'S THERE!



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 non-sensical 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 VIPs 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 Garvey's 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

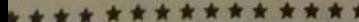
Watford medals for the loyal ground staff

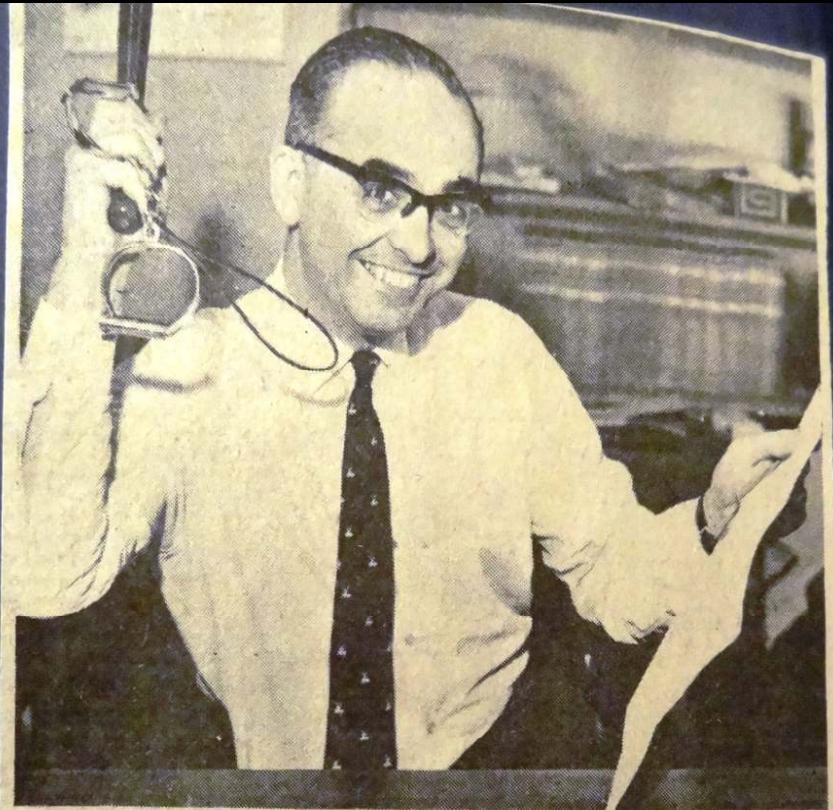
WATFORD are having a commemorative medal struck to mark their first-ever season in the second division after 49 years of lower grade soccer—to be presented to some 80 turnstile operators and stewards. Said Ron Rollitt, Watford secretary: "The staff recipients all felt that such a medal would be of more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





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 townfolk 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 come 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—of the team he 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 . . . Sincere, 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 have 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



