



BISHOP'S STORTFORD  
HOCKEY CLUB

# The History of Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club

Draft Recollections  
ISSUED MARCH 2019

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## *A note on the club history*

Colin Barber commissioned Tom Saul to produce his recollections of the early years of BSHC reproduced below along with his own manuscript of the middle years of the club's history to date. His son, Duncan, our current Men's Club Captain arranged for these manuscripts to be transcribed in 2017 and Mark SurrIDGE added his section to bring the history up to the end of the 1980s.

We are now seeking help from members and friends of the club to build on the bones of this history: either to add their recollections to enhance the existing sections or to contribute to more recent history – particularly the period 1990-2010. We are also keen to receive any photos, scanned or otherwise, and any other memorabilia worthy of capturing in this document.

If you have any material that you would like to submit, please do contact me via [d.s.n.butcher@gmail.com](mailto:d.s.n.butcher@gmail.com)

David Butcher

BSHC Chairman

March 2019

## The Early Years – from 1948

### T.G. Saul

I was honoured to be asked by our worthy President to assist in compiling this history by giving details of the formation of the Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club in 1948, on the understanding that somebody more fitted to the later stages of the club would complete this brief history. Sport throughout the ages has always figured prominently in English literature. Books on cricket abound while other sports have been suitably covered, but hockey, alas, has never been a popular subject, with the result that there has been a dearth of publicity for this particular game.

Perhaps a few lines on the history of hockey might not be amiss and Chris Moore, the Daily Telegraph hockey correspondent, tells us that the game of hockey as we know it today came into being because some cricketers at Teddington in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century decided to utilise their outfield to bang a ball amount. Actually, the first hockey club had been formed in 1861 at Blackheath but they could hardly claim their game to be truly hockey, for instead of a ball they used a cube of rubber. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Lord Harris, the Governor of Bengal, introduced hockey to the Indians and we all know how well they adapted to the game.

In Bishop's Stortford between the wars the only local hockey club was known as the East Herts H.C. who played on various grounds in the district including Cricketfield Lane, Hockerill Athletic Club and Sawbridgeworth C.C.; they even had a ground for one season in a field situated between the river and Twyford House. After the war there was very little likelihood of that club starting up again, and as a result several cricket club members, who were hockey enthusiasts, got together and decided to form a hockey section of the cricket club. A meeting was therefore convened on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1948 at the Reindeer Hotel (now Woolworths) for the purpose of forming a hockey section of the B.S.C.C. The meeting unanimously approved that the Hockey Club should be formed and Edward Kew was elected captain with myself as secretary and treasurer, fixture secretary and general factotum!

During those early years our membership was no more than twenty or so and consequently we could only raise one side each week. For this reason fixtures were hard to come by and we more or less had to accept anything that was going. Equipment such as goal posts etc. were a problem but it transpired that one of our members, B.R. Hart, who had played for East Herts, had had all the posts and nets belonging to that club stored in his father's barn at Sawbridgeworth during the war years. This equipment was still in good shape and thus we were able to acquire it and make a start, the first practice game taking place on Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Cricketfield Lane. At that time the Ladies' H.C. had first choice of the cricket ground pitch and we only had it for use on Sundays, and Saturdays when they were playing away. The pitch was never very good, it was always covered in worm casts while the drainage was almost non-existent with the top of the ground at times being like a quagmire and rolling was impossible.

The minutes record that for the first seasons teas were organised by Miss Denise Lewis (later Mrs. Ralph Smyter) and were charged at 9<sup>d</sup> per head. It also recorded that teas could only be served if the necessary permits were first obtained from the Food Office. Such were the problems caused by food rationing. For the second season Mrs Saul took over when it was resolved that members should be charged one shilling and sixpence! Conditions for the provision of teas were on the primitive side as they were served in the pavilion which is now the groundsman's store and where the bar was also situated.

