

READING REFEREE

Editor - Brian Palmer

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Editorial

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JANUARY

Monthly Meeting

The meeting opened with a disappointing number of fewer than 50 present, possibly because the expected visit of the County Training Team could not take place.

- Members congratulated Pat Monaghan on his appointment to the England v. Holland Under15 match to be played in May at Old Trafford.
- Membership stood at 116 and those who had not re-registered were being contacted (yet) again.
- There were now 23 attending the new training course.
- The Reading Football League was looking into two cases of referees overcharging and allegations about referees not sending in reports. The Chairman echoed the league's concern and promised full support.
- Martin Shearn and others were concerned about the length of time being taken by the Berks & Bucks FA to acknowledge reports by sending out new forms.
- Brian Palmer, in referring to the resignation of Assistant Editor, John Moore, asked for any volunteers to replace him, especially with DTP experience. He also invited members to be thinking of ways in which to celebrate our 75th anniversary.

On the (Problem) Spot

Stewart Mills presented an incident which had happened in a Hellenic game.

The goalkeeper has gathered the ball from behind the goal line. He ran into the goal area, quickly put the ball down and side-footed it towards one of his own side outside the penalty area. However, the ball struck the referee who had been on the goal line and was running towards the centre, and ricocheted to an attacker positioned outside the penalty area. The attacker dribbled forward and kicked the ball into the net. What should the referee decide?

As ever, there were different responses and, as ever, some were rather surprising. Some members would have disallowed the goal, considering the referee as an outside agent. Wrong, of course in Law. Most members correctly agreed that the referee had to be discounted, being considered part of the appurtenances, and therefore the ball had properly gone into play and a goal had

been correctly scored. It was also argued that the referee could technically have disallowed the goal as he had not seen the goal kick correctly placed and taken. Perhaps on a local park game, but here he had neutral linesmen. It was agreed that the referee should not have been struck at all - he should have been facing the goal and keeper as he went *backwards* towards the centre circle..

The Guest Speaker was our own Peter Pittaway. Peter refereed in the Army at the highest levels and was a Football League linesman until compulsorily retired. He now referees regularly on the local parks.. He is a licensed FA Referee Training Instructor.

In his vigorous, somewhat self-deprecating style, Peter started by suggesting that the appreciation and respect and overall satisfaction we all want to get out of refereeing do not come easily. *Cautioning, or Do you do it by the Book?* After his desert island joke warm-up, Peter asked for those in the first year of refereeing and started to tease out actual experience of cautioning. How frequent? For what sorts of reason? An example of deliberate handball. One member doing only boys' football (U 11) this season had not cautioned at all. In what circumstances might you caution?

Among the more senior members there was wide variation. One had cautioned three players so far this season, others at least as many *per match*. One older member, who retired from refereeing men's football before the recent years of mandatory instructions cautioned only six players in - 40 years. This was considered exceptional!

Peter then took us through the various reasons for cautions, first just giving the number and sub-section of the Laws. (Most of us failed on at least one).

12(j) - *entering or leaving without permission*. The typical scenario would be making a substitution without telling you. Most members had never cautioned for that and Peter (and one other) confessed to having cautioned a player who entered, without remembering to caution the one who left.

12(k) *Persistent infringement*. How do you decide? Not easy to define how often or how soon. Members gave examples - the best advice is 'gut feeling'.

12(l) *Dissent*. It depends largely on your tolerance level and does get easier with experience. Action on 'You can't be serious'? depends entirely on circumstances. Dissent can be by action as well as word. Kicking the ball way for example (unless deemed time-wasting). Is '*Cheat*' dissent? Never for Peter - it's abusive and merits the red card.

12(m) *Ungentlemanly conduct* The catch-all, but in practice usually an unacceptable tackle or deliberate handball.

Why do we caution? Peter believes it *is* different at local level - the same Laws but applied taking in local circumstances, like levels of skill and fitness. The

caution is to avoid escalation. But do think about it. Is it justified? Peter liked the 'sin-bin' used successfully in Germany at local league level. Serves both as an immediate sanction in depriving the team of a player, and allows the player a cooling-off period.

When do we caution? How soon? If it's necessary in the first two minutes, *do it*. Aim for consistency in that game - consistency week to week won't happen. If you do caution early, it does not mean you will be inundated - the usual fear. Remember you can't get the game back by cautioning if you've lost it. Don't threaten unless you mean it. Remember the periods of pressure, the flash points - e.g. after a serious incident, a goal, beginning of the second half.

How do you caution?

'No 4 *please*'. Aim to calm it down. Step back if necessary. Take your time. If others crowd round, Peter asks whether they would like to join him (in the book).

Conclusion?

- Know when and why to caution
- Do it to keep control, to apply the Laws
- Do it when its justified, at whatever stage of the game.
- Do it with dignity and respect

Final Message: *Caution with Caution.*

FEBRUARY Monthly Meeting

[Report based this month on those provided by Martin Albury and Brian Wratten, to whom my thanks. Ed]

About 50 members present (at least at the start of the meeting). It was reported that the Berks & Bucks FA has now installed a new computer system. An improvement in speed of turn-round of disciplinary reports is anticipated.

Among the other items of business:

- FIFA is satisfied that the FA 'had implemented its requirements' in not allowing us a seat on the FA Council.

[Doesn't it all depend on the question asked? There was no suggestion the FA had done anything *wrong*, our concern is that it continues to fail to do something *right*. Not the same thing at all. Why not ask FIFA about *best*

practice, about how other countries arrange the relationship between referees and the football administration? Ed]

- The 1996 National RA Conference will be held at Stoke-on-Trent, 14-16 June. Invited guests will include Sir Stanley Matthews.
- Membership stood at 116
- Kevin Parsons, Supplies Co-ordinator reminded members of the kit available through him and the national RA. He can also get Umbro kit at a discount and even has some previously used kit at very reasonable prices.
- There are now 27 candidates on the present training course.
- John Moore, on behalf of the training team, highlighted three matters from the NRA Minutes:
 - (a) Players sent off are allowed to stay in the vicinity of the pitch, e.g. the dugout, unless the competition rules say otherwise or the player gives trouble. Then he must go and the incident has to be reported. In case of a refusal to go, the game would have to be abandoned as a last resort.
 - (b) If a referee suspects a player is under the influence of drugs (or alcohol) he should talk to a club official to get the player removed.
 - (c) A referee had used a portable tape recorder to record what was said during disciplining a player. The FA has ruled that this is not part of referee's equipment and should not be used.