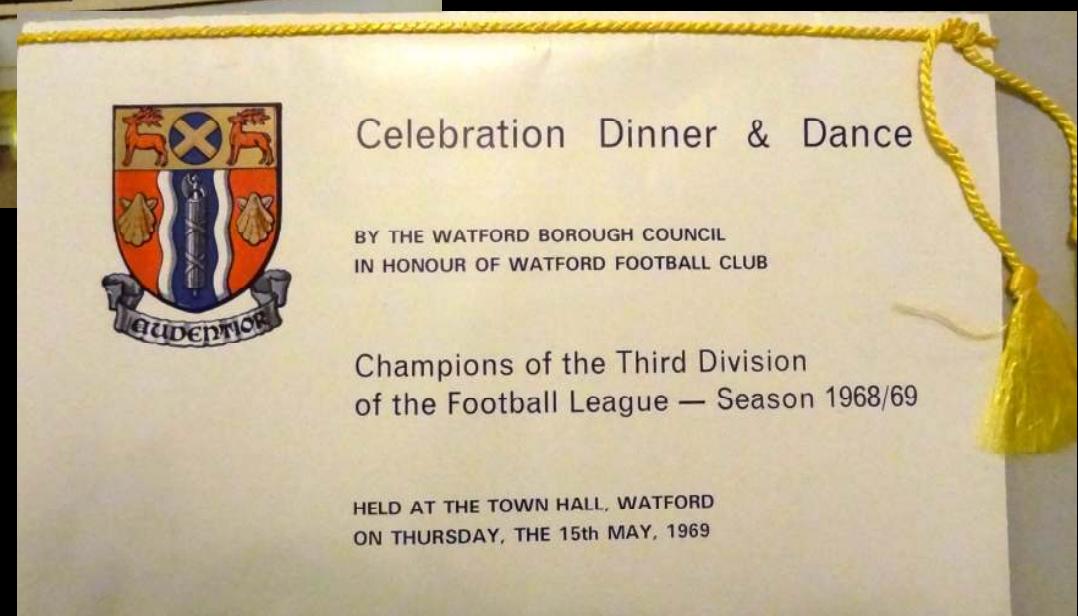
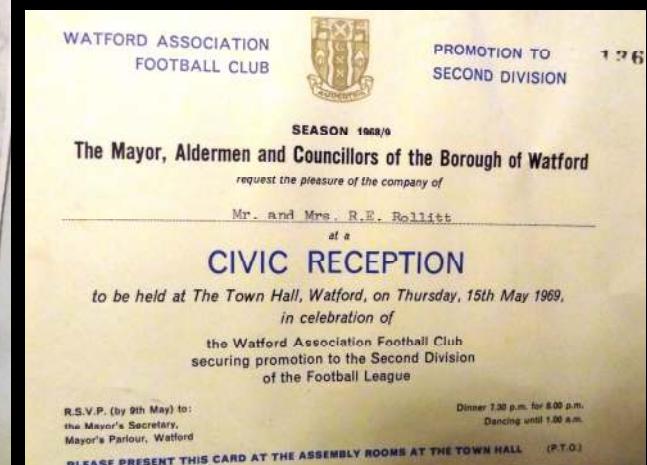
COMEDIAN Terry Scott shares a joke with officials and players of Watford Football Club, who have certainly got plenty to smile about. Last night they were guests of Watford borough council at a dinner and dance at the Town Hall to celebrate their winning the Third Division championship.

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



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 hatch provides 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 greyling at the temples, is the only one of the four non-playing full-time staff to admit in 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 is probably cope with the better. Born in Stockton-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.

Right from the start, he wanted to be a professional footballer, spending hours kicking tennis-balls round streets of factories, steel 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 that school played rugby. "At first I refused to go at all," he recalls. "I was halfway to a nervous breakdown and for nine months my mother had to take me to school every day."

ANXIOUS DAYS AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS FOR THE MEN IN THE BACK ROOM

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

Ken takes Doris to many of their 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

Correspondence of all kinds is one of Mr Rollitt's

most time-consuming concerns. There are always 20 to 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 autographed 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."

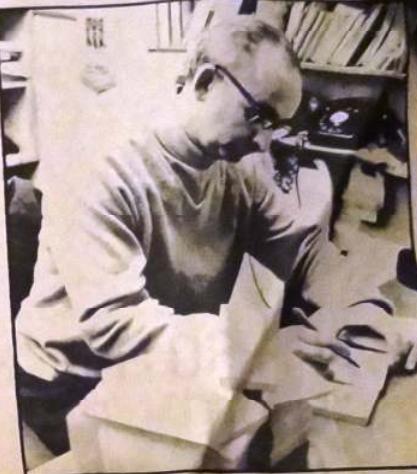
But Ron admits he hardly ever watches a match. "I have only seen four games this season. The rest I have just glimpsed in snatches. During a game I'm having to attend to a thousand and one little problems — answering telephone calls, checking security, seeing to the gate staff, sale of tickets, attendance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