It was not much fun for any lady providing teas, for, not only was there very little heat, but the place was infested by mice! Petrol rationing also caused numerous problems in connection with away matches as there were few private cars in those days. I can recall that two of our members had cars, Leslie Wilson was one and the other was owned by our goalkeeper, J.T. Harrison, who was a member of the family who owned the Hertfordshire Mercury. The latter had a largish car and when he played he could usually accommodate 5/6 players and, if his was the only car available, the remainder of the team had to travel by public transport, such as much to Chelmsford (we even ran to the luxury of a taxi on occasions). It is recorded that to Saffron Walden we caught the train to Audley End and completed the journey to Walden by taxi.

During our first years at Cricketfield Lane the facilities for washing were abysmal. In those days there were no showers and all we could offer were pails of hot water and two washing-up bowls!

With regard to our membership, those from the Cricket Club, in addition to Edward Kew and myself, were Peter Davies, Jim and Alex Tee, Bob Wellington, Leslie Swift, Leslie Wilson and Laurie Surridge, while from outside we had Ralph Smyter, Robert Crauford, Fred Cornell, Bill Gammie, David newton, B.R. hart and C.E. Larkins.

At the end of our first season we had played 25 matches, winning 15, losing 9, with 1 drawn. Our first balance sheet showed that income exceeded expenditure by some £12. Our umpire in those early years was W.H. (Bill) Gurton, while that inimitable character, Freddy Scholl, was in charge of publicity and ground collections. (Why do we not now make collections at important matches?)

The second season, 1949/50 saw the arrival of M.D. King, who reinforced with a stick purchased at a bargain price, continued over many years to give yeoman service. He is now a pool umpire, thus giving back something to the game he has enjoyed playing for so long. At the second A.G.M. it was reported that, of the 34 matches played, 27 had been won, 5 lost with 2 games drawn. During that past season we had been strengthened by the skill of John Dawson, another College master, who, with David Newton, formed a powerful combination and we were then beginning to be recognised throughout Hertfordshire. Both these players gained county recognition.

Fixtures in the early years included Essex County Council, Marconis and Hoffman from Chelmsford, Witham, Braintree, Old Loughtonians, Harlow, Sawston, Epping and one or two of the Cambridge Colleges. But, as I have said before, because we could not raise more than one side, clubs like Broxbourne could not accommodate us to much extent as well could not accept block bookings. They did, however, offer their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> XIs and I recall that on their first visit to us we ran out win-

ners by 20-1! At the end of our second season we had played 34 matches of which 27 had been won, 5 lost with 2 drawn. At the A.G.M. it was resolved that in future the club should be known as the Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club with no reference to the Cricket Club. Unfortunately at the end of our third season, I had to resign my posts as the bank by whom I was employed moved me to Hertford where I had to take up residence. I did, however, continue to play until 1952 when advancing age brought a halt to my playing association with the Club.

As I have said before, we had to resort to taxis for many of our away games and the cash book for those early seasons make interesting reading as it shows that the return fare to Chelmsford was £1.5/- rising by £1 in 1952. It was in that year the Club first participated in the Broxbourne Easter Festival, which alas is now no more. At the A.G.M. it was reported that the results during the previous season had not been so good as stronger opposition was being met, with Blueharts, Stevenage, Cambridge City 2nds now figuring in the fixture list.

It was in 1952 that Ralph Smyter, who had been a found member, was elected on to the committee, and both as a player and administrator his efforts to further the well-being of the club have been inestimable. Ken Bines had joined in 1952 and he too added much to the playing strength as his skill is well remembered by all who played with him.

At the 1952 A.G.M. it was decided that new colours in the form of royal blue shirts, blue shorts and red stockings, should be adopted. The new captain was G.H. Cole, Hon. Sec. E.R.C. Kew and Treasurer J.S. Bewers.

The following 2/3 seasons were more or less a period of consolidation but there was still much dissatisfaction with the state of the cricket field pitch being voiced and this was to be a bone of contention for many years. In 1953 three members, John Dawson, David Newton and Philip Caruthers had all been selected to play for the County. At the following A.G.M. Peter Davies, another founder member, was elected captain.

