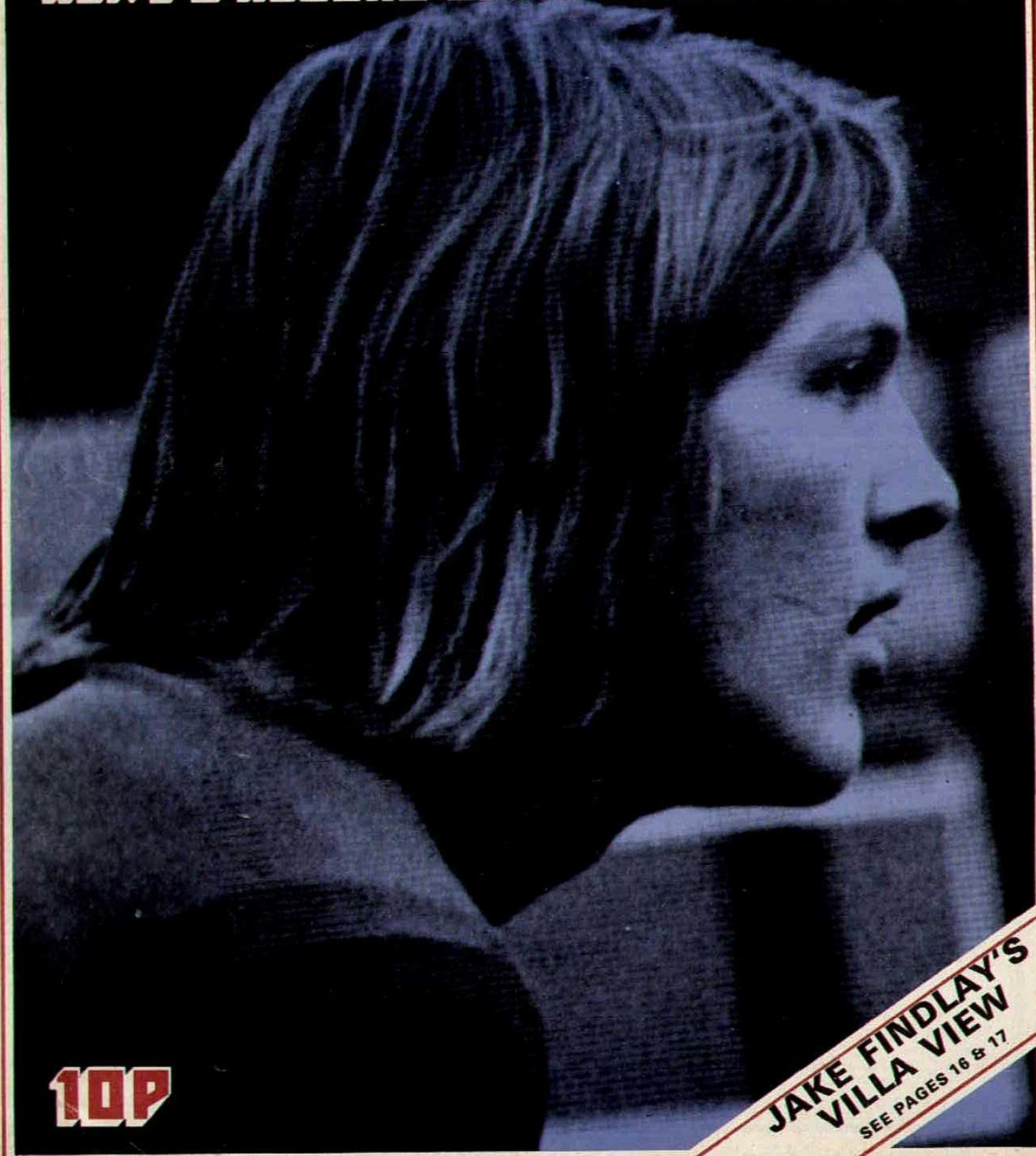
ASTON VILLA

NEWS & RECORD OFFICIAL PROGRAMME



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JAKE FINDLAY'S VILLA VIEW

SEE PAGES 16 & 17

VILLA NEWS & RECORD

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PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR
1970-71—1971-72—1972-73

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Pat McMahon has done a fine job in taking the midfield role previously occupied by Bruce Rioch, and like his predecessor, our Scottish number four is developing the knack for scoring goals. He scored with a header against Bolton and then came a really vital two-goal burst after Portsmouth had held a 1-0 half-time advantage at Villa Park. His 30-yard special for the equaliser was out of cameraman Terry Weir's range but we show Ian Ross delivering the congratulations, (top). Pat got the third after Brian Little (centre) had touched on a cross from Charlie Aitken and Sammy Morgan (bottom) left no doubt about the result!

VIC CROWE TALKING...

A letter which dropped on my desk this week has prompted my theme for today's column. It is the benefits of having a Central League to play in. And my article is prompted by the views of my correspondent, Charles Winstone of George Road, Erdington (a prolific letter writer to local newspapers).

Mr Winstone writes: "Can you tell me, please, just what benefits and advantages the soccer clubs obtain by taking part in the Central League, and similar competitions? I appreciate that such matches do give the players some match practice; but from the Central League games I have seen, there is nowhere near the keenness and enthusiasm that is shown in a first-team game. The Central League (and I suppose all the other reserve-team competitions) is a very easy-going affair.

"I'll honestly admit that I do not go to see the Villa in the Central League, unless the weather is fine, or when there is a top club visiting us. (Liverpool, for instance—a good game to watch, especially as Villa won!) But I can't seem to drum up the enthusiasm for a competition which has no object other than the need to give some injured, or unplaced players a try-out.

