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EDITORIAL

Sad start to this edition: doyen of the society, Fred Porton, has died after a short period in hospital. A tribute is on page 5.

Recruitment continues to loom large wherever referees get together and yet we still seem to leave untapped the potential of half the population. Of course we have relatively few women playing soccer in this country, whereas in the USA there are more females involved, certainly at the elementary school level. We have two females out of 119 members. We have women supporters at matches, mothers and husbands closely connected with soccer, and yet most (male) referees produce excuses when asked the question. Problems with changing rooms, the language, they won't cope. Some won't, but then some men don't. Women may have some disadvantages, but they might bring a change of attitude too. Get recruiting!

As this is the last issue before Christmas and Fergie has just switched the lights on in Oxford Street, I've got a perfect excuse for a couple of pages of funnies. (Borrowed this time. When are you going to send me a few more of yours?) Hope you enjoy them as well as the rest of the magazine. See you at the special Christmas meeting, but in case I don't . . .

All the best for the festive season and the New Year!

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Reading RA

Unsigned items have been written by the editor

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[Editor's address: 1 Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG6 1HX
(Please note slight change - I've moved next door)
Telephone no: (0734) 663756]

FRED PORTON M.B.E.

I have to report with great sadness the death of our oldest member, Fred Porton, at the age of 83.

A Life Member of the Reading RA, Fred joined 59 years ago - in 1924. Fred's refereeing was in local football, but it is for his work with referees and for football that he will be most remembered.

In 1931 he helped to form the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Referees' Association and later became its Chairman. As I recorded in the new handbook, he was one of the organizing committee 3 years later when Reading hosted the national RA Conference.

Fred's many positions of responsibility in refereeing and football included membership of the Reading RA Committee and 5 years as President; he served as auditor for 30 years until, typically, he graciously bowed out to professional audit; he was a vice-president of the Berks and Bucks County FA; he served as secretary of the Reading Youth League and later as Chairman.

Anyone who had been at a meeting chaired by Fred, or at a meeting in which he made a contribution (and he usually did) will never forget his style. He had style. He was direct and never lost for words - a quality that helped him sort out many a difficulty and many an opponent as well. I particularly liked his way of welcoming newly qualified referees. Up to the last he was able, with the greatest sincerity, to convey his own enthusiasm and zest for referees and refereeing.

Of all our members Fred sent me the most contributions. Not necessarily for publication. Snippets of information, bits of history, all sorts. As late as September, he wrote me a short note saying how much he appreciated the handbook. Without adding, as he was entitled to, that I hadn't quite got the history of the RA right, he sent me an extract from the files of the Football Chronicle showing that the foundation meeting of the Reading RA took place on October 20th 1920.

We have lost a great colleague and friend, at the age of 83 years young.

Our President George Mills adds: "It may be the time with the passing of Fred Porton, to remember the losses the society has sustained over the past few years - Charlie Kearse, Harry Collier, George Rumsey, Lionel Gibbs and now Fred - men who always put 'Service before Self', who put Reading RA on the map and then worked to keep it there. We can never adequately repay the debt we owe them."

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our second meeting in the new venue with some 60 members present and it proved to be one of the longest on record. Not to be repeated!

The business meeting included contributions from various officers and committee members. Plans for future monthly meetings were revealed by Secretary Derek Reigate. Stuart Gentle reported that membership had reached 108 - remarkable in view of the national situation, but less surprising given our recent record course. A number of well known names were still missing. Brian Palmer reminded members that he welcomed contributions for the magazine: written or even spoken over the telephone. Terry Gale talked about the revised coaching scheme. All new colleagues had coaches, thanks to an excellent response from members. A number of social events had been planned and support was all that Mike Borland asked for. Steve Green produced two designs for a society tie. Opinions were (inevitably) mixed - further consideration would be given.

Members were reminded about correct procedures in case of assault. It was particularly stressed that in case of actual injury, it should be examined professionally and the details recorded.

It was somewhat after nine when the Guest Speaker Vic Heron took the floor. He started by talking about points arising from our meeting and one held earlier in the day at the FA - all interesting stuff but not what many members were expecting. He commented on the maximum age for promotion and described the various categories of assault. There had been 228 assaults reported nationally last year. 96 led to sine die suspensions, 121 to shorter periods of suspension, 11 cases only were not proven. Vic then commented on the FA letter on foul or abusive language and pointed out that the police were threatening action in one place. On the law amendments he revealed that the English representatives had suggested in respect of goalkeepers "with his hand or hands". The shortening of the phrase had led to the problem.