League News

- Derek Reigate reported that two referees had turned up for a Reading Football League game because the first appointed had not responded to the club's message. If no contact seems to have been made by the club, contact them.
- Phil Lewis reported that the league is looking at the question of fees and expenses. A straw poll of members present was inconclusive: some prefer a consolidated fee, some prefer separate fee and expenses.
- Keith Simmons, on behalf of the Sunday League, reported several problems arising from recent weather conditions:
 - a referee had declared a pitch playable, then called it off after two minutes and claimed a full fee.
 - another had arrived at 10-20 for a 10-30 kick-off, and declared the pitch fit, when other referees thought otherwise. One team refused to play..
 - some referees have been charging in excess of the amount allowed.

Martin Shearn reminded members that players may play in glasses, but only if they constitute no danger and won't come off, i.e. are unbreakable and fastened round the back

Brian Wratten asked members to be thinking of potential officers and committee for next season. All posts are open for election at the AGM in May.

On the (Problem) Spot

The problem was *ground conditions - pitches and inspections* and Peter Pittaway provided the answers.

- arrive in good time. In frosty weather even earlier than usual
- dress appropriately to test the pitch - wear boots and run around/kick a ball
- inspect on your own or with other referees. At parks with two or more referees it should be 'all on' or 'all off'.
- wet pitches can be dangerous: if the ball gets stuck, players may 'dive in'.
- consider the temperature, especially in very cold weather with a strong wind (danger of hypothermia).
- fog: delay the start if necessary. Suspend play temporarily before calling the game off. Don't be hasty.

Guest Speaker

Gary Willard, the Guest Speaker originally scheduled for this meeting, had been invited to a gathering of newly-appointed FIFA referees in Seville. We were surprised he had preferred that to visiting Berkshire on a cold and wet winter's evening and spending an hour or so in our stimulating company! We were delighted, however, to welcome old friend Roger Beavis at short notice.

Roger, a licensed instructor and experienced first aider, started by pointing out that the teachings and techniques of first aid are constantly being reviewed and updated. So there were differences - indeed contradictions - between the advice he had offered on his last visit in 1993 and that which he would now be giving.

Describing first aid as 'an accepted set of principles of what to do when an injury occurs', he told us that full details of the most current teaching were to be found in the *First Aid Manual* (see below). It was upon this publication that his presentation would be based.

Roger started by summarising *the problems*:

- often there is no first aid kit - only what you have with you
- the silent person is the one to be concerned with - there is little wrong with the player still running
- the head clash, unconsciousness and major cuts are serious

and the priorities:

- to preserve life
 - go to the silent player first
 - get an ambulance arranged before treating the player
 - clear his airway/windpipe

- to protect yourself: precautions are essential before dealing with blood (danger of AIDS and hepatitis)

[Use a plastic bag or similar plastic to cover a wound before you put your hand over the cut. If artificial ventilation is needed and there is blood in the region of the mouth, cut a small hole in the plastic and breathe through this.]

When a person is unconscious, the tongue can flop back and block the windpipe. It has to be removed as soon as possible. Hold the person's forehead and chin and pull back the head, holding the chin forward. This opens the airway. Do not do chest compressions unless you are sure there is no heartbeat. Make sure an ambulance is on its way - the best chance of survival is to get a defibrillator to the casualty as soon as possible.

If a player is down injured, quickly assess the events leading up to the injury, look at him for signs and symptoms; talk to him. If there is no response, open his airway and look for obstructions in the mouth. Put your cheek over his mouth for at least 5 seconds to check for breathing. If none, still holding his head back, pinch his nose, place your mouth over his and breathe into it. Let the air release from the casualty and breathe into him again. Continue until the ambulance arrives.

After the initial two breaths, you should check the pulse in the casualty's neck. (which should be done only once). If there is no heartbeat, do *cardiac chest compressions*. These are done by measuring from the bottom of the sternum two fingers upwards and then with the centre of the hands and locking arms, press down approximately 2 inches (50mm) for 15 times, counting 1,2,3 etc. After this, two more breaths and repeat the compressions.

When a player is unconscious but breathing, he needs to be put into the *recovery position*. Unconscious people usually vomit and, as the choking mechanism is turned off when people are unconscious, the vomit could block the airway. The recovery position allows any vomit out of the mouth.

Roger then went on to explain the principles and practices of ***Resuscitation*** or ***CPR***. Using a model of the human head, he showed how the airway can become blocked by the back of the tongue when a person loses consciousness. The technique used to overcome this problem and re-open the airway was then demonstrated. Further demonstration - using a human dummy - followed, with the audience being shown how to provide the casualty with ***artificial ventilation*** (the 'kiss of life') and, if necessary, how this could be combined with chest compressions in order to force oxygenated blood through the heart and round the body.

The final demonstration was of getting a casualty into the *recovery position*.

Procedure as follows:

- do all checks - open airway etc.
- kneeling at the casualty's side, take nearside hand and place it over the neck
- take the other hand and place it over the side of his face
- move the far leg, holding it under the knee, pulling it up so the foot is level with the other knee
- pull the knee towards you and the body will roll over
- adjust the casualty's leg to a 90 degree angle at the knee.

The member of the audience chosen for the demonstration was Vice-Chairman, Derek Reigate, who had been singled out by Roger as having the bulkiest and most awkward frame of anyone in the room. The spectacle of Derek's inert (and at times uncooperative) body being turned through ninety degrees with little more than the pressure which Roger could apply through his two index fingers, was a sight not to be forgotten.

Everyone present should have derived great benefit from Roger's highly informative and thought-provoking presentation. It was a shame that so few members stayed to enjoy his talk, with his lively and entertaining delivery. Certainly those who did stay left the meeting feeling that, if we were ever unfortunate enough to require first aid, then we would be more than happy to find that Roger was on hand to provide it.

[Although every attempt has been made to record accurately what Roger said, readers are referred to the textbook he quoted: *FIRST AID MANUAL*, Sixth Edition 1992, the Authorised Manual of St John Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance Association, and the British Red Cross. Published by Dorling Kindersley, London. Price £8.99, Available in most bookshops.

75th Anniversary Celebrations

The Committee has asked me to head a small sub-committee to arrange a function to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Reading Referees' Association.

If anyone would like to volunteer to be part of the sub-committee, or has any ideas for a celebration, or has any contacts in catering or entertainment that might be suitable, then please contact me:.