It would seem that in the 1954/55 season the weather was no better than it is today for, out of the 49 fixtures arranged, 20 had to be scratched but a very successful visit to the Broxbourne Easter Festival had been experienced. At the A.G.M. it was decided that the club should have a president and, as a result, the name of T.G. Saul was proposed and duly elected to be the first holder of that office. I consider that this was indeed a great honour and I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation of being invited to be the club's first President.

The 1955/56 season saw the advent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> XI with twelve matches of which 5 had been won, while the 1<sup>st</sup> XI played 35 matches, winning 21. At the A.G.M. it was decided to hire a pitch on Silver Leys and it was reported that three members of the club, Ken Bines, John Dawson and Laurie Surrage had all played for the County.

In 1956 it was becoming obvious that, with the growing stature of the club and a resultant increase in membership, the time was coming for the club to stand on its own feet and sever its connection with the town Cricket Club. Subsequently a Special General Meeting was convened on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1956 and the large number of members present voted unanimously for the dissolution. It was

at this meeting that G.H. Cole, who had been both captain and a member of the committee, tendered his resignation on moving from the district. In 1958 the growth in membership enabled the club to field a 3<sup>rd</sup> XI for the first time. Difficulties were still being experienced with the state of the cricket field pitch, a season or two with a pitch at Silver Leys proved to be no solution while the hiring of a couple of pitches at Grange Paddocks from the Council was an absolute disaster.

It is not possible to mention all those who worked so hard in those early days to further the growth of the club but tribute must be paid to members like Peter Davies, Harold Kimber, Paul Wellings, Edward Kew, John Hickling, Ken Bines, John Bowers and many others. I have already commented on the efforts of Ralph Smyter who in 1959 took on the job of Honorary Secretary, a post which he filled in a most efficient manner until 1964 when David Allen took over. In 1960 the name of C.O. Barber appears in the minutes as being elected a new member and he quickly made his presence felt. In 1964 he was 1<sup>st</sup> XI Captain. To Ralph and Colin the club owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for all they have done for the club over many years – as is well known both became Presidents of the club.

In 1962 on my removal to Stevenage where I had to take up residence I felt that in all fairness to the club, I must resign as president after seven years in office and I had great pleasure in proposing as my successor, Leslie Bowers who had been a great supporter and committee member for many years, and son John had been a club official as well as 1<sup>st</sup> XI Captain and Mrs Bowers had given a great deal of help behind the scenes on the social side.

As I end my share of this brief history and before I close, I would just like to mention that having taken all the aforementioned information from the minutes it had been most apparent throughout the period 1948-62 that the problems facing the officials have been innumerable and it is a tribute to all concerned that these difficulties have been overcome with such effect that the Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club now finds itself in such a prominent position in the hockey world.

## And Thereafter - 1964-76

**By Colin Barber**

One of the major problems existing in the early 1960s was that the club desperately required a good standard pitch as apart from anything else three Saturday elevens were now fielded and the main pitch at Cricketfield Lane was proving far from adequate due to the damage and to add to our problems the cricket club were demanding an increased rental from £50 p.a. to £150. A new pitch was sought within a five mile radius of Bishop's Stortford but this wasn't forthcoming and the dispute with the Cricket club was eventually compromised at £75.

Membership increased at the start of the 1962 season and a fifth XI was fielded. This was our largest ever intake of new players and generally echoed the increase in the popularity in the game. Amongst these members was one Francis John Ramus and his wife, Mien. John Ramus was most dedicated both on and off the field becoming Hon.Treasurer in 1965 and serving until 1978. The Club is indebted to the pair of them, John and Mien, as they were heavily involved with the social side of the Club. John, apart from his elected duties over the years was largely instrumental in guiding the Club through some of the most complicated financial reorganisation, culminating in our membership to the Sport Trust in 1964. A Club tie was adopted – a Hart and crossed sticks on a maroon background.