At 9.40 we were ready to watch the FA film no.3 on foul play, with Vic promising not to take his usual two hours! In fact we spent the next hour watching the film in sections with commentary and questions from and to Vic. It was an interesting session - the film does provide excellent material for discussion - but rather wasted as many members had to leave before the end.

OCTOBER MEETING

Some members may have been put off by the exceptional length of the September meeting. We had only 50 in attendance at what proved to be an extremely interesting meeting with lots of participation even from the newest of our colleagues.

Assistant Secretary, Dick Wilkins kicked off with another amazing piece of news. We had been sent a further £6,000+ as the final settlement under past president Major Sainsbury's will. Again ideas for using the income as well as the capital were requested. The committee had agreed the purchase of a video-recorder for training purposes after successful experiments and the gift of a large colour TV from the president. Dick went on to give details of a new inter-league competition.

In commenting on training, John Lambden reported that 11 would soon be sitting the exam and the next course was planned to start on November 18th. Promotion classes had been held but the attendance had been disappointing. Also, only 7 of over 40 newly qualified referees had attended the refresher evening.

Under league business, the contradiction between the District handbook and the rules in respect of naming substitutes was admitted. The rule is correct: 'The referee shall be informed of the names of substitutes before the game'. There was discussion of the confirmation of fixtures, with members supporting the Sunday League's requirement that **clubs** are responsible for notifying the referee, not vice versa. Peter Toft would take the message back to the Saturday leagues.

Mike Borland expressed the Social Committee's disappointment with the minimal response for the pantomime which had had to be cancelled. Some members felt that the publicity had not reached everyone. Tickets were going well for the theatre trip on November 29th ('No Sex Please, We're British'), but there was some more room on the island for the Chairman's night out (November 1st). Mike gave notice of the Dinner & Dance (which is always a sell-out) on March 6th.

The main part of the evening was devoted to discussion of Foul or Abusive Language - with David Keen, our Football League linesman, introducing the subject with the letter from the FA. He told us that a Football League player had been arrested after a game for foul language and fined £250. A policeman can arrest a player for the offence on the pitch (the team **is** allowed to use a substitute) but shouldn't we put our own house in order?

The discussion was extremely lively as might have been expected. There was little consensus about what is foul - abusive was easier - but everyone agreed the way words were said was important. David's occasional use of the indirect kick in certain

circumstances, following a stern (first) warning, worried the purists (and may have confused the less experienced). Some members liked to tell the teams before the match or at half-time what they would accept/not accept; others preferred to deal with the situation if it arose. All agreed we had a problem and that we had to be seen to be doing something about it; no-one seemed to think the FA had been of much help.

SOUTHERN DIVISION - Meeting 11 October 1986

Among the items reported on by the Berks & Bucks representative - our own President, George Mills - were the following:

Supplies Further severe criticism. Wrong sizing of kit, bad packaging, and no re-imburement of postage for wrong orders. The new linesman's flags - £12 from the RA - are available elsewhere for £10.50. It was also reported that the Middlesex FA have set up a retail company to sell referees' kit.

Insurance A member's claim has recently been rejected. His kit was stolen from his car when he stopped for a drink on the way home from a match. Essex C.R.A. are asking the Insurance Ombudsman for a ruling.

Booklet of Advice Some still available, price £2. Ask George for details.

Income Tax Problem is escalating, with the DHSS chasing unemployed referees and reducing their benefit. The RA is trying to get help from the FA.

Foul and Abusive Language Members felt the FA had ducked the issue again. Article expected from Alan Robinson had not appeared. Suggested that referees swamp C.F.A.s with reports of sendings-off to try to get something done.

Conference 1986 Generally felt to have been a good conference, and there were different views about the Guest Speaker's contribution. Various suggestions made for next year, some [even] for reducing the business part of the proceedings.[!]

(Southern Division) Five-a-side and Quiz Finals This season they will again be held at Pickett's Lock on 8 March 1987. The National Finals will be on 25 April 1987, probably at Deeside.

Minimum Age for Referees The minimum age was reduced from 16 to the present 14 owing to pressure from us, the RA. Given the problems young referees are facing, is it time to think again?

George would welcome comments and ideas, especially about conference and the minimum age, for further discussion at County RA.

FAIR PLAY & LINESMAN'S AWARDS

Keep filling the forms in and if you haven't got any, use plain paper and then see Ben Gater (or give him a ring on Newbury 67978).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

You may have read of the incidents after a Football League match on October 25th. This is how David Lacey of the Guardian saw it (29/10/86):

'The revelation that two Portsmouth players were ordered out of their own ground by police after Saturday's match against West Bromwich Albion because the officers claimed that they heard them abusing a linesman has alarming implications.