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TIMES CHANGE

But shouldn't our priorities remain the same? asks Dick Sawdon Smith

A couple of our local newspapers run regular features with titles like *Pick of the Past* and *Down Memory Lane*, where readers send in their old photographs. These are usually of places, buildings or events, but occasionally they are of people from a past age.

Looking recently at a photograph of a local football team taken in the 40s, one point struck a chord in my memory. Although the players were all wearing the same shirts, their shorts and socks were all different. I remember playing myself at that time, and as the photo showed, only shirts were provided, so you had to bring your own shorts and socks and the team seldom matched. Numbers on the backs of shirts were unheard of.

Today's teams, of course, even in the lowest leagues, expect everything to be provided, down to the tie-ups to keep their socks up. Referees too expect the teams to be turned out complete. I have even heard at RA meetings, members complaining about opposing teams turning out in similar socks and how the leagues ought to do something about it. Almost a hint that they wouldn't allow teams to take the field if any part of their apparel was identical to their opponents'.

I link this with a report earlier this season of a referee who refused to play a game on a local park, after he had stepped out the pitch and found it only 45 yards wide. It reminded me of a story about Charlie Kearse who refereed locally between the wars, and went on to reach the Football League middle and indeed did international duty. When he arrived to do a local game one Saturday, he discovered that there were no goalposts. Charlie marked out 8 yards at either end and put down a pile of coats to represent the goalposts. "I'll decide whether the ball goes under or over the bar" and they played the game without dispute.

I realise that you can't get away with that today, but are we in danger of losing our sense of proportion? How would you react, for instance, if there were no corner flags or no goal nets? When I started refereeing 44 years ago, nets were only compulsory in the top division locally. With a pitch that doesn't quite meet the regulations, isn't it better to play the game and report it afterwards? Do we really want to get too finicky about team strips? I appreciate that there are Laws and rules to be upheld and leagues to be won, but isn't the most important thing today, as ever it was, to give 22 (or more) players the opportunity to go out and enjoy a game of football?

Dick Sawdon Smith

ADVICE FOR NEW (and not so new) MEMBERS or Are You a Planner?

Correspondence. Becoming a referee means the postman will deliver plenty of mail, and most of it will need acknowledgement or a written reply. So good housekeeping is required: keep all your paperwork together and *keep it tidy*. If your wife (girl friend or mum) finds it lying around, you can bet you'll have a job to find it! Simple ideas for keeping the paperwork together: a box file; a lever arch file; a drawer; a good sized briefcase; even a school satchel (easily picked up at a jumble sale).

Always make sure you have a current diary to enter up *all* your appointments. Also a calendar with all your dates visible, say, in the kitchen. Keep a book of 1st class stamps handy.

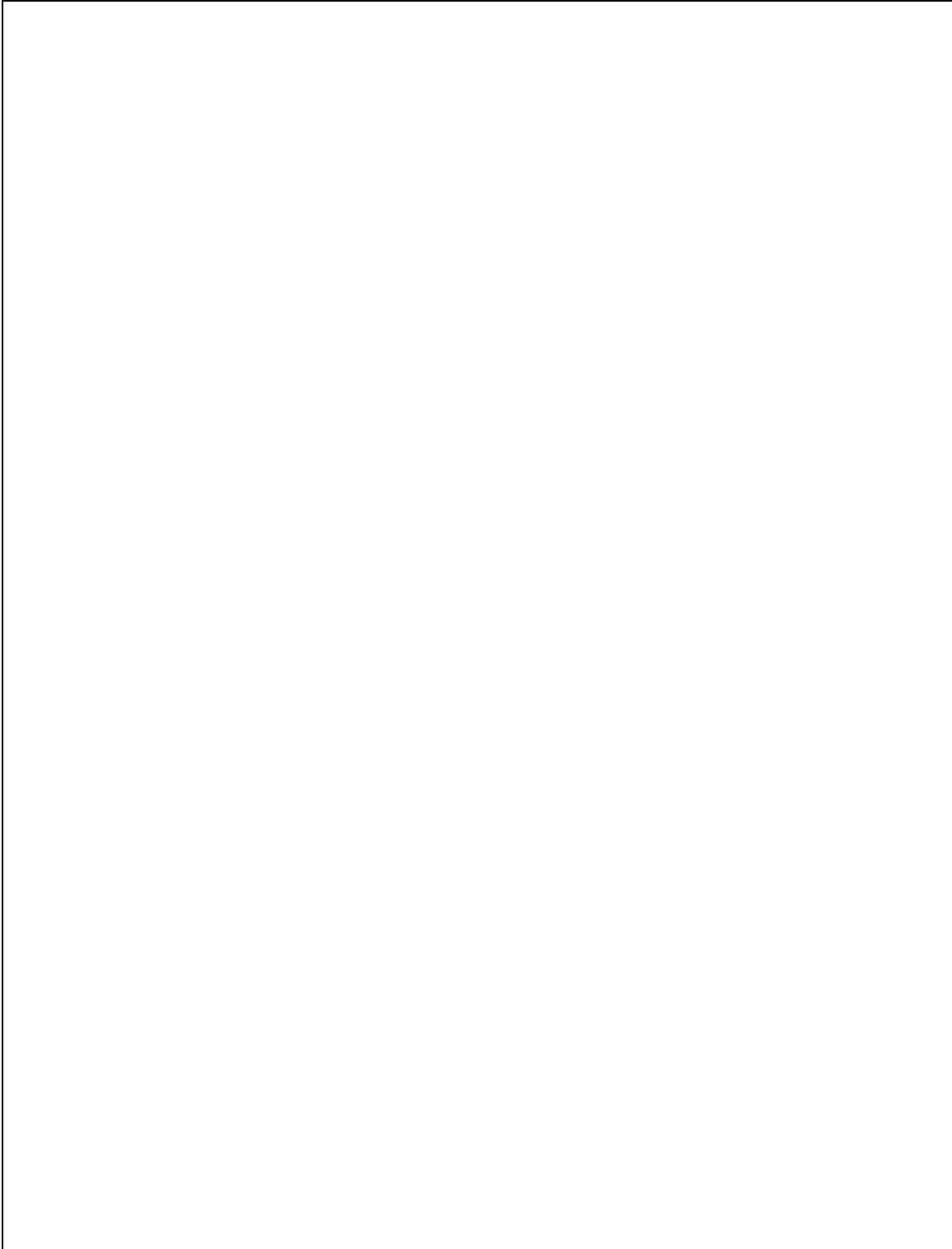
Make it a rule to deal with *all* correspondence within 48 hours. Prompt replies are required and the higher up the leagues you go, the stricter the system. If you are to be efficient you have to plan for the whole season in advance. This demands *pre*-season commitment. And remember football doesn't always come first - think of your family. If you leave some dates open, your forward planning can be seen on the calendar and in the diary - by your partner as well you. It will help things to go more smoothly. As your fixtures become known, enter them at once on your calendar and in your diary. Then, if some family commitment/crisis occurs, your partner can see any clash. If you *must* pull out of a fixture, deal with it promptly. Nearly all fixture secretaries have an answerphone as well as a phone number. Never let football refereeing come first before family.