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

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

TOMORROW: When the boys need a mum



ABOVE: Secretary Ron Rollitt — 150 letters a week

BELow: Train-coach turned physiotherapist Pat Molloy treats top goal-scoring Barry Endean

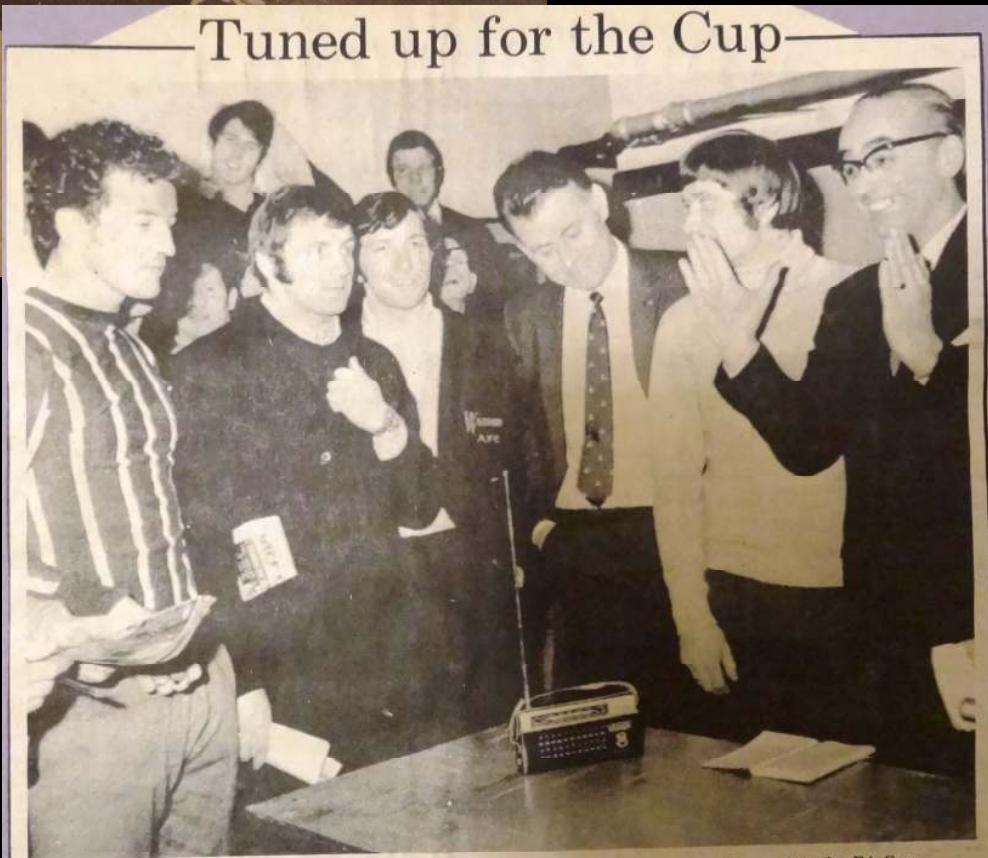


The close season - July 1969



Tuned in for the
FA Cup draw
1970

Tuned up for the Cup—



PICTURED in their dressing room at Vicarage Road yesterday where they listened to the FA Cup semi-final draw are manager Ken Furphy and the Watford players. Front row (l-r): Tom Walley, Barry Endean, Mike Packer, Ken Furphy, Ray Lugg, and secretary Ron Rollitt.

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 diabolical that the staging club gets a third of the ticket - 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 that 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,
HERTS

Dear Mr. Rollitt,

Just over a year to you on behalf of the Far Club on the splendid performance of Manchester United. Again I thank the Parish Councils for congratulating them every success in matches this year.

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



HERTFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Hon. Assis

Telephone
HOME : Hemel Hempstead 55523

Dear Ron,

May I on behalf of the Watford FC players on the

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 disappointment in this County do not c trials. What a pity!