The council acknowledged our plight over the shortage of pitches and kindly provided us with a new playing area further up Cricketfield Lane by Silver Keep. When completed it was obvious this was too small and was duly handed back. To compromise, the Council provided two new pitches at Grange Paddocks at a cost of 17/6<sup>d</sup> per game! Although far from being satisfactory it did enable us to fulfil our fixtures with 4 XIs. It was obvious that if a reasonable playing surface was to be acquired, then this would have to come from our own resources and so a new pitch fund was created – leading ultimately to the "Plateau" as we have come to call it at a cost of £1880. At this time we were very fortunate to gain the services of C.I.M. 'Kim' Jones as a Master at Bishop's Stortford College. Kim played over 100 times for Hertfordshire whilst at Southgate, was capped 28 times by England and Great Britain and had the distinction of playing in two Olympics (1960 and 1964). His presence along introduced new dimensions to the standard of our play and it is probably fair to say that he very much helped to set us on the road to our future successes.

Another bonus was that we were also to persuade Mrs Natley, the then Cricket Club Tea-Lady, to provide our teas each Saturday. We now had table cloths every week and Beatrice herself going round with a teapot offering everyone 'a second cuppa!' We had never had it so good and our reputation as the perfect hosts was known around the County. Beatrice's husband, Joe Natley, helped with the washing-up.

Season 1964 saw the mole-draining of the main pavilion pitch and the contractors succeeding in severing the main electricity cable to our then existing tea and social pavilion (now the Groundsman's storage shed). Undeterred, life went on with tea being brewed on the Natleys' cooker in

Glen Road and carried across to the pavilion. Our barman, Frank Sell, served his beer by candle-light and sales on the average Saturday leapt to an unprecedented average of £7.50.

By now one of the focal points in the Club calendar was the Annual Dinner and Dance. This was always held on the first Friday in February at Simmonds Restaurant and had a reputation throughout the area as *the event* to attend. Usually, 225 people crammed into the Restaurant and waiting lists of 30-40 were certainly not uncommon.

The Ministry of Education voiced an interest in helping us with a new pitch and quotations were obtained from local contractors. Bishop's Stortford U.D.C. granted us a 44 year lease on the Barrells Down site and work commenced in 1967. Life as a club was beginning to become serious in the late 1960s – training was introduced and we were providing two members to the full county side – Kim Jones and Tommy Hickling. A new well-travelled County player, Roger Allen, joined the Club and we were really beginning to give oppositions something to think about. Showers were installed – one only in each changing room – and early discussions were held within the Cricket Club about a closer working arrangement – amalgamation or trust, and a much needed new social venue.

In 1969 our President, Leslie Brewers, died after seven years valuable service and Ralph Smyter succeeded him. Ralph was instrumental in negotiating our new pitch and it will be remembered he had been paying for the club since its inception in 1948. Plans for the new Pavilion were passed by the authorities during 1969 and work commenced at a cost of £7000. Problems inevitably arose during the construction, none less than a large section of one of the tennis courts slid into the foundations and a replacement court had to be provided. The new named "Charles Edwards Pavilion" was officially opened on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1970 and BSHC could now entertain its visitors without shame. Our 1<sup>st</sup> XI reached the semi-finals of the newly formed Hertfordshire League in our first season as members and a Colts XI was started.

1971 saw the Club playing hosts for the very first time to an overseas club – HC Bloemendaal of Holland and the laying of a car park for 45 cars. It was now becoming apparent that the Hockey & Cricket Club's future would be better served if the two clubs had a formal understanding regarding the use of the pavilions and grounds as both clubs were employing their own groundsman and buying equipment to maintain the upkeep of the playing surfaces. After long negotiations the two clubs signed the Rickling Agreement, which apportioned the overheads to each club but above all gave the Hockey Club a guarantee of tenure. From this liaison it was decided that the Tennis Club should be invited to joint the venture and consideration be given to providing squash facilities as this was the popular sport at the time and it was envisaged that a healthy revenue could be generated which would help subsidise the other sports.