Carry out your correspondence and forward planning as a professional and you can be sure you can enjoy many years of football and refereeing.

So, are *you* a planner?

Alan Turner

Ex-Town Star Tom
plays it by the book



Swindon Evening Advertiser (20/12/95)

Thanks to Alan Wellsted

75 YEARS - AT LEAST!

Part 2: The Next 25 Years - 1971-1996

The story of the first fifty years of the Reading RA gave testimony to the years, sometimes decades of dedication of a number of members, often in the same role. The next 25 years were to see contributions by individuals no less significant, but often for more intensive periods and in a variety of offices and roles.

Importantly, the Reading RA has become involved more widely in matters of policy affecting the business of refereeing. While the society has continued with its traditional vigour to fulfil its major objectives 'to provide opportunities to meet regularly for the discussion of matters relating to refereeing and football in general' and 'to provide training classes for intending referees and further guidance and training for qualified referees', it has made a more significant contribution to the wider debate concerning referees and refereeing - at the County and national levels.

A summary chronological record of the third quarter century of the society can do no more than give a flavour of all that has gone on. It does, however, highlight how the referee's lot has changed over the years, how much of what was most valued in the society's activities has remained, and how many of those things perceived by the society as needing change - in both refereeing and football - have continued stubbornly to resist it.

The most special event of the Reading RA 50th Anniversary was the Jubilee Dinner. Although Sir Stanley Rous was unable to attend, guests included Dennis Follows, Secretary of the FA, Jack Taylor the FIFA referee of World Cup Final fame, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Reading.

At the AGM in 1971, Cecil Grieshaber, an officer first in 1936, was made a Life Member. Cecil had served on the Committee, had two spells as Assistant Secretary, three years as Chairman and also ran the training classes for a number of years. Ray Weedon, Treasurer for 14 years stepped down and he and Ray Stroomer were made Vice-Presidents, Alan Porton failed to be elected Press Secretary, but it was not to blight his future career, arguably because he became Assistant Editor to Dick Sawdon Smith.

For the first time the FA Memorandum for the new season referred to the 'professional foul', and the 'flick-up' free kick was outlawed.

For the Reading RA this was a period of frequent social activity: in addition to a successful seaside outing to Bournemouth in the Summer, the first Children's Party was held at Christmas.

The Berks and Bucks FA announced that promotion from 3 to 2 was no longer to be automatic and in the *Reading Referee* Dick Sawdon Smith invited the assessors to look at what was important (e.g. not the colour of the laces).

In February 1972, Major Sainsbury, President of the Reading RA, died. An architect and surveyor by profession, former Mayor of Reading, scouting rather than football enthusiast, he simply believed in referees and refereeing and served the society faithfully as President for 40 years. He was also to become our unexpected and generous financial benefactor.

This was an outstanding season for the Reading RA's own football team, the *Whistlers*. They won the County 6-a-side competition and the Southern Region Finals of the national 5-a-sides. In spite of defeat in the national finals at the Albert Hall, it was a memorable visit.

Life Member Charlie Kears was elected President, Peter Jefferis became Chairman and John Lambden joined the Committee.

The new Chairman determined that the business at monthly meetings would be given only 30 minutes and chairs would be re-arranged around tables to make the atmosphere more informal. (Those who know the Oddfellows' Hall, the venue at that time, will recognise the need).

In an article in the *Reading Referee*, Alan Porton made a case for 'professional referees', well before the idea gained media popularity.

In February 1973 the month's Guest Speaker was Barrie Davies, the TV commentator.

This was also the year of a serious disagreement with the County FA. A member had been assessed and recommended for promotion from 3 to 2 but his promotion 'deferred' by the Berks & Bucks FA because, in their view, he had not been refereeing long enough - this in defiance of FA policy.

New President Fred Porton made a presentation to Harry Collier in recognition of his 25 years as Referees' Appointments Secretary for the (then) two Saturday leagues.

Don Serjeant, who was to become our oldest member, took office as auditor and John Lambden became Assistant Secretary.

The society also said good-bye to its first black member, Sig Owojemi, who was leaving his many friends after six years in Reading to return to his native Nigeria.

Guest Speaker at the October 1973 meeting, Ted Gale, Chairman of Harrow Society and father of our Committee member Terry, made a spirited attack on the lethargy of the national RA - to become a recurring theme in Reading and elsewhere - together with a plea for a full-time administration.

The 100 Club, established in 1970 to give financial support to the society, was wound up, but the emphasis on fund-raising remained, with regular jumble sales and raffles forming an important part of the society's activities.

Bernie Young joined the Committee to fill a vacancy.

The dispute with the County FA over promotions continued and the society caused controversy, even in the *RA*, by writing direct to the FA (as it was FA policy that was being flouted). When the FA rejected our approach as 'not through the proper channels', a 'boycott' was proposed by one member in view of this and the lack of support given to referees 'by the disciplinary set-up'. The article containing the proposal caused a stir, but members did not go on strike. It is interesting in retrospect to note that official statements at this time always referred (accurately) to referees as 'men'.

At the 1974 AGM, Maurice ('Mo') Baker, a committee member since 1966, became Chairman, and the George Mills/John Lambden partnership, which was to prove highly influential in many aspects of the Reading RA, was formed: John became Secretary and joined George on the training team. George moved to Vice-Chairman after 10 years as Secretary. John's first initiative was to start the scheme (now called 'mentorship') to support newly-qualified referees.

The October 1974 Guest Speaker, FA Cup Final referee, Gordon Kew, bemoaned the fact that when he started to referee in 1950 'players controlled themselves', but it was no longer the case.

In February 1975, after two years, we won our dispute with the County RA over promotions: in future they would be on *merit*, irrespective of the referee's length of service.