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

SECRETARY
ALAN HARDAKER

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 qualifi
F.A. Cup, and co
delegates last y



THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE LIMITED

TELEPHONE



HERTFORDSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

SOUTH-WEST DIVISIONAL COMMITTEE

9, DENWOOD CLOSE,
WATFORD,
HERTS

11th March, 1960

Hon. Secretary :
W. A. C. STRUGNELL
Telephone—Watford 29904

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 the remaining fixtures in the Football League.

Yours sincerely,

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 £9,000.

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





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, Collin 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 McGettigan. 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.



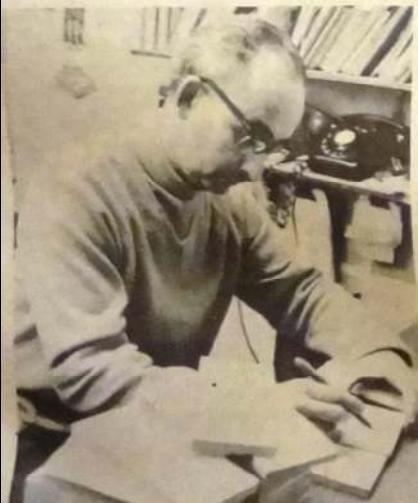
Club Officials

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



Organised by the Watford Observer, Elton John's visit to Vicarage Road was kept a strict secret although less than 30 minutes before he was due to arrive, Occupation Road was filled with a host of young girls. Watford's fears were quickly alleviated. The girls were members of a visiting team of Swedish girl footballers. Here secretary Ron Rodlett greets the pop star.

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-



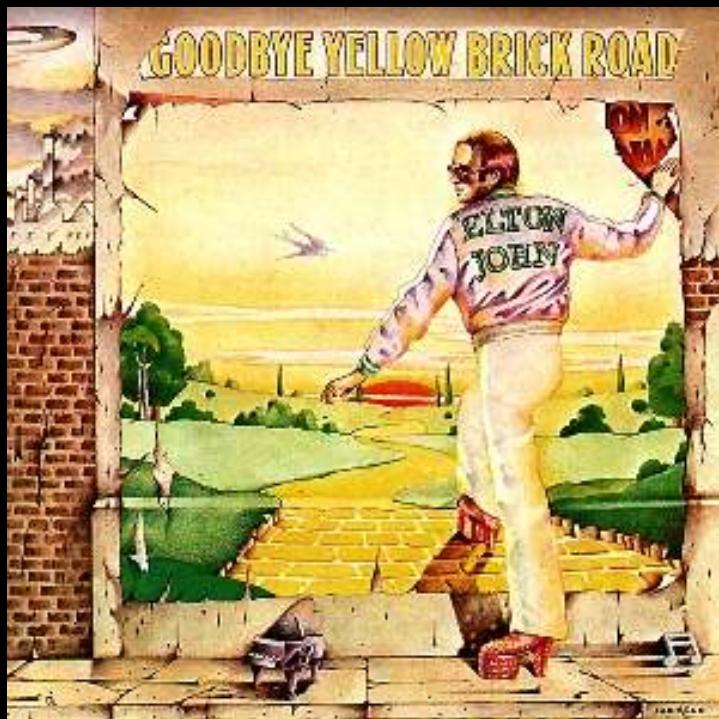
First again, from the Watford Observer last May.

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 Regis Dwight who used to visit relatives next door to his home in Springfield Close, Croxley 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

age of the Nobel Prize
of the Nobel Prize
awarded to Mairead

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.



RON ROLLITT

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!



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.

Sheffield Utd. v. 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 £10.00 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.

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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 is staring them in the face... the worried 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 Lex Siemann, David Woodfield and Pat Molley



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

So it was 1-0 to Walsall at the interval and early in the second half Andrews was booked for a crude tackle on Andrews. But Walsall remained clear again.