"Is there a cup to play for? (I've never seen it). Do the winners of these reserve-team leagues go on to better things? If not, why not? I would have thought that the players' own enthusiasms would have been increased if there was a target to aim for, other than being in the best reserve-team in the Central League."

I wonder how many people have similar views because, quite frankly, Mr Winstone's letter left me speechless for a moment—but only a moment. I would have thought that the value of having a Central League in itself is absolutely priceless, and never was I made more aware of this than during my days in America.

Playing and managing over there was made far more difficult because we did not have a Central League, or any kind of reserve competition.

So, at a stroke, as it were, the players who were left out of the first-team had no way of challenging to get a place themselves. It was frustrating beyond belief. There was no way, except in private practice games, for them to show how good they were, and yet they knew that practice matches are never the perfect form guide.

The Central League, as such, provides a magnificent service to football as, indeed, does the Football Combination. It is no exageration to say that the Central League could add another dozen clubs without too much trouble if they so wished, because there is a tremendous demand to get into this competition.

Every year we get letters from League clubs not in the competition asking us for our support when they seek election.

The Central League, Mr Winstone, provides a much needed opportunity for younger players to show what they can do and at the same time gives them a chance to gain the experience necessary to bridge that vast gap between first-team football and apprenticeship.

I am sorry that Mr Winstone rarely goes to see our reserve games. We are very grateful to the faithful 2,000 or so who make the journey when we are travelling away to give the youngsters, particularly, the kind of support they need in this stage of their careers.

Obviously there are bad games as well as good but, by and large, the standard is extremely high.

Incidentally, there is a handsome shield to play for but the real reward the players in the Central League are seeking, is, in fact, a place in the first-team.

Put many Central League games into a first-team setting and there would be a vastly different game but it is difficult, believe me, to create the same kind of atmosphere at reserve matches when the crowds are so much smaller.

In the end, however, all players must have pride in the club they represent and the colours they wear, irrespective of what team they are playing for, and for what reason.

I would hope that Mr Winstone takes more journeys to see our reserve games at Villa Park and, indeed, take the opportunity to watch our youth-team in action on Saturday mornings at Bodymoor Heath in the Midland Intermediate League.

THERE IS PLENTY TO SEE, A GOOD DEAL TO ENCOURAGE—AND A GREAT DEAL THEY CAN OFFER TO THE PLAYERS THEY WATCH.

PERSONAL POINTS SWINDON

JIMMY ALLAN—*goalkeeper.* Born Inverness. A professional for around three years, Jimmy won the battle for a regular place against Peter Downsborough, now with Bradford City, but dropped out of the side in February. The young Scot made his League debut during the 1971-72 season and had recorded 20 Second Division appearances by the start of this term.

RAY CLARKE—*forward.* Born Hackney, Although Ray was Spur's top scorer in the Football Combination two seasons ago, the former England Youth international failed to get a full League game with the London club. He was on a full professional contract for nearly four years, but had just one substitute appearance before his £8,000 move to Swindon last summer.

MICK COLLINS—*forward.* Born in Johannesburg. After playing in Wolves' junior teams, Mick was given a free transfer last year and signed for Swindon in July. He played his first game in the League Cup against Chesterfield in October and has also appeared as substitute in the Second Division.

ROY COMPTON—*forward.* Swindon collected a bargain a year ago when Roy was released from his apprentice contract by Millwall and signed as a Town professional on 30th March. He scored on his League debut at Middlesbrough in February this year after achieving a good scoring record in the Football Combination.

JOE BUTLER—*midfield.* Born Newcastle. A tenacious player who has served Swindon in midfield and the back-four since joining them from Newcastle United in August, 1965. He was signed as a schoolboy by Newcastle and played in three senior games before moving to Wiltshire. Now has 300 League games behind him and played in the 1969 League Cup Final.

WILL DIXON—*defender.* Born London. Former Arsenal reserve who made his League breakthrough with Reading. He played in over 150 games for the Fourth Division club, but was made available for transfer last summer and joined Swindon on three months loan in September. Made his debut at Bristol City in October.

PETER EASTOE—*forward.* Born Tamworth. Swindon attempted to stop their slide by signing Peter on loan from Wolves in December and he made a great start with two goals against Carlisle. In all, he scored seven goals in eleven League games before returning to Molineux, but went back to Swindon in a reported £80,000 deal last month. Peter scored twice for England when they won the 'Little World Cup' in 1971 and notched a goal in this season's U.E.F.A. Cup.

TERRY HUBBARD—*forward.* Born Newport. A Swindon apprentice discovery who joined the professional ranks in 1969. He had his best season in 1972-73 when he developed well enough to win his first Welsh Under-23 cap, playing as substitute against Scotland at Swansea.

TOMMY JENKINS—*winger.* Born London. A skilful outside-left who was bought to replace Don Rogers in October, 1972. Tommy's career has been full of ups and downs, starting when he had one League game with Orient, who then allowed him to drift into the Southern League with Margate. He moved to Reading four years ago and after only 21 League games, he went to Southampton for £60,000.

RICHARD LEGG—*forward.* Born Chippenham. After being signed from Chippenham Town in August, 1971, Richard gathered experience in Swindon's Combination side and has really come to the fore this season. He scored a goal that was worth two points against Oxford United in October.

JOHN McLAUGHLIN—*defender.* Born Edmonton. It's only been two years since John made his League debut with Colchester United and his progress has been rapid, culminating in a five-figure transfer to Swindon last December. He was only 16 when first appearing in the Fourth Division and last year he played at right-back for the successful England Youth-team in the 'Little World Cup'.