In the February/March edition of the *Reading Referee* there was a spirited article by George Mills urging the RA to take full charge of refereeing matters. David Keen took office as Treasurer after one year on the Committee.

A former recipient of the Club Linesman's Award (and more than once), present Vice-President Terry Gibbs got his Class 1 and also took over as Treasurer of the Reading Combination League.

Members were warned not to become involved in unaffiliated football.

1975 was historic for the society. A woman passed the training course for the first time: Janice Stranley, daughter of one of our members. She was not allowed to qualify and officiate, however, as the FA still did not accept women referees.

Spring 1976 was particularly sad for local referees and football with the deaths of Charley Kearse, Maurice Edelston and Vic Beasley.

At the AGM George Mills became Chairman, and Dick Sawdon Smith Vice-Chairman. John ('Bunny') Waters resigned after serving 15 years on the Committee.

The season 1976/77 opened with a new-look *Reading Referee*. For the first time it had a 'real' cover and was professionally produced by local printers Lamport Gilbert. Though still only four sides, the content was cleverly increased by the use of a smaller typeface - 11 point? (though even smaller was to come).

The society complained to the County FA about their practice of automatically making new Council members both assessors and examiners of referee trainees, whether or not they had actually been a referee. The issue had come to a head because a new Council member had actually taken the examination to become a referee *and failed*. The County FA took no action.

At the end of the Autumn training course one of the successful candidates was Wendy Prior who *was* allowed to qualify. A former player with Bracknell and Reading Ladies, she went on to get her Class 2 and officiated for a number of years in local football.

1977 was to prove a vintage year for refereeing. The FA appointed a National Referees' Training Officer, Ken Ridden; the national RA appointed its first paid secretary; the Reading RA made national policy at the NRA Conference. The society had accepted a proposal from President Fred Porton that all referees should belong to the RA, which could then speak for all referees and make it possible for us to conduct our own affairs. The motion for 100% membership, as it became known, was passionately presented by Chairman George Mills on behalf of the Reading RA and carried by a huge majority in spite of the Council's opposition. It has, however, never been implemented.

The 1977/78 season opened with a different sort of dispute with the Berks & Bucks FA. The County RA's elected representative to the County FA - Ken Walker - had been rejected 'because of his behaviour and attitude'. The County RA saw it differently, believing he had persisted in asking legitimate questions and trying to get answers, and went so far as to seek legal advice. The matter petered out in 1978 when Ken decided to resign from all football.

Peter Jefferis became President, Dick Sawdon Smith Chairman and Geoff Way took on the office of Treasurer for what was to be the first of three occasions. Two new Committee members were Derek Reigate and Brian Palmer.

The first course of the 1978/79 season saw the introduction of the practical element into the society's training programmes. It was introduced by John Lambden, based on his experience in the Army. A special match was arranged by the Sunday League (now it is a regular League match) and trainees took turns in the middle and on the lines 'shadowed' by a qualified official, much as today. The society proposed a form of proportional representation for voting at County RA meetings, but it was never accepted.

December 1978 is distinguished by the first note of Martin Shearn's concern about the state of players' studs.

The national RA took out an insurance policy designed to cover members in case of assault. At the Annual Conference George Mills received the Meritorious Service Award for his service to the RA dating from 1956.

David Keen, member of the training team, was appointed to the line of the FA Vase final at Wembley..

Lionel Gibbs, Life Member, was elected President of the County FA. Bert Newman, Vice-President of the society, died at the beginning of the new season. (The Fair Play Awards were subsequently given his name in commemoration). As a referee Bert reached the Football League line and among his extensive service to the RA were 12 years as Chairman. He was probably better known as Secretary of Division 5 of the Berks and Bucks FA and long-serving Secretary of the Saturday Combination League. In March 1980 a dinner was arranged at Wokingham FC, at which the national RA President Ken Burns made a special presentation of his MSA to George Mills.

David Keen was appointed to the Football League linesman's list, joining fellow members Tom Bune (middle) and Peter Pittaway (line)..

At the AGM John Lambden did not seek re-election as Secretary in order to concentrate on training; Geoff Way became Secretary and Derek Reigate replaced him as Treasurer.

Thanks to Sunday League Secretary and County FA Councillor 'Chippie' Taylor, briefing meetings for assessors were introduced for the first time. 1981/82 was a special season in a number of ways. Derek Reigate became Assistant Secretary of the County RA; Reading RA membership passed 150 for the first time (12 years after reaching 100 and our congratulatory letter from the County FA); an innovation was a special (and very well attended) meeting arranged on a Monday to listen to TV commentator John Motson; Brian Palmer carried out a survey of local clubs to examine their attitude to referees and his findings were published in an expanded issue of the *Reading Referee* and re-published in the national RA publication, the *Football Referee*. He also published an article in the latter advocating a practical element in the referees' qualifying examination. The Reading society endorsed a proposal on those lines to go to the national RA Conference where it was proposed by Brian, ably seconded by John Lambden, and carried by a large majority. Although it remains RA policy (like 100% membership), it has still to be implemented by the FA.

In 1982 David Keen passed the course to become an FA Licensed Referee Instructor, Reading's first.

In the summer of 1983 Peter Willis, former Football League referee, was elected President of the national RA. Dick Sawdon Smith resigned after 22 vigorous years as editor of the *Reading Referee* to be replaced by present editor Brian Palmer.

1983/84 was again special. The society received a bequest of £10,000 under the will of Major Sainsbury, the former President (which was to be followed by a second similar sum). After much discussion, it was decided initially to invest the money. Following the Annual Conference, there was an inconclusive exchange of correspondence with the national RA over the lack of action on the proposed inclusion of a practical element in the examination. The County RA

accepted a proposal to implement it in the Berks & Bucks, but it has never happened. At the national RA Conference Dick Sawdon Smith received the Meritorious Service Award in recognition of some 30 years of service to the RA.

The Reading RA made history (again) in 1985 with a recruiting advert (complete with specially written jingle) on local Radio 210. Feedback from candidates showed that it had had some effect but it was discontinued the following year as not sufficiently cost-effective. A series of articles by Brian Palmer as Press Officer in the Reading FC match programmes, as well as introducing spectators to points of interest in the Laws, acted as a further (and cheaper) stimulus to recruitment.

National RA took the 'Reading proposal' for a practical element in the qualifying examination to the FA Referees' Committee, only to have it turned down.