Bond then found that the ball would not run with him and he was unable to score in the penalty area, but the crowd, who were magnificent throughout, were not besting their team now. And in the 49th minute there was dancing on the terraces

had to make an equally good one to stop Andrews from getting a second, and in the 57th minute Walsall did regain the lead.

A weak headed clearance

from a right-wing cross went

wasted no time in hitting a

thunderous shot into the net.

Sullivan again raised the

hopes of Watford support-

ers by intercepting a ball

wide of Kearns and

Harrison who got there first

for Walsall.

In the 86th minute,

Splinter struck again with a

low shot into the corner of

the net and that was that.

It mattered not that

Sullivan successfully con-

verted a penalty into a

missed chance when he

handled a Garner header on

the line. They didn't even

time to restart the game

and Watford were down.

As the final whistle

sounded, a mass of sup-

porters raced across the ground

and into the front of the

stand and chanted "Banner

out".

But the chairman again

made it quite clear that he

had no intention of resign-

ing after the game.

The one happy specta-

tor

at the end was Aldershot

skipper McNaughton

who admitted that it had

been 90 minutes of torture

for his team.

"I would rather have

stayed in Aldershot and

played golf, but my chair-

man

feels sorry for Walsall for

being one of the most

helpless teams in the

league," he said.

He added: "I'm glad

they went in Walsall now.

Watford: Regan, Hines, con-

trary, Scully, Jenkins,

Woodfield, Mayn,

Greenhalgh,

Buckley, Burch, Sut-

cliffe, Clark, Keen.

Referee: T. G. Hume (Bilston

area).

Aldershot: 46 14 11 21 53 83 39

Walsall: 44 12 17 19 52 73 37

Transper: 44 12 9 23 31 58 33

Huddersfield: 44 11 19 23 58 78 32

THE FINAL RECKONING

Watford: 2 Walsall: 3

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

Watford 2 Walsall 3

by MIKE GREEN

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, but in the final reckoning, it wasn't enough.

Just as manager Mike Keen feared, Walsall's latest adventure of the fact that Watford were forced to throw extra men forward by giving away goals in quick breakaways.

Watford didn't deserve to lose last night, but then relegation was sealed by one game alone. Points thrown away in September and October by silly mistakes proved to be the icing on the decided cake.

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

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

On that basis they did not deserve to clinch a win above Aldershot, the side who eventually pipped them for the promotion. Watford, 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 the ball in the past. As a despondent Keen said last night: "I admit I have made mistakes, but we haven't played as well as we should have done on more than one occasion, but I still

reckon the fates have been against us all along."

"I have never been particularly lucky in my life," he said. "I just didn't know what to say to them in the dressing room afterwards. I certainly could not fault them for effort in that game."

And it was the senior

players who rose in the

occasion last night. Keen

had been a critic of the

team's performance, members

of his playing staff on

occasions, but Dennis Bond

and Peter Scully, in particular, were quite

magificent last night.

Scully, who was

Watford's defensive

ace, had a moment of

luck. He was in tears as he left

the field. Bond was close to

crying too.

"It just wasn't meant to

happen," said Bond.

Watford's first goal was

a classic case of what hap-

pens when an offside trap

doesn't work. Walsall

bulleted 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

defenders, it went in.

But even before this

misfortune, Scully had

been a couple of goals

away. Greenhalgh was unlucky

when the ball bounced

unkindly after he had

clashed with a Watford

defender, and he had

been beaten to the ball by

Walsall's Andy Buckley

when he had a header

on goal.