Teams travelled, for the first time, to HC Bloemendaal and Bad Nemenhar (Germany) for an indoor tournament. Our President, Ralph Smyter, unfortunately had to move to the West Country and thereby felt it necessary to resign from office. We were very pleased and fortunate that E.R. C 'Teddy' Kew, one of the founder members of the Club, agreed to stand in his stead. Teddy was a well-known playing member of the Golf Club but on his appointment turned his full attention to

the Hockey Club and soon became one of our valued and respected umpires. By now the administration of the Club was becoming very onerous for the President alone and it was agreed to create a new position within the Club that of Chairman, who would take day-to-day control of looking after our affairs. On the playing front we were improving and reached the semi-finals of the Hertfordshire County Championships being beaten 4-1 by Blueharts.

By 1973 our administration affairs were becoming even more extensive and this combined with our election to the East Central League in addition to our commitment to the Hertfordshire League. We were now becoming a serious threat on the field of play and in order to again lighten the load on the administrators it was agreed to create yet another new senior position within our management structure, being that of Club Captain. This officer being responsible to the management for the entire playing side of the Club, throughout all XIs fielded. Unfortunately, Beatrice Natley had to give up doing our teas due to ill health and the current quota system was introduced in the absence of a successor.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1973, we celebrated our Silver Jubilee with a splendid Evening Ball held at Down Hall, Hatfield Heath followed the day after with the Club 1<sup>st</sup> XI playing a C.I.M Jones XI. who included some impressive internationals in his team, but it was pleasing and appropriate that the Club ran out winners 2-0.

Difficult to imagine competitive hockey every Saturday without playing 'league hockey' but our games were certainly competitive and none more so than in season 1973-74. We were a youthful side with ambition and our immediate objective was to secure enough points and a sufficiently high position to make the cut and gain entry into the inaugural Green King Premier East League. We were playing fixtures in a 'league' that ran along the grounds of the London League in that not every team played each other. Thus our league position was determined on the percentage of points obtained per games played. Our victory at Peterborough was of great significance and on the pub crawl home our long suffering skipper, Tony Gray, spent the long journey bemoaning having to be in charge of such delinquents.

That season saw a nail biting conclusion. Whether we qualified for the following season's Greene King 'big boys league' depended on the last game that we were due to play. Had we lost and one of the teams below us had won, we might not have made the cut arithmetically. Heavy rain on the Friday evening prompted a very early cancellation of the fixture on the Saturday morning (by Ground Secretary Fred Poole) and no one questioned his decision as this ensured that whatever the teams below us did, mathematically, we could not be overtaken for the final league spot. As it turned out the Clubhouse pitch was perfectly playable by the Saturday afternoon!

Once into the Green King East Leagues are playing membership continued to increase further and by the start of the 1974/5 season we were able to field no less than 6 Saturday teams. During that season we had some notable successes – winners of the Hertfordshire League and the Broxbourne 6-a-side competition. We hosted the early rounds of the Club Championship, joined the indoor

hockey scene at Picketts Lock and assisted financially in having proper showering facilities put into our ageing and inadequate changing pavilion.

Things got even better the following season. There was little 'summer hockey' and very little 'pre-season' and so Mike Brearey assembled his squad at the Club Trials day in late September on the bottom field at Cricketfield Lane Club - the main pitch was still being used as outfield for the cricket season which still had a fortnight to run. New young players had joined from the College: Dozy Carter, Peter Smith, Andy Tonkin, Murray Houlder, George Tee and Matthew Swayne ; and two masters from Forest School, Mark Surridge and John Waller, joining another newcomer, also a teacher, at Leventhorpe School, Colin Watson. The new look squad now had Graham Wells switching from centre forward to goalkeeper, otherwise he wouldn't find a place in the team, and already understudy to John Hurst in the County Squad, and with Richard Lace, a great friend of the skipper now appearing regularly, and new addition, Peter Rook, we were ready for the new season with a new look team.