Police are hired by football clubs, at an ever-increasing cost, to keep order at their grounds. They are not employed to assume the duties of the match officials. If they intend to start coming between the players and the referee, the game is on a slippery slope towards chaos.

Already this season the £1,500 fine and one match ban imposed on Mark Falco, now at Watford, for making gestures to Aston Villa fans during a Tottenham game at White Hart Lane in May has caused controversy because the FA's action was based, not on the referee's report which mentioned nothing of this, but on a police statement.

The policemen at Fratton Park alleged that Mick Quinn and Paul Wood, both Portsmouth strikers, shouted abuse at a linesman during the second half. After the match the players were ejected from the stadium.

A Hampshire police spokesman said that had the incident occurred during the first half the players would have been dealt with at half time.

John Duke, the chief constable of Hampshire said yesterday that it was "nonsense" to suggest police were trying to do the referee's job. "Players' conduct on the field is for the referee, but their conduct as it affects other people in the ground is for the ground rules. These are rules drawn up by the Portsmouth Football Club, not our rules."

Before the start of each game at Portsmouth everybody is reminded that the ground rules also apply to events on the pitch. A fortnight ago, moreover, the players were warned about bad language.

Alan Ball, the Portsmouth manager, said yesterday: "The police can now virtually run a football match. The referee has no jurisdiction whatever. I love football desperately but if this continues the game will be as low as it is ever going to get."

Gordon Taylor, the secretary of the Professional Footballer's Association, said last night that if the police extended their role in the way they did at Portsmouth, the game would soon be reduced to a farce.

"The prime responsibility of the police inside grounds is surely to deal with hooliganism," he said. By acting against players it would seem they are taking the easy option."

Taylor will discuss the Portsmouth issue with the FA and League as well as raising it with the joint working party on hooliganism. "We are not talking about serious assaults off the ball," he said. "If anything, professional football is a cleaner game now than it has ever been, although the behaviour records of the police in their own matches are sometimes not so good."

Physical sporting contests tend to involve acts or threats of violence that would be actionable off the field or outside the ring. The average game of football contains conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace, threatening behaviour, foul and abusive language and the odd bit of actual bodily harm.

All can be dealt with by the referee within the laws of the game rather than the law of the land. If the allegedly abused linesman at Fratton Park felt offended, he could have drawn the referee's attention to the matter. The fact that none of the officials appears to have heard anything makes the police action seem even more bizarre.

The football authorities and that includes the Professional Footballers' Association, should question the police about their future conduct. Given soccer's hooligan problems over the last 15 years their presence is essential and there will be occasions when they need to enter the field of play to cope with crowd invasions, clear missiles, protect referees and even separate fighting players.

With this latest incident, however, they are in danger of bringing their role in the game into disrepute.'

Isn't there something National RA should be doing about this?

GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW

Yes, it's ticket time again. By now you should have received your bundle of books of tickets for the annual Christmas Draw. Some members wonder why we go on with the Draw when we have money in the bank. Well, it's all about fun and the chance to win one

of the very many attractive prizes. Gives a nice bit of suspense to the Christmas meeting too. (I have to say that I once won a prize). See if you can beat Ivan McNelly's record of 250 (yes, two hundred and fifty) books of tickets! Money and tickets back before the meeting please.

TRAINING

Course just completed and we have 11 passes out of 11, thanks to John and the training team. And 11 new members. Let's make them very welcome. But no rest for our trainers: another course started straight away last Tuesday. You can still help. New members can join next week and the team will cope. Get anyone interested either to ring John or George, or just to turn up. South Reading Community Centre, Northumberland Avenue, 10 Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. Two practical sessions, free Referee's Chart, Manual of Guidance if they pass **and** free membership of the Society for the rest of the season. Must be the best buy in the business.

Most of us neglect to show our gratitude to those who help us, but I think the following letter from one of our newly trained colleagues sums it all up:

Dear John,

I must write to thank yourself, George and Roy for the excellent training course at the South Reading Community Centre.

I found the lectures most informative and presented in a very professional manner.

The use of an overhead projector, magnetic football field, illustrated diagrams and videos certainly enhanced the presentation and clearly portrayed the points you were putting across. The practical training session was invaluable and I am sure it will only be a matter of time before it becomes a compulsory part of the examination.

Thank you once again and I look forward to seeing you at future meetings of the association.