DAVID MUNKS—*defender.* Born Sheffield. An experienced player who stepped into Swindon's relegation fight with a five-figure move from Portsmouth just over three months ago. David started his career in the First Division with Sheffield United and played over 100 games before joining Portsmouth for around £20,000 in 1969. He also topped a century of appearances for the South Coast club.

MICK McGOVERN—*forward.* Born Hayes. Mick first made the mark in London amateur soccer and joined Queen's Park Rangers for his first taste of League football. But he was not a regular at Loftus Road and had a spell on loan with Watford before joining Swindon in February last year.

DAVID MOSS—*forward.* Born Witney. Swindon spotted David playing in junior soccer and were quick to give him a professional contract in 1969. He has now emerged as a skilful player on the right-wing and has played in nearly every game this season and has been top scorer.

CHRIS PORTER—*forward.* Born Bridgwater. Another shrewd signing from non-League soccer, Chris arrived from his home-town club in 1969 and made good progress with several useful goals in 1970-71. However, he has had few opportunities in the last couple of seasons.

RON POTTER—*defender.* Born Wolverhampton. Ron had a brief look at First Division life with West Bromwich Albion, but was released to Swindon for a modest fee in November, 1970. He looked great value last season when he missed only one League game.

KEN STROUD—*midfield.* Born London. Signed as an apprentice in 1967 and won professional status in 1970. He has so far had a handful of first-team games and looks a skilful prospect for the future.

DAVID SYRETT—*forward.* Born Salisbury. David is rated as one of Swindon's most promising players, having made his debut earlier this season while still an apprentice. The 17-year-old striker turned professionl in November, and was a member of this term's England Youth squad.

ALAN SPRATLEY—*goalkeeper.* Born London. Although Alan was bought from Queen's Park Rangers last summer, he didn't get a League chance with Swindon until February this year—since when he has justified the modest fee paid to Rangers. He actually made his Rangers debut at Villa Park in an F.A. Cup-tie in 1969, but played only 30 League games because of the consistency of Phil Parkes.

JOHN TROLLOPE—*defender.* Born Wroughton. Swindon's longest-serving player, John signed as a professional in August, 1960, and broke Maurice Owen's club record of 554 League appearances this season. Made his debut at 16 and played in 368 consecutive games before breaking an arm in 1969.

SWINDON TOWN F.C.—1973-74—(Back row): K. Stroud, T. Hubbard, J. Allan, A. Spratley, C. Porter, R. Legg. (Centre row): M. Collins, R. Potter, J. Trollope, F. Burrows (now Mansfield), R. Clarke, T. Jenkins, R. Thomas (now Derby), K. Morris (Physio). (Front row:) M. Owen (trainer), D. Moss, M. McGovern, R. Bunkell (now Colchester), L. Allen (ex-manager), C. Tuson, R. Treacy (now Preston), J. Butler, G. Edlestone (coach).

SWINDON

Swindon Town reacted to their bottom-of-the-table crisis last by restoring Danny Williams to the manager's chair which he had left within a few months of leading the club to its finest hour in the 1969 League Cup Final at Wembley.

So, for the second time in nine years, Swindon looked towards the former Yorkshire pit worker for a solution to a critical situation. On the previous occasion, he had taken over when Swindon were reeling from the blow of relegation after only two seasons of Second Division football—and when he left for Sheffield Wednesday in July, 1969, he had repaired the damage so well that his successor, Fred Ford, took virtually the same team to the brink of the First Division.

Unfortunately, the subsequent seasons have proved largely disappointing for Swindon and Danny Williams. While Swindon slowly disintegrated to the virtual certainty of dropping into the Third Division, their former manager went through the misery of relegation from the First Division with Wednesday and then grappled unsuccessfully with the task of trying to raise Mansfield Town from the Fourth Division.

Now everyone at the County Ground hopes Swindon and Williams will prove an ideal partnership as in the happy days when he took the side to promotion and Wembley in the same season. On his return, he took office in a modern £200,000 grandstand which is a monument to the profits accumulated from his previous playing success, but most other things had changed.

Only a week before Mansfield agreed to release him following an approach by Swindon, the attendance dived to an all-time low of 2,600 despite the attraction of promotion-chasing Luton Town. And only three players had survived from the magical Wembley occasion five years ago. They were reduced to two when Mr Williams loaned skipper and centre-half Frank Burrows to Mansfield, but John Trollope, now the holder of the club's appearance record, and Joe Butler remain to face the prospect of returning to the Third Division next season.

Presuming that the worst happens, Swindon still believe that what was achieved once before can be done again. Back in 1965, Danny Williams had arrived from Rotherham United—where he was player, trainer, coach and manager in years of loyal service—and had discovered Swindon suffering inevitable reaction from falling back into Division Three.

Ernie Hunt and Mike Summerbee, two of the super youngsters unearthed by former manager Bert Head, were discontented and Mr Williams reluctantly parted with them for a combined sum of £70,000. The cash was used quickly and sensibly, bringing ten new players who formed the core of the team that was to become the flag bearer for the League's smaller town clubs.

Memories of those glory days were stirred for Swindon supporters when news came through of Mr Williams' appointment in succession to Les Allen, who had left the club in February after spending 15 months in charge of team affairs following the departure of Dave Mackay to Nottingham Forest in 1972. The fans remembered the success achieved by Mr Williams' firm but warm-hearted approach and they were urged to "come back and support us" by the new manager, who said: "I would like to develop the kind of side that I had at Swindon the last time."