Watford's second goal

was a tremendous drive

by Scully, who had

been beaten to the ball

by Walsall's Terry

Spinner, who had

been beaten to the ball

by Walsall's Terry

Spinner, who had

been beaten to the ball

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been beaten to the ball

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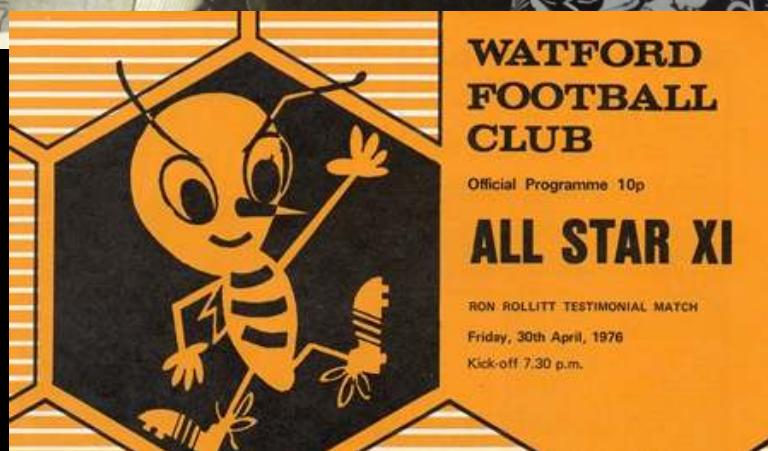
Spinner, who had

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by Walsall's Terry

Spinner, who had

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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, Eton 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 2222



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.



Above: Elton John in the directors' bar at Watford Football Club. Left: in the directors' box at a match. The cloth cap covers a £700 hair transplant

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.



**1977
1978**

the memories...

WATFORD are in Division 4 in the summer of 1958 but a youthful Ron Rollitt can still raise a smile now as he and telegraph poles at Vicarage Road, 1958. Here 20 years later.

Ross Jenkins and Roger Ashby, two of the side's Boreham workers, lead the championship celebration past the Rockery End.

**NINE-
YEAR
ITCH**

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

1959-60

"Totally different," says Pat Mollin. "Ken Furphy was a determined player but there was wonderful discipline. Graham Taylor had a great influence on me, believing you can win every match. This has been the most professional in terms of getting the best out of the players. But the Hutton era was real football. There was more variety, more games in those days, never a winter with two winners and open play instead of all being gathered in the centre of the park. Entertainment-wise that era was best."

1968-69

Ron Rollitt agrees. "It's a different game now. The Hutton era was more entertaining and possibly there was more excitement in those days. I think every Ken's team would have the edges of all three sides but not currently the standard of football is the same. That's been wiped it up so quickly."

1977-78

Jim Harrinoff seems a man in the Hutton era, but as an "old man." "The football was more interesting then and the players were the best striker we've ever had. I can't get used to the new style of football we're playing like we've never done before. I think that the team has to be better than Division 4 teams to be better than Ken Furphy's team which was a very good one."

SPANNING THE YEARS

Pat Mollin 1959 ... 1977

Jim Harrinoff 1959 ... 1975

COMPARISON CHECK

	OVERALL						HOME						AWAY											
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	W	D	L	F	A	Pts					
Watford '59-60	46	24	8	13	92	67	57	17	2	4	62	20	36	7	7	0	30	39	21					
Watford '68-69	48	27	10	9	74	34	64	16	5	2	35	7	37	11	5	7	20	27	21					
Watford '77-78	46	32	10	4	85	39	71	28	1	44	14	40	12	7	2	41	26	31	17					
Watford '77-78	46	32	10	4	111	39	74	21	2	0	71	15	44	11	8	4	40	44	20					
ATTENDANCES	Total (League only)						Total at Home (League only)						Away (League only)											
	Home & Away						Attendance						Attendance											
1959-60	4,274						8,724						12,271						11,021					
1968-69	632,795						113,665						312,475						13,886					
1977-78	404,782						8,759						261,039						11,349					
Lincoln	313,376						6,813						171,471						7,455					

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

Number of wins by the odd goal
[1-0, 2-1, 3-2 etc.]
1959-60 — 12
1968-69 — 14
1977-78 — 17

Jim Harrinoff was then just at Sandown. It took a great deal of great individual and team performances to take him to that position. For me, he's simply a true Watford old-timer. He's a great player, but he did not have to be a legend longer than he was. He was the best player in our history. I think that the team at the Old Show Ground made it a Watford legend.