Dissatisfaction with the Oddfellows Hall, where meetings had been held for some twenty years, was increasing. It was considered by its critics to be rather spartan and unwelcoming and had to be 'dry' - drink was available at the Nag's Head across the Oxford Road. The Hall's major advantages were that it was central and free. The search for a new venue was started.

Harry Collier, Life Member, who had served as Secretary for a remarkable 30 years until 1964, died.

The season concluded with Wendy Prior, our first active woman referee, being awarded the middle of the Reading Junior Cup. Two of our members officiating on the Football League - Tom Bune and Peter Pittaway - were retired.

The 1985/86 season started sadly with news of the death of our most (internationally and nationally) famous (Life) member Lionel Gibbs: the 'Mighty Atom' as he was nicknamed in South America during the 1948 World Cup. Lionel's service really was remarkable. In 1929, eight years after qualifying, he refereed the FA Amateur Cup Final, in the 1930s travelled Europe, officiating in league and international matches. He refereed the FA Cup Final in 1944 and then achieved even greater fame as one of the first English referees to officiate in the World Cup. 64 years an active member of the Reading RA and 52 years of service to the County FA, Life Member and finally President.

The Sunday League, ever conscious of the need for referees, helped to stimulate recruitment by offering 25% of the cost of kit for referees who would do a minimum of six games on their league.

Nationally the first proposals for a 'super league' were being made.

In memory of our benefactor, a Major Sainsbury Award was instituted to be presented annually to the member who was adjudged to have made the best contribution as a referee in local football.. The autumn training course had an

all-time-high enrolment of 54 (while attendance at monthly meetings was also about 50).

The Committee took up the question of associate membership with the national RA which seemed to be misinterpreting its own rules. Although legal advice supported the society's view, national RA did not concur and the matter was finally dropped to avoid possible litigation.

Fred Porton and Don Sarjeant received a special presentation to mark their 50 years service to the Reading RA.

The opening of the new season was marked by a change of venue - to the Trades Union Club in Chatham Street, just behind the Oddfellows' Hall. The magazine editor Brian Palmer introduced a new Handbook which contained, along with a variety of information about the society and refereeing, the new rule allowing membership details to be held on a computer. Stephen Green joined the Committee and, thanks to him, the magazine had a newly-designed cover. (The new society photocopier made it possible to average 24 pages too). In November 1987, Life Member Fred Porton died after 59 years of membership and a variety of offices in the society. He also served as President of the County RA which he helped to found and was a Vice-President of the County FA.

The society's practical training was captured on video and created a good deal of interest nationally. Copies were circulated on request as far afield as the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland.

Membership reached 146, the second highest ever.

David Keen had his third Wembley appointment - on the Littlewoods Cup - before being retired from the Football League linesman's list.

Summer 1987 saw a number of changes of personnel: John Lambden completed his term of office as Chairman and stood down from his role as Senior Training Officer. Bernie Young was elected Chairman; Dick Wilkins became Vice-Chairman; Peter Hitt and Pat Monaghan joined the committee; Stephen Green became the Public Relations Officer of the County RA.

In July, Ken Ives, 15 years a Committee member, former Supplies Officer and stalwart attender of the National RA Conference, died after a brief illness, aged only 55.

Late in 1987 Reading members were asked by the Chiltern Society to back a proposal that referees should receive a fee for attending personal hearings. Reading members agreed unanimously (and magnanimously) that attendance was part of the job of a referee and should therefore *not* be paid for by separate fee. Magazine editor Brian Palmer published the first digest of statistics about members from the computer database.

A presentation was made to Don Sarjeant and Ray Weedon in recognition of their service as auditors (15 and 10 years respectively).

In March 1988 Peter Jefferis died after a few months' illness. He was in his late fifties. Peter was the founding editor of the *Reading Referee* in 1958 and had

held various offices including that of Chairman. Peter was an articulate and committed member who had given much and still had much to give. The annual quiz on the laws of the game for local clubs, devised and introduced by Dick Sawdon Smith was discontinued after 13 years for lack of support. The long-running battle with the Berks & Bucks FA over disciplinary suspensions was re-activated when they suspended a wrong-doer for a month - from 31 May. John Moore and Graham Stockton were elected to the Committee and Dick Sawdon Smith was elected President. County FA Certificates of Meritorious Service were awarded to George Mills, John Lambden and Dick Wilkins.

1988/89, and the new Reading Football League (created from the merger of the District and Combination Leagues) successfully got under way. A Problem Spot was introduced into monthly meetings as the Problem Box tried at intervals had had no lasting success. The season's membership of 152 was the second highest ever (free membership was being given to successful trainees for their first season). At the 1989 AGM it was decided to discontinue the practice of giving a copy of the new Referees' Chart to every member. The annual membership subscription had nevertheless reached £10 for the first time. George Mills was elected a Vice-President of the County FA.

In the autumn of 1989 the national RA completed the purchase of a Headquarters building in Coventry. It also turned down the Reading RA proposal of John Lambden for the Meritorious Service Award, on the grounds that his massive and innovatory service to refereeing, first in the Army and then in Reading and the County, did not quite add up in days and weeks to the required total. Typically John urged the society not to challenge the decision. In three successive issues (January-March 1990), the *Football Referee* published its longest article ever, written by Brian Palmer on the *'The Training and Retaining of Referees'*. The article was based on extensive research, including a survey of all referees' societies and County FAs. In February 1990 the society wrote to the President of the national RA in support of Alan Robinson, the RA Public Relations Officer, who had been found guilty of 'improper behaviour' by the FA, because he had said some players are cheats. The RA support was of no avail. There were again frequent complaints from members about the poor condition of local park changing facilities. The society's dissatisfaction with the inefficiency of the management of its (relatively) new venue - the Trades Union Hall - came to a head in March. There had been a history of double-bookings and meetings having to be held in a noisy and cramped bar area. A deal with the Reading FC Supporters' Club, the Royals Rendezvous Club in Tilehurst Road, was quickly negotiated for the

April meeting. The annual Dinner and Dance had to be cancelled for the first time since its inception, due to lack of support.

Members were again concerned with the County FA which suspended a player from 2 April to 24 June for head-butting.

Dick Wilkins became Chairman; Graham Stockton, Vice-Chairman; Stephen Green, Senior Training Officer. This was the year the FA Cup Final was replayed on the night of our AGM - and some 80 members attended! (It never became clear whether it was wonderful commitment to the society or dread of the quality of the football they would otherwise have had to watch).