Victories over Colchester (2-0), Old Southendians (1-0), Chelmsford (3-0), Pelicans (2-1), Old Loughtonians (3-2), West Herts (2-1). Norfolk Wanderers (2-1) saw us as title contenders, but disappointingly as reported in the *Daily Telegraph* "Bishop's Stortford, had won eight of their ten league fixtures, but having slipped up and losing away at Welwyn Garden City they have dented their league title chances" (and so it proved) and that defeat opened the way for Beds Eagles to win the Green King East Premier League for the second year running.

## **Peter Rook remembers Colin Barber as Player and Chairman**

When I first joined BSHC in 1975 Colin was no longer involved in the 1st X1 so I have no memories of playing in the same side as him. But I do remember he turned out once in the early 1980s in the Club annual Six-a-Side (what a great occasion that always was, too !) and we had a team comprising Steve Plumb (then still in 1st X1) , Colin Watson (2nd XI), Gerry McBride, Gordon Buchanan and Colin Barber, who more than held his own on the day in our winning line-up.

Colin was however a constant fixture throughout my time at the Club and his work off the pitch helped turn Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club from 'poor relations' to a club that could compete against the very best. He always seemed to be able to combine the seriousness that comes with chairing the Committee with being able to enjoy the company of Club members in the bar. After fairly riotous celebrations after thrashing Harlow (4-0) in a local derby on their own patch (a famous win celebrated in Harlow's Clubhouse ), which caused complaints being made to Chairman Colin Barber, and a dressing down to our Captain Colin Watson. I was not there for the admonishment but I would imagine that Colin would have fulfilled his 'headmasterly' duties quite properly, and having done so finished the conversation with a ' by the way, bloody good win!'

## **Giant Killers : Memorable Stortford Cup Runs 1976-85**

**Mark Surridge**

*Like a breath of wind, gone in a fleeting second, and only the memory now remains.*

Although Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club was founded in 1948 it wasn't until the late 1970's that the Club really announced itself on the county stage making an impact in the Hertfordshire County Tournament, regularly beating Broxbourne, Bluharts, Welwyn Garden City and West Herts. Back in the day when all fixtures were 'friendlies' the county tournament was eagerly awaited as our chance to have a go at the big boys who barely deigned to give us fixtures or acknowledge our presence on the eastern borders of the county. Fortunately the Hockey Masters at the College like 'Kim' Jones, Brian Underwood and Bernard Cotton, all played for the club and brought their expertise and know how, and with a little 'coaching' here and there the style of the team in the 1970s and 1980s developed and bore testament to their influence.

Gradually our improvement was noticed and members of the hockey club of the younger generation were selected for the Herts County A X1 - Tony Gray, Andy Tonkin, John Watson, Colin Watson, Graham Wells, Mark Surridge and Steve Plumb - the last three going on to play for the full County team. Close relations with the College saw a steady stream of talented youngsters come and play their first adult club hockey at Stortford but hanging onto talents like Chris Cowan, David Mansfield, Tony Bowden, Mark Thompson, Matthew and Guy Swayne So the annual county tournament gave Bishop's Stortford an opportunity to show case their improved standing in the hockey world.

Our two most memorable victories both times securing the Herts County Championship were defeating St Albans and winning the Cup in 1981, playing the final rounds at our own ground at Cricketfield Lane. And then again beating St Albans in the 1986 final at Berkhamstead, with Neil Vartan launching huge aerial passes from deep inside his own half and dropping in the muddy circle of John Hurst England and St Albans 'keeper. Steve Plumb followed up and as poor Hursty did the 'hokey-cokey' so Plumby tapped the ball over the line from short range.

The county and divisional rounds of the National Club Knock Out were played before Christmas and then in the New Year the competition went national. Each division sent through three teams to the National Club Championship that in the early 1980's was sponsored by Rank Xerox.