Pat Mollin is now an ex-reporter for the *Evening Standard* and has been writing for the *Watford Observer* for 20 years.

Ross Jenkins and **Roger Ashby**, two of the side's Boreham workers, lead the championship celebration past the Rockery End.

Praise from ex-bosses

WATFORD's championship success was founded largely on a squad of players. Three had been signed by

CONGR

WA

A collage of three images. The top image shows Elton John and Rod Stewart cheering at a football match. The bottom left image is a portrait of Rod Stewart. The bottom right image is a graphic of a 1977-1978 football trophy.

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."

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

By MARK GARROD

Attendance 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 toppled.

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.

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.

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

The chances are that Pollard, who scored on

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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.

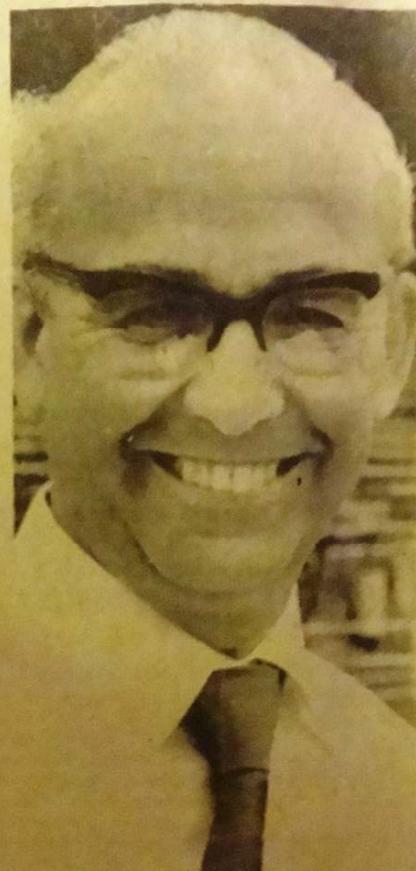
Mr Rollitt who has been with the club for about 25 years, is in a "comfortable" condition at Huntingdon County Hospital.

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 the 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 Mid-week 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 Murphy'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.



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.

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.

"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.

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.

Tickets — not sold out yet

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 unluckily 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 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, also 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.

Tougher

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

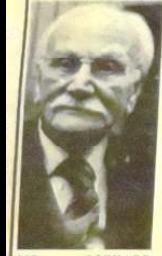
WATFORD
Football at Vicarage Road
FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIV. 2
CAMBRIDGE UNITED
SAT., JAN. 31
Kick-off 3 p.m.

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.

PEOPLE WHO MADE NEWS IN THE PAST YEAR



MR RICHARD GODMAN ... former Watford engineer '98 in January. He died in February.



MR HORSEGO ... 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 star from dog-training to horse-training.



MRS SMITH ... Garston homecoming 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 mayress.



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



THE REV. DERT 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.

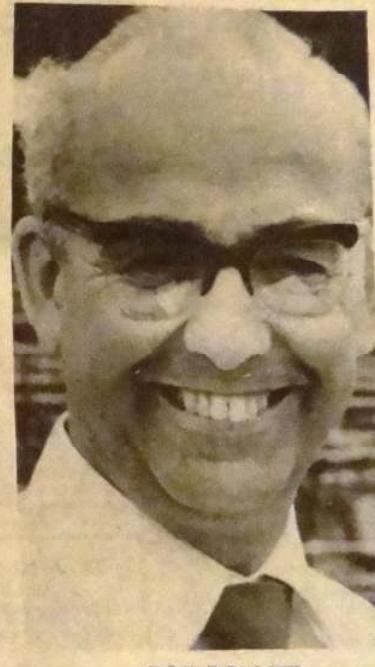
Ron, meanwhile, continues to move towards full fitness and is aiming to find another job in the accountancy line.

"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.