He made an immediate impact on the club's following when taking a quick decision to gamble most of his available funds on paying a reported £80,000 for Wolves striker Peter Eastoe. The fee smashed the club's record spending—and Mr Williams agreed the terms without ever having seen the former England Youth international play. He relied on the recommendation of coach Gordon Edlestone and the knowledge that Eastoe was popular with the supporters after scoring seven goals in eleven League games while on loan at the County Ground. Les Allen had tried to buy Eastoe at various stages of his temporary transfer period, but Bill McGarry refused to do business and recalled Eastoe to Molineux, possibly as cover in case of injuries as Wolves prepared for the League Cup Final.

New signing from Wolves
PETER EASTOE

ALL ABOUT WINDON

Swindon hope that Eastoe can replace former idol Don Rogers as a star personality in the eyes of the fans. And there was every suggestion that the youngster could do just that now that his promising partnership with England Youth international Dave Syrett is back in circulation. Until the Eastoe deal just before the transfer deadline, Swindon's efforts to sign a new forward had met with little success despite the cash surplus left over from the sale of Welsh international full-back Rod Thomas to Derby County and Ray Treacy to Preston North End.

Les Allen arranged two incoming deals, both at five-figure expenditure, to strengthen the defence. John McLaughlin, a young full-back from Colchester United, and David Munks, experienced player from Portsmouth, both signed in December, but there was little they could do to assist in checking Swindon's slide.

They collected just one win bonus in their first three months at the County Ground. The decline was such that a 3-1 win against Preston on January 1st was the only success in 17 games since they had beaten Villa with a last-minute goal in November. Yet the season had opened well with five points from three games—including victory over Albion which prompted a crowd of almost 14,000, their best of the season, for the next home game against Bristol City. Their West Country rivals won and Swindon saw all their hopes explode in a steady fall down the League table. They were ousted from the League Cup by Chesterfield and a 1-0 triumph over Oxford was their only win in a ten-week spell. They made frantic efforts to change the pattern, borrowing the experience of Bournemouth's former Scottish international, Jimmy Gabriel, but various permutations between more than 20 players did nothing to prevent the decay eating away at the club's foundations.

By the time they reached February, Les Allen knew that anything short of at least a point a game would put Swindon into a certain relegation fight. The 'crunch' came with the re-arranged home games that month and Swindon knew their likely fate when Notts County beat them 4-1 and Luton then snatched a 2-0 win.

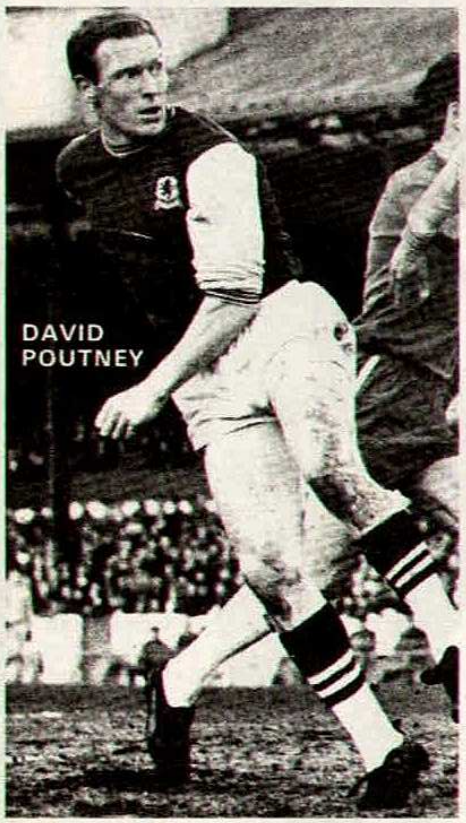
It seemed that the supporters feared the outcome, too, for the two fixtures produced an aggregate of just under 6,000 spectators. So now it's back to the drawing board and hopes of a prosperous new future under the 'lucky charm' manager of Danny Williams.

DAVID MOSS

ACTION REPLAY

Reporter Norton Jones takes a look into a past which holds memories for Villa supporters of all ages . . . ten, twenty and forty years ago.

10 YEARS AGO



DAVID POUTNEY

DIVISION ONE—11th APRIL, 1964

IPSWICH Thorburn; Davin, Compton; Baxter, Bolton, Dougan; Stephenson, Moran, Baker, Leadbetter, Broadfoot.

VILLA: Wilson; Wright, Aitken; Tindall, Sleeuwenhoek, Pountney; MacEwan, Wylie, Horne, Ewing, Burrows.

RESULT:
IPSWICH TOWN 4, ASTON VILLA 3

In the season that Dave Pountney made his debut, after being signed by Joe Mercer, he only scored twice, and on, both occasions the former Shrewsbury Town player was a member of a Villa side that got three goals—but on neither occasion were they enough to guarantee victory.

Dave's debut arrived against Sheffield Wednesday in October, 1963, and after a first spell at left-half, he was promoted to inside-left and got his first goal credit in a 3-3 draw against Blackburn Rovers.

The next time Dave found the net that season was four months later when he was back in defence. But that was an unfortunate afternoon for Aston Villa's Bob Wilson, who was responsible for the work between the posts. Though it was a general reflection more on the sharpness of the Ipswich attack than on the frailty of Villa's defence, Bob had to suffer the indignity of retrieving the ball four times out of his net.

Bob, born in Small Heath, joined Villa in 1960 and reached the first-team and League football for the first time in March, 1964, when Nigel Sims and Geoff Sidebottom lost their places.

Later, Bob's career spread to Cardiff City and European football when the Welshman went into competition abroad via their success in the Welsh Cup. Wilson stayed as Villa's goalkeeper for the ten remaining games of the 1963-64 season—but that was the first and last Villa fans really saw of him before his transfer.

Missing from the Portman Road seven-goal thriller just ten years ago were Tony Hateley and the injured Alan Deakin. There were five of the 'Mercer Minors'—Wright, Aitken, Tindall, Sleeuwenhoek and Burrows—with present-day assistant manager Ron Wylie a father figure in the front line which also included Stan Horne, later to follow Mercer to Manchester City.

Evidently the shock of having burglars overnight, who ransacked the offices from top to bottom, failed to worry the Ipswich side. They cannoned off into the first of their four goals through Broadfoot, a player Villa's manager had earlier tried to buy. It was something against the run of play, but Leadbetter, a brilliant legacy of Ipswich's 1962 Championship year, snapped onto a Tindall backpass and Broadfoot was fed with a chance he couldn't miss.

But the next two credits came Villa's way. The chink in their armour was located when Pountney hit the first of his two goals from 30 yards, followed shortly afterwards by Ron Wylie's contribution.

The see-saw struggle became even more intriguing when Ipswich were stung into retaliation and got back on level terms in the 70th minute through Baker. And then they sprang back for Broadfoot to make it 3-2 with barely ten minutes left.

But at the rate they were going it, ten minutes was ample time for more. Pountney looked to have saved Villa's day with his second equaliser, but the final glory was to be won by Ipswich, who logged a last minute winner through Baxter.

20 YEARS AGO

BILLY BAXTER

DIVISION ONE—10th APRIL, 1954

VILLA: Jones; Parkes, Aldis; Blanchflower, Moss (F), Baxter; Roberts (K.O.), Gibson, Pace, Dixon, McParland.

BURNLEY: McDonald; Aird, Winton; Adamson, Burns, Seith; Gray, McIlroy, Holden, Shannon, Pilkington.

RESULT:
ASTON VILLA 5, BURNLEY 1

On the day Villa turned on the goal tap and flooded a battered Burnley defence 5-1 at Villa Park, a future manager of the club lay in agony on the Highbury pitch with a broken leg.

It was, of course, the tragic event in the career of Joe Mercer, the epitome of a class half-back, who distinguished himself with Everton, Arsenal and England in an outstanding ten years at the top. Joe was carried off against Liverpool, a black Saturday afternoon which to this day has left him with a 'left peg' out of line.

Once, when mistaken for his jockey namesake, Joe replied: "Right name, right legs, but wrong Mercer!"

Joe came to Villa Park about five years after his injury, when Villa had apparently frozen their assets with the goal days such as enjoyed against Burnley in April, 1954. Was it a coincidence or was there something in the fact that the attack that day included four players, in the five positions, all of whom, at one time or another, were used as wingers?

K.O. Roberts, Colin Gibson, Derek Pace and the fast-improving youngster, Peter McParland, were a quartet who put the spark and spirit into a search for goals.

Showing impressive assurance from the kick-off, Villa shot off into an early lead when former Wolves man, Billy Baxter took advantage of the turmoil his front men had caused and Baxter's bullet went past a surprised Colin MacDonald from 20 yards. Little did the 22-year-old reserve 'keeper who later went on to be capped for England, know that this would be only the first of five he would have to suffer that afternoon.

The gifted Irish genius, Jimmy McIlroy, was the character whom Burnley had come to rely upon as their saviour. But his radar distribution and classy control were missing against the counter bid of Danny Blanchflower in midfield.

Burnley's defence, including Jack Winton, the full-back Joe Mercer was later to sign, and their current manager, Jimmy Adamson, were basically left to do the best they could.

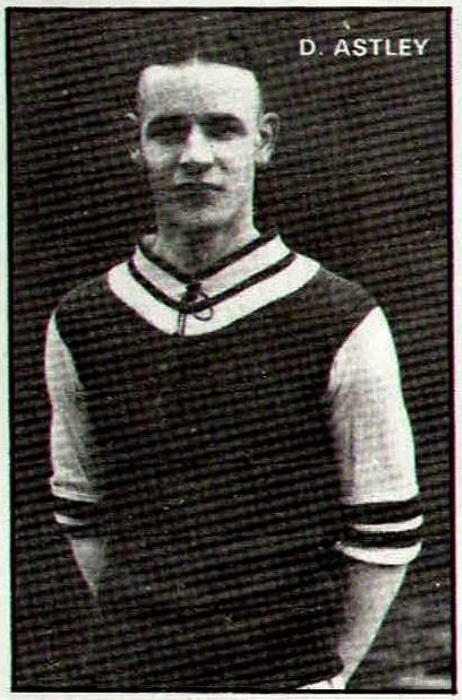
Credit number two came just before half time when McParland fastened onto a Dixon pass, switched inside, and then thundered a unstoppable shot past the helpless McDonald. The only threat to Villa in a commanding first half was the terrier type worry from Billy Gray, an outside-right, later to enjoy a successful managerial career with Millwall.

With a 2-0 interval lead, Villa only seemed to want to play at a pace that was above Burnley's and with the Turf Moor ambitions pretty low and weak, the second half work rate was poor in comparison to the first.

The resumption of the scoring came after a neat piece of work by K.O. Roberts, who sneaked a superb ball through to Colin Gibson for the Newcastle man to register number three.

Before centre-forward Holden got a token goal for Burnley, Villa's fourth had been logged by Derek Pace. It was completed shortly before the end when 'Dashing Derek' got another, climaxing a bright attacking display which won him the centre-forward's position for the last five games of the season from Dave Walsh.

40 YEARS AGO



DIVISION ONE—7th APRIL 1934

NEWCASTLE: Burns; Nelson, Fairhurst; Imrie, Bolton, Hughes; Boyd, Richardson, Allen, Dennison, Lang.

VILLA: Morton; Blair, Nibloe; Gardner, Gibson, Kingdon; Houghton, Brocklebank, Astley, Dix, Cuncliffe.

RESULT:
NEWCASTLE UNITED 1, ASTON VILLA 1

Villa turned into a new decade just over 40 years ago as a 'Super-Power' of the First Division. Only the supreme rivalry from Arsenal prevented the club from topping the Division twice in three years, finishing second in 1931 and 1933 to the famous red 'hot-shots' of Highbury.

But Villa's fortunes went through a gradual recession which resulted in the eventual first ever visit to the Second Division at the end of a fateful 1935-36 campaign.

Another name also synomonous with the great traditions of soccer, both pre-and-post-war was Newcastle and it was something of a rare occasion, indeed, when the pair met during the 1933-34 term. Success for either side could have been a big factor in securing SURVIVAL in the First Division.

Newcastle's side, in a far worse predicament than Villa's with only five Saturday's in the season remaining, were practically doomed unless they could start an end-of-the-season winning sprint with success over Villa.

The late and great Birmingham City physiotherapist, Dave Fairhurst, was the English international full-back in United's defence. It was the Newcastle skipper. Fairhurst's full-back partner, Nelson, who won the toss and the 'Geordies' went away in a flash to try and crack Villa's defence before it settled.

The coolest brain on St. James's Park at that time was the cultured Scottish figure of Jimmy Gibson, the legendary right-half but now needed in the centre of Villa's defence.

Before their home supporters, Newcastle were able to keep Villa more active in their own half than in United's, but when Dix and Astley began to probe for the weaknesses the match swung back into a more even keel.

Eric Houghton's wing power was always something which every team of that era watched closely. It was also noticeable that Dave Astley had a shadow wherever he went for at the time Astley was Villa's top Cup hero, winging them through to the semi-final with goals in every round.

But there was to be no show of goal power from Astley this time, and it was no surprise when Newcastle delighted the 30,000 crowd by springing off into the lead through Dennison, who beat Morton after a great move.

Villa turned round a goal in arrears. But there were too many old hands at the game in 'Claret and Blue' for a real ducking to be suffered. Villa pulled level in a second half they more than won, taking a point which Newcastle were unable to afford to lose.

At the end of the season, Newcastle were two points adrift of safety, and football bade a sad farewell to a side quite rightly recognised a premier side.

by NORTON JONES

BREW XI

For the men of the Midlands

M&B

Mitchells & Butlers Ltd.
Birmingham

Mick Hoban displays souvenirs from his days with Atlanta.

Two young men who featured regularly in Aston Villa's Central League side last season are preparing for another summer of glamourous travel on the North American soccer circuit.

Some time in the next fortnight, Mick Hoban and Paul Child will fly over 5,000 miles to check out the prospects with new clubs which are entering the American League for the first time. And their families will go along to share in the affluent life of sportsmen in the United States.

Mick, the former grammar school boy from Tipton, has been allocated to Denver, Colorado, and Paul, who gave up the carpentry trade to turn professional with Villa, goes on an extra 1,000 miles to link up with San Francisco.

Avid watchers of the television screen will appreciate the exciting locations in which the young Midlanders will be clocking up the dollars. Denver was a central point in many of the film Westerns and perhaps we can nickname Paul 'Ironside' as he flies towards the

AMERICAN ADVENTURE

headquarters city of TV's famous lawman!

But don't get the idea that a season in American football is a joy ride. The game itself is wearing because of the baking temperatures and, while it is enthralling to see all the sights of a vast Continent, the travelling schedule can be tiring as well.

Mick tells us it's nothing unusual for the coach to announce a pre-season warm-up game in, say, Miami, and it's 'all aboad' a jetliner which will have to cover the ground of similar distance to the British tourists' summer trip to Majorca.

"Mind you, I wouldn't miss it for the world," says Mick Hoban. "I love travelling and all our expenses are paid. So far, while with Atlanta, I have seen most of the Eastern States, but if I join Denver, then I will be playing in the Central States and Western Seaboard. This could mean matches in places like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver."

This will be Mick's fourth season in the States and the second for Paul. The reason for their change of clubs is that Atlanta Apollos (formerly the Chiefs when Vic Crowe was manager) became defunct at the end of last season.

All the players were placed on a draft for allocation to the new clubs. Paul was listed number one and became the choice of San Francisco, while Mick, at number three, was selected by Ken Bracewell, the former Atlanta manager who is now in charge of Denver.

Both lads are convinced of the future of American football even though associated with the failure of one club. Mick explains: "The trouble in Atlanta was that we were in direct opposition to American grid-iron football which is strongest in the South. We always had difficulty in getting publicity, as I discovered when staying on to work in the promotion office. You really had to sell the game to the newspapers."

However, Mick says that Atanlta could still come back on the football map because of the steady groundwork achieved in the schools and colleges. "All the professionals coached the kids three or four times a week," says Mick. "We were well received and had many requests to go back to colleges. The kids love the sport and, for parents, it's much cheaper to buy the boys a pair of football boots compared with the expensive clothing needed for American football."

Paul Child and family—Jackie and 'Junior'—awaiting this year's trip to the States.

One development that could help the sport in the States is the advent of six-a-side football. The game had been amended basically along Ice Hockey rules to suit the American fans' taste for high-speed action and plenty of goals.

The game is played over three 20-minute periods and substitutions are allowed at any time—without the match being stopped. "You just put up your hand to say you're ready for a rest, "explains Mick. "The sub then comes on automatically just as in Ice Hockey. And, of course, you are not finished with the game. You can then go back as a substitute yourself."

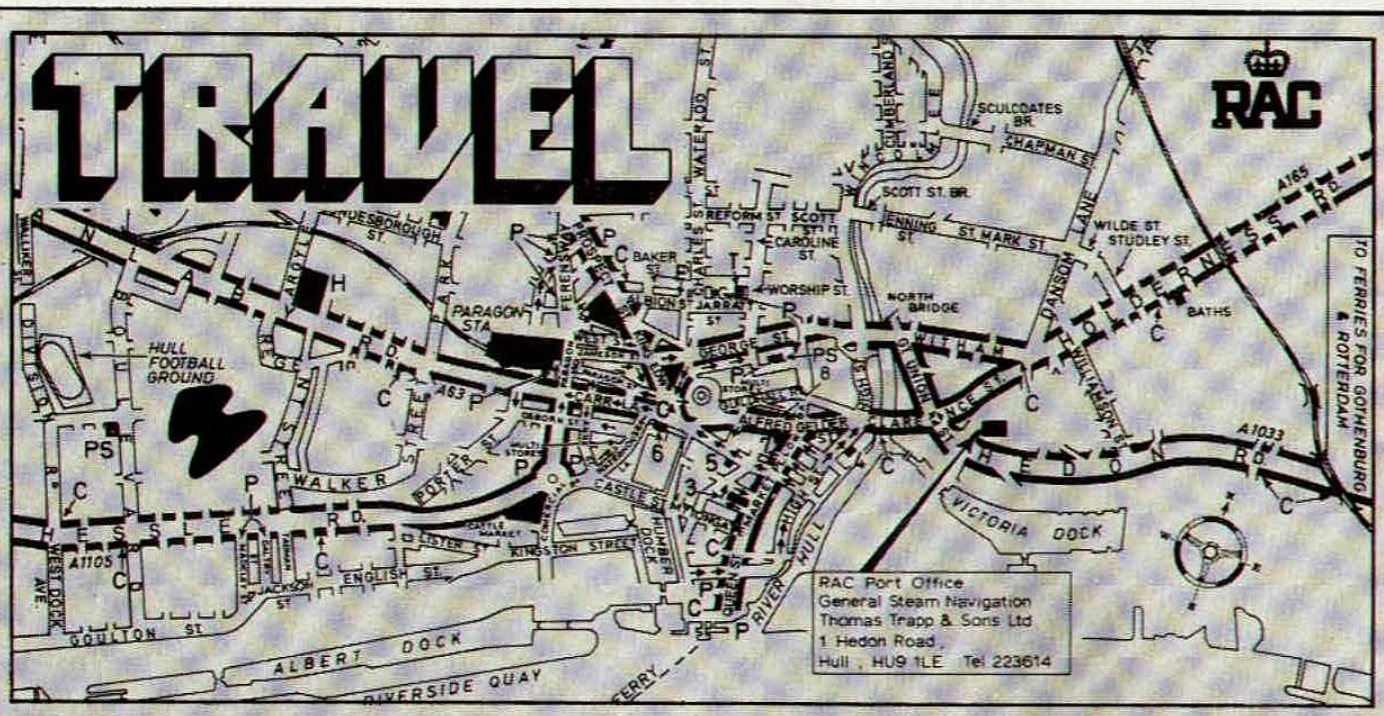
Crowds of 15,000 have been attracted to this new venture and Mick thinks it will remain successful. "It suits the Americans to have their luxury," he says. "They have a comfortable seat indoors and drink their bottle of beer."

It certainly sounds as if exciting times are ahead for Mick Hoban and Paul Child. We wish them good luck for their season which starts in May.

ACTION

Sammy Morgan made another sizeable contribution to Villa's attacking play with two goals in the trouncing of Portsmouth. The main picture shows the Irishman forcing home our second goal of the match following a back-header from Keith Leonard and the inset 'catches' Sammy watching his cleverly-placed header beat David Best for the fourth. Pictures: Terry Weir.

Drum Bitter
Bristol Street Motors



HULL CITY v ASTON VILLA

SATURDAY 13th APRIL 1974

Leave Birmingham via the A.38(M) Aston Expressway to join the A.5127, continue via Sutton Coldfield to the Lichfield by-pass. Take the A.38 to the Derby Ring Road. Join the A.52 to junction 25 of the M.1 motorway. Follow the M.1 Northwards to junction 32. Take the M.18 to junction 1. Join the A.631 to Bawtry, and the A.614 to Howden and the A.63 to Hull. Entering Hull via Boothferry Road, turn right down North Road. Football ground is on the left. Total mileage: 150.

Tickets . . . Stand seats (£1.20, £1, 70p and 65p) available fourteen days in advance from Hull City F.C., Boothferry Park, Hull HU4 6EU.

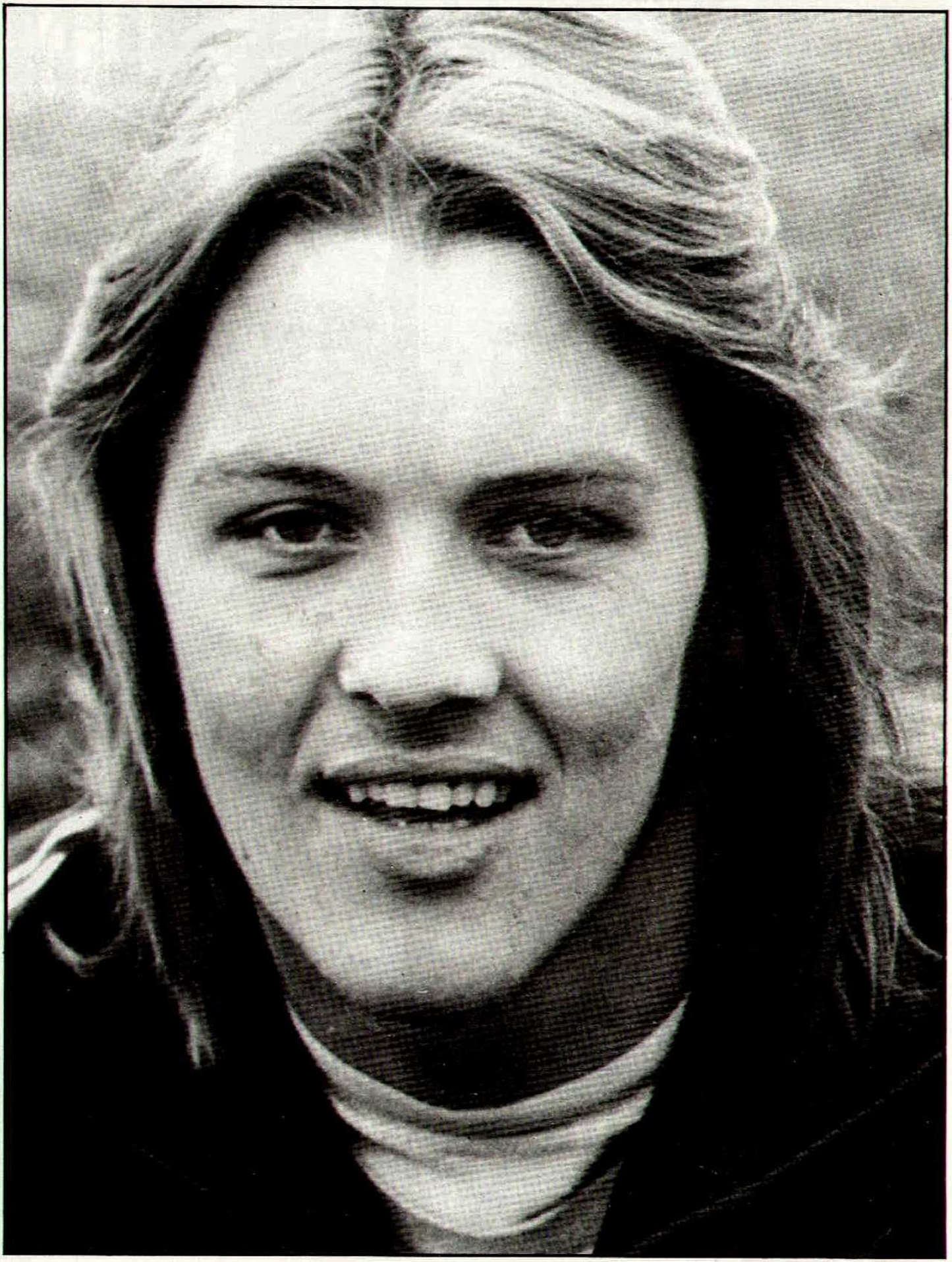
Nearest British Rail Stations . . . Paragon Station (main line), Boothferry Park Halt (ground).

ANSELLS BITTER

Aston Villamen. You can't beat 'em

WELL DONE CHARLIE

The Lions Club members recorded their appreciation of Charlie Aitken's achievement in beating Billy Walker's all-time record of appearances for Villa. On their behalf, Director Eric Houghton presented Charlie with a silver plated tea service during a pleasant evening at the Club. Charlie was accompanied by his wife, Kay.



VILLA VIEW

When Jake Findlay made the 350 mile trip to Villa Park from Blairgowrie after being signed by Tommy Docherty, he quickly found himself last man in a six-strong queue for the first-team spot. Last month, he made his first-team debut in the friendly with Southampton and is now knocking hard on Jim Cumbes' goalposts for a regular spot in the side.

It takes a lot of strength of character and determination to make this kind of progress, especially when there were times when he naturally felt he was marking time and getting nowhere fast.

The men standing between Jake's (and Villa's) prime goal were, over the next few years, John Dunn, John Phillips, Gordon Knowles, Tommy Hughes and Geoff Crudgington, and as fast as one of them left, a replacement was brought in so that Jake could only inch his way nearer to the first-team.

He took the plunge against Southampton and those of you who braved the bleak weather will admit that he made quite a splash—at 6 ft 1 in and 13 st 4 lb he is quite entitled to do so.

Jake was one of the first products of Docherty's intense Scottish scouting system. It was when he was given a trial against Possil Park, the junior club formerly associated with Villa, that he caught the Doc's eye. What he could not have guessed at the time, was that only four months previously, another Scottish schoolboy, Gordon Knowles, had also joined the apprentice ranks.

At first, it looked as if Knowles, who shaped better early on, was going to be the lad to make it, but with the tenacity that was to earmark his ability to shrug off later disappointment, Jake stuck to it and eventually it was Knowles whose apprenticeship was terminated. It could have been said at the time that Findlay's pro-career had made its first telling step forward.

"I have to admit I have experienced a few problems since I came here and it doesn't do your confidence any good. But you just have to keep plugging away and Frank Upton, Leo Crowther and Ron Wylie have all helped me through this waiting period," Jake told me.

"I thought my luck had changed and that I had turned the corner when I played in the side which won the Youth Cup two years ago, but last season I had a bad time and it was due to my failure to maintain concentration throughout a match. It was during these raw spells when I was downhearted and my head dropped that Frank Upton helped me so much. I can't thank him enough for his assistance in these trying times.

"Concentration has to be the key to the 'keeper's job. He can work on improving his strength and agility, and positional play comes naturally, I think, to a goalkeeper. After all, he has the advantage of having the entire pitch in front of him and must be in the best position to assess developments when the opposition are attacking. But there's very little you can do to train yourself to concentrate, it's purely a question of willpower.