At the annual National Conference, Life Membership of the NRA was conferred on George Mills, only our second member ever to be so honoured.

To summarise his extensive service: George had started as a committee member in 1956 and been Secretary for 10 years, Vice Chairman, Chairman, Recruitment Officer (as it was then called), Training Officer, President. And it was George who presented the 1977 motion to Annual Conference for 100% membership. He had also been the County RA representative on the County FA for 10 years and B & B representative on the Southern Division for 17 and had just been elected President. He had been awarded the Meritorious Service Award of the RA in 1980.

This was also the summer of the FIFA 'mandatory instructions' - including the red card for destroying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity - which arguably brought the biggest change ever to refereeing.

Dick Sawdon Smith and Terry Gibbs collaborated to publish a First Aid booklet for clubs: *So You Carry the Sponge*.

The FA, concerned about the difficulty of recruitment into refereeing, set up an incentive scheme for *County FAs*, though in many counties including the Berks & Bucks the training is conducted by the RAs.

Membership reached a record 166. In December 1990 George Mills stood down after 25 years as a member of the training team.

At the 1991 AGM John Lambden was made a Life Member of the Reading RA in acknowledgement of his 44 years of meritorious service to refereeing..

David Keen, former Treasurer, member of the training team, FL linesman and currently FL assessor, was made a Vice-President. In a 3-way election, Graham Stockton was elected Chairman for 1991/92. Andy Awbery, Stewart Mills and Gary Webster joined the Committee and brought a welcome and considerable lowering of the average age.

The National RA Conference decided to press for a seat on the FA Council.

Early in the new season the national RA Council caused great ill-feeling among societies by deciding on a levy of £1 per member to provide a contingency fund against possible VAT liability. Many societies began to question more than ever the value of the national body. In a front page article in the May 1992 issue of the *Football Referee*, Brian Palmer suggested areas of necessary reform

and proposed a Development Group or 'think tank' - an idea taken up by other members but not by the RA Council.

John Moore joined the training team.

Membership reached 173 in 1991/92 - the highest ever - and the practice of giving free membership to successful trainees for their first year was discontinued. The Guest at the Annual Dinner was Peter Willis, President of the national RA.

Derek Reigate was elected Vice-Chairman and replaced Dick Wilkins who had served on the Committee since 1976 and also been Assistant Secretary. Pat Monaghan was elected Secretary; Stewart Mills, Assistant Secretary, Neil Isham, Treasurer.

During the summer of 1992, Graham Stockton became an FA Licensed Instructor after attending the 2nd year course.

At a Special Meeting held before the September monthly meeting, a Disciplinary Code for members was accepted. (It has never had to be implemented).

At the November meeting, youngest member Ritchie Condon (aged 15) made a presentation to Don Sarjeant, the society's oldest member, to commemorate his 90th birthday.

The local leagues rejected yet again a proposal that they should only appoint RA members to their games.

April 1993 was to bring tragedy - Chairman Graham Stockton collapsed and died at the age of 43 while refereeing an evening match. Well-known ex-local player, poacher turned gamekeeper, Graham had brought the wind of change into the society. Energetic and committed in the training team, then as committee member and ultimately Chairman, he made an important but all too brief contribution to the Reading RA.

Stephen Green, Senior Training Officer, was elected to replace him. Also at the AGM, retiring President Dick Sawdon Smith was made a Life Member in recognition of his service during 40 years' membership, including 22 years as editor of the *Reading Referee*, office as Chairman and President, founder and manager of the RA football team, the *Whistlers*, as well as responsibility for numerous innovations like the award for Club Linesmen and the quiz nights on the Laws for local clubs. Brian Palmer was elected to succeed him as President. John Moore became Assistant Editor of the *Reading Referee* and was responsible for its Desk Top Publishing face-lift. Ray Kerr, though not a member, agreed to act (voluntarily) as the society's professional auditor.

The discussion of the future of the National RA at the Annual Conference proved to be a damp squib, unsurprising in such a large gathering. The 'think tank' proposed the previous year had not been adopted. During the summer Stewart Mills completed his qualification as an FA Licensed Referee Instructor.

The 1993/94 season started with a Reading member officiating on the Premiership for the first time. Not 'home-grown' unfortunately. Graham Poll,

(now on the FIFA list but no longer living locally), had joined the Reading RA after moving into the area.

Although our relationship with the local leagues remained good, with representatives in regular attendance at our meetings, complaints continued about bad language on the local parks and the inadequacy of too many referees in dealing with it. The society continued to give the topic a high profile and dealt positively with any of its members whose refereeing was found at fault in this or any other way. Too often the offenders were non-members and yet the leagues remained opposed to 100% membership.

The assault on a member in a 5-a-side competition which falsely claimed to have been affiliated raised a number of serious issues. The matter ended up in the Crown Court, with the assailant acquitted, the member financially much worse off and his fractured leg not fully recovered. Members were left concerned, in spite of lengthy correspondence with the RA and FA, about the uncertainty of the real support referees could expect from either, if assaulted, whether the competition was affiliated or not.

Early in 1994 the Reading RA invested £8,000 of the Major Sainsbury bequest in a contract with the Royals Rendezvous Club to guarantee a venue for 10 years.

At the AGM, Treasurer Neil Isham made history with his proposal to *reduce* the subscription by £1-00 - not surprisingly the first reduction on record.

Brian Wratten, who had joined the society on retiring home from the USA, but was still officiating, was elected Assistant Secretary. When Neil Isham later resigned he also became Acting Treasurer.

Stephen Green, Senior Training Officer and Chairman became the society's third 'native' FA Licensed Referee Instructor. (Peter Pittaway had qualified through the Army).

Stuart Gentle, who was not seeking re-election to the Committee and who had served as Assistant Secretary and for many years as RA representative to the Sunday League, was presented with the Berks & Bucks RA Certificate of Service by George Mills, County RA President.

The 1994 season opened with news of the death in his late fifties of Geoff Way after a few months of unexpected illness. Geoff had served a record three times as Treasurer, once as Secretary and had been a valued member for some twenty years, most of them on the Committee.

The FIFA 'mandatory instructions' in respect of off-side, time-wasting and tackling especially (following the summer's World Cup Competition) were destined (again) to bring fundamental change to the game and the role of the referee (and the focus of discussion at RA meetings).

The editor of the society magazine caused some controversy by questioning the practical outcomes of a meeting of County RA and FA officers.