In 1979-80 Bishop's Stortford battled through the Hertfordshire Rounds beating Letchworth (6-0) and West Herts (4-1) before the East divisional rounds first defeating Ipswich on flicks, with Gra-

ham Wells scoring the winner with his inimitable one handed method, and then beating Welwyn GC (2-1) and Pelicans (2-0) before thumping Beds Eagles (4-1) also at Cricketfield Lane in front of the usual partisan not to say raucous home crowd, led by cheer leader Alan Wilde. This result was largely courtesy of some skulduggery by our captain, Colin Watson. Over successive weekends we played the highly skilful Beds Eagles team twice. First weekend our under strength side was on the end of a hiding but then a sudden snow flurry rubbed out the lines on the pitch and our captain's complaint was upheld. In the replay the following week we had both our farmers, Plumb and Smith, back from their winter cricket tour to Kenya, and we won the replay 4-1. The Sunday Times reported, "*Stortford stormed their notorious hill in a whirlwind start scoring their goals in the first five minutes.*"

Then through to the last sixteen, Stortford played host to Slough the high flying London League side and the Observer reported in front of a crowd of 350 Stortford held their star studded side rammed full with internationals through a goalless first half until well into the second half before three of their internationals got onto the score sheet - Suti Kehar, Brajinder David and Ravinder Laly – and ensured that there would be no giant killing that day.

In 1981-82 season we travelled into the Fens where a hat trick of short corners by new captain, Mark Surridge, helped us to beat Wisbech (3-0) and then enjoying home advantage we beat Cambridge City (2-1) and Norfolk Wanderers (2-0). Then Stortford captured their biggest scalp of all when on 7<sup>th</sup> February a solitary Tim Smith goal won us a fine victory over Reading (1-0), and this was with Peter Rook now playing in goal for the second half of the season. A fortnight later and Robin Goodyer who played left back but more importantly worked for Ford's, and had access to their 59 seater coach, drove the team and vociferous supporters up to Derby, and after withstanding a tremendous onslaught from the home side Steve Plumb and Chris Cowan scored the goals that saw us come from behind to win a marvellously entertaining match on the county cricket ground 2-1. We spent several hours in the "*Stilton Cheese*" just off the A1 on the way home and Alan Wilde and Bernard Judge led the chorus as we made our way slowly home. A fortnight later and we were in the same coach passing along the same stretch of road heading for Nottingham and the dizzy heights of the quarter finals. This time Stortford snatched an early goal through Colin Watson and then amazingly went two goals ahead as Steve Plumb scored our second. The home side were shocked but came back strongly in the second half to win a great game by 3-2, with Robert Clift, later to join Stortford Vets, as our destroyer in chief. Again Messers Wilde and Judge, backed up by a sizeable choir, sang us all the way home and again we drowned our sorrows in the pubs along the way, finishing at our favourite "*the Queen's Head*" in Newton.

In 1982-83 Stortford again defeated Harleston Magpies and arch rivals Bedford in the East divisional rounds, but there were to be no further heroics this year as we travelled down to Surrey full of hope but were beaten by Guildford (2-0).

In 1984-85 Stortford defeated both Beds Eagles and Long Sutton in the East rounds and then on a frozen pitch up on the plateau put our long distance visitors from the north, St George's (Newcastle) before travelling into the Midlands and losing a close game by a solitary to Edgbaston (0-1).

Tim Smith can remember other encounters like losing at home to Hounslow, and some hard done stories like losing away at Slough, where the home side successfully lodged a complaint against a perfectly legitimate Neil Vartan strike at a short corner. Similarly at Pickwick our old adversary, Doug Bruce disallowed a goal for being off side when it was nowhere near off side at 1-1 and it went to extra time and I think we lost 6-1 in the end, and at Coventry and West Warwick (0-1) when another perfectly good short corner was disallowed, which hit the top of the back board which would have put us in front. Another campaign ended when we were beaten by a Beckenham side that contained no fewer than four former BSHC players, Matthew & Guy Swayne, Craig Vartan and Tony Bowden. *I remember against Richmond we were 1-0 down and David Mansfield was sent off and we got 2 goals while he was off the pitch to win 2-1.*

This was the last giant killing before the advent of the plastic pitch (1992) that put pay to entertaining much hope of upsetting more vaunted opposition on our sloping cricket outfield at Cricketfield Lane.

Mark Surridge 2017