[I've left off the signature to save him possible embarrassment!
- Ed]

COUNTY RA QUIZ

The draw for the County Quiz (made by Barry Davies at Slough RA's Dinner) was as follows:

Maidenhead	v	Buckingham
Reading	v	High Wycombe
North Berks	v	Newbury
Slough	v	Aylesbury

The first four societies and the last four will play on a league basis. The winners of each league will contest the final. Once again Alan Tate (Slough) and George will be running the show. Venues and dates to be arranged, but time to get into training. Contact Robert Barnard-Smith, the captain, or any other officer if you want to be considered.

ONE WAY TO MISS 12 MATCHES

St Mirren captain, Billy Abercromby, made history by being sent off three times in one game on Wednesday. Abercromby and Motherwell's Steve Kirk were sent off after a flare-up, by Ayr referee Louis Thow. A penalty kick was awarded to Motherwell but before it could be taken Abercromby returned to the referee to make a comment which provoked another red card offence. Abercromby appeared to make a further comment and was shown the red card for the third time. He accumulated 15 penalty points - five for each red card offence.

(The Guardian, 31/10/86)

This incident naturally led to a good deal of comment by the media and, while many referees would argue that Abercromby should know the price of abusive language, nevertheless the punishment in this and a number of other instances does not seem to fit the crime. Can we honestly say that one wrong word is as serious as a deliberate, vicious, limb-crunching foul? That's how the public see it and I agree with them.

There is talk again of the sin-bin which certainly seems effective in other sports. It has the major merits of being visible, understandable, and immediate.

The weakness of our sanctions - cautions and sendings-off - is that they are too far apart in severity. The caution is a suspended sentence in two ways. If the player does no more wrong in that game, he doesn't suffer any actual punishment **in that game**. Sending-off is immediate and a very powerful sanction, especially when the departing player is a goalkeeper. Here chance really comes into play. Not only is it most critical to lose a goalkeeper - a misdemeanour towards the end of the season usually has a much more serious outcome (like missing the cup final) than the same offence earlier on.

Doesn't the sanction of a temporary expulsion appeal to you? As we saw in the recent hockey matches on TV, the sin-bin provides an instant retribution which defuses a situation and gives immediate, but temporary advantage to the side offended against. It also peeps up the game as the full team tries hard to exploit its advantage while it lasts. Perhaps if we all shout loudly enough,

the RA and the FA might hear and try to get the International Board at least to allow an experiment

SOCIAL EVENTS

Very successful Chairman's (and Vice Chairman's) evening on the island with one M. Borland winning the big prize. The theatre trip is sold out (Nov.29th); other events to look forward to - next, the Christmas meeting and draw.

EXCHANGE TRIP TO FRANCE

Anyone interested? Have a word.

THOSE FUNNIES

One of the advantages of having two (grown-up) sons who share my affection for soccer is that when it's time for presents they often give me a book (or two), sometimes humor-ous. One such is Jimmy Greaves 'Stop the Game - I want to get on!' Football lore and funnies. Get someone to buy you a copy! Here's just a modest selection of some of my favourites.

Norman (Hunter) got an injured leg in an away match. The Leeds trainer telephoned Mrs Hunter to warn her that her husband was coming home with a broken leg. "Whose leg is it?" she asked.

Playing for Colchester, goalkeeper Graham Smith went through his usual pre-match ritual of kicking the foot of each of the posts. He kicked one post, jogged across the goal-line and kicked the other. Then the crossbar fell on his head.

A team going out to play a vital relegation battle had their usual encouragement, stimulation and motivation from the manager and coach in the dressing-room prior to the game. In fact the players were at such a pitch they could easily have torn the walls down. Then just as they were about to leave the dressing-room, the manager barred their way at the door for what they thought was going to be one last rallying call. "Just one more thing you lot," he said with true feeling in his voice, "Whatever you do - don't let them panic you into playing football . . . "

One morning during the Doc's spell as Manchester United manager, Stuart Pearson was lying on the treatment table when Docherty came into the medical room.

"What's wrong with you?" he asked.

"I've got a bad back," said Pearson.

"Don't worry , son," said the Doc. "Manchester City have got two."

"There are two great teams on Merseyside," Shankly once said on the eve of a derby match against Everton. He paused with the timing of a professional comedian and then added, "Liverpool and Liverpool Reserves."