Ted Cambridge, long-serving Secretary of the Sunday League, FA Councillor, Chairman of local assessors and regular attender of RA meetings, organised an exemplary meeting to discuss the new guidelines for assessors issued by the FA

(thanks to Ken Ridden, National Referees' Training Officer). Significantly, training seminars for assessors would (at last) be compulsory and assessors would receive a fee.

In April 1995 the society lost its oldest member, Life Member Don Sarjeant, at the age of 92 years after a brief illness. Don was active in the RA for more than 60 years. A former FL referee in the 30s and 40s, he served on the Committee and was an auditor for many years. He also helped to found two County FAs - Oxfordshire and the Berks & Bucks. He served on the organising committee for the national RA Conference when it was last held in Reading - in 1934.

Alison Chapman became the first woman member to reach Class 1 (and, at the AGM, also the first to be elected to the Committee). A second 'first' for women was the first ever female Guest Speaker at the March meeting, physiotherapist Jill Wigmore-Welsh, talking about referees' fitness and injuries.

The AGM was, as always, very well attended but failed to produce a secretary to replace Pat Monaghan who had not sought re-election. The duties would be shared by Chairman and Treasurer until a replacement could be found..

At the national RA Conference it was announced that the FA had turned down the RA request for a seat on the FA Council on the grounds that the RA does not represent all referees. Catch 22, because the FA will not accept 100% membership - RA policy since the Reading motion of 1977. Thanks again largely to Ken Ridden, the FA did, however, promise welcome reforms of the 'pyramid' of leagues to provide a better system of development for referees to reach the higher echelons.

The last season of the quarter century, 1995/96, opened with more changes to Law and the disappearance of the notion of 'intent' - it was hoped to help referees.

Stewart Mills, member of the training team since 1993 and former committee member and Assistant Secretary, completed his qualification as an FA Licensed Referee Instructor.

More problems were reported with local park facilities and, maybe not unconnected, the Sunday League was suffering an even greater shortage of referees than in recent years. There was more welcome news from the FA: that compulsory ID cards for players would be introduced, but not till the year 2000. The Reading RA decided to ask local leagues to act more quickly.

Members at the November meeting were saddened by the decision of Chairman Stephen Green to quit all football activities for personal reasons. His contribution to the Reading RA and County RA had been immense since he joined the Committee in 1986. He had assisted with training and progressed to Senior Training Officer and been Public Relations Officer for the County RA, but those were only his most obvious contributions. For example, he designed the last two covers of the magazine and did the art work for some of the adverts, designed the society notepaper (and the last tie). Alongside his very active refereeing, Stephen was always there, available, working and thinking for the Reading RA.

Stephen Green's example of 'service before self' provides a fitting conclusion to this chronological view of our history.

During these 25 years of the Reading RA, hundreds of referees have enjoyed the camaraderie, enlightenment and sheer enjoyment of the monthly meetings. The formula has remained much the same, because members have always rejected significant change. The mix of Guest Speakers (from a variety of backgrounds and tackling a range of topics) and the more focused 'nitty-gritty' refereeing/training sessions, lubricated by liquid refreshment and the opportunity for informal chat, has proved a robust game-plan. The topics of practical concern have, perhaps inevitably, changed little too: e.g. assaults and the support/lack of from the RA and FA; the disciplinary action of the County FA and the arrangements for personal hearings; the facilities on the local parks for referees (and players). And, unfortunately, the concerns of the leagues and County FA about referees have also remained largely unchanged: e.g. referees not dealing with correspondence, crying off, not turning up, sending in poor reports (and sometimes no reports at all); and more fundamentally, failing to deal properly with indiscipline/foul language. Many of the culprits are not members of the RA, but some are. While perfection on both sides will no doubt remain elusive, 100% RA membership would give the possibility of a true partnership with the FA and potentially higher standards all round. Maybe during the next quarter century of our existence

It is inevitable that a summary such as this - of years of activity of the RA - will have omitted much that was worth recording. Most importantly, it has certainly failed to mention many of those members who have helped to make the society successful - from having specific named roles, to giving a hand when necessary, to simply attending meetings faithfully. Their contributions are nonetheless recognised here, collectively - the Reading RA will always be what it is made by them, its members.

Postscript

As stated in the last issue, it is not certain when the Reading RA was formed and so this 75th Anniversary is being held, logically enough, 25 years after the 50th. However, Fred Porton had a cutting from the local press which referred to a meeting in 1920. I think it would be nice (and appropriate) to celebrate our Centenary in 2020 - has a nice ring to it - but the decision must, of course, rest with a future Committee. Ed.

FIFA HITS THE NET

No, not that net. This is about the Internet and surfing.

FIFA's information service - FIFA ON-LINE - can now be accessed at <http://www.fifa.com> by those with the gear and know-how. Initially it will only be in English (later Spanish and French) and will include comprehensive details of all FIFA competitions, and articles, illustrations and graphics from FIFA News and Magazine (which are to be revamped).

FIFA ON-LINE will expand during the year to include the FIFA Electronic Archives, a database of all FIFA Competitions. A variety of chatline forums to foster discussions among football fans world-wide will also be added.

NB A Netscape Navigator or a compatible browser is recommended for access to FIFA ON-LINE.

What's On for the rest of this season

MARCH 21

JIM DE RENNES

An FA Licensed Referee Instructor, Jim will be getting us to think about aspects of Law 12

APRIL 18

Open meeting

MAY 16

Annual General Meeting

PHYSIOTHERAPY - Everybody's Health Service

Where do you go if you have a sprained ankle, back pain, or simply need advice on how to get back after injury?

Jill Wigmore-Welsh is a chartered Physiotherapist and practising Acupuncturist based at Tilehurst Physiotherapy, a clinic opposite Prospect Park. Her experience with athletes is extensive, having spent 12 years with the British Judo Association at international level and 2 years with the International rowing team.

The clinic offers a complete and comprehensive treatment for the injured athlete and has a link with Bradfield College which can assist in full rehabilitation using their gym and pool facilities.

If you need professional advice or help, either call into the clinic at 218 Tilehurst Road or **telephone (01734) 594099**.

Alternatively contact **John Moore** for further information.

Concessionary rates for Reading RA members on production of a current membership card

DID YOU SEE THIS?

Apparently police have found the solid bronze football taken from Jackie Milburn's statue: Vinnie Jones had been using it for heading practice.
(*The Guardian*, 11/11/95)