One thing Shanks never lost was his competitive spirit. This was never more evident than when he used to join in the five-a-side training matches with the Liverpool first team squad. During one game Shanks was convinced he'd scored a goal, but the defenders insisted the ball hadn't crossed the line. Chris Lawler - known as the quiet man of Anfield, because he rarely had much to say for himself - was watching the game from the sidelines. "Was that ball in, Chris?" Shanks shouted. "The lads will believe you." "It didn't cross the line boss," said the English international full-back quietly. Shanks looked thunderstruck. "What d'you think of that?" Shanks said with his arms spread wide in an appealing gesture. "That's the first thing he's said since he joined the club and it's a lie!"

Referees are traditionally alleged to be the products of one-parent families, born with appalling eyesight and with a knowledge of football that begins and ends with the letter of the Law. Well, let me say straight away that this is just not true. It applies only to ninety per cent of them.

"This was when I (Joe Mercer) was manager of Aston Villa and we were playing Preston in an important FA Cup tie. Denis Howell was referee. 'King' Tom Finney was playing centre-forward for Preston and he was continually going past Jimmy Dugdale in the middle of our defence. Let's be fair, Tom used to go past all of us as if we weren't there. Anyway, he went past Jimmy for the umpteenth time and Jimmy shouts out more in desperation than belief: "Off-side, ref! Off-side!" Denis Howell was having none of it and waved play on. "You must be bloody blind, ref," Jimmy shouted. "What was that you said, Dugdale?" Denis said in a schoolmasterly way. "Je-sus," said Jimmy in his lovely Scouse accent. "Don't tell me you're deaf an' all . . ."

"There was a ruck of players in the goalmouth and I (the late Sir Stanley Rous) clearly saw a fist punch the ball. I had no hesitation in blowing my whistle for a penalty. As I walked into the penalty area the players as one stopped and looked at me in obvious surprise. It was immediately evident to me that I had made an error and I realized that the fist must have belonged to the goalkeeper. So I kept on walking past the penalty spot, past the goal and all the way to the wall separating the pitch from the terraces. Then I stopped and bellowed in the direction of the crowd, 'If that spectator blows his whistle once more I'll have him removed from the ground.' I re-started the game with a dropped ball at the edge of the area."

Swansea referee Tom Reynolds was the busiest man on the pitch during the FA Cup tie between Chelsea and Birmingham in 1975. Birmingham won 1-0 but had five players booked. After the game Tom found he was unable to leave the car-park because his vehicle was blocked by Birmingham's team coach. He went to the dressing-room, poked his head round the door and asked, "Where's your coach-driver?" "Christ, ref," replied a Brummie voice. "Don't tell me you're going to book him as well."

Frank Saul was having a bit of a nightmare when playing for QPR in a league match at Loftus Road. In the second half a dog came scampering on to the pitch and the game was held up while players and officials chased the intruder. The chase was still in progress when a loud Cockney voice boomed from the terraces, "Leave the dog on - take Saul off."

And finally, no joke:

Oldham left-back Sam Wynne had a crazy match against Manchester United on 6 October 1923. He scored four goals. The result was a 2-2 draw! Wynne scored for Oldham with a free-kick and a penalty and cancelled them out by twice turning the ball into his own net.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

- November 20** Guest speaker to be announced (owing to cancellation)
- December 18** Special: bangers, spuds, beans - and a jar (of something). All free **and** the Grand Christmas Draw

DID YOU SEE THIS?

Gary Linekar may be the striker of the moment, but the Cameroon Cup winners, Canon de Yaounde, have the most memorably-named goalscorer. They beat Rail of Douala 1-0 and scorer of the winning goal was Misse Misse. There is no truth in the rumour that Manchester United are going to buy him to take their penalties.

Sunday Times, 19/10/86

NO COMMENT

After the World Cup, the postmortem. Harry Cavan, FIFA's vice-president, is also chairman of the referees' committee, which

has just completed several meetings dealing with complaints and suggestions arising from the recent finals.

Cavan rejected media criticism that the refereeing was generally poor, saying the average assessment for officials was 8.3 out of 10. Time-wasting by players simulating injury and the fact that referees rarely added on the extra time after such antics were two of the main complaints.

The offside trap and the composition of the defensive wall at free kicks would also be looked into, said Cavan. Now, everyone get down on their knees and pray they actually do something about it all.

Martin Thorpe, The Guardian 25/10/86

AND AGAIN

David Hay has received a second summons from the Scottish Football Association. Only 24 hours after being ordered to appear before them in connection with the stormy Skol Cup Final with Rangers. The SFA's executive committee have now written to Hay asking him to explain his remarks after the final in which he implied he would prefer Celtic to be playing in the English League to escape from Scottish refereeing.

The Guardian 5/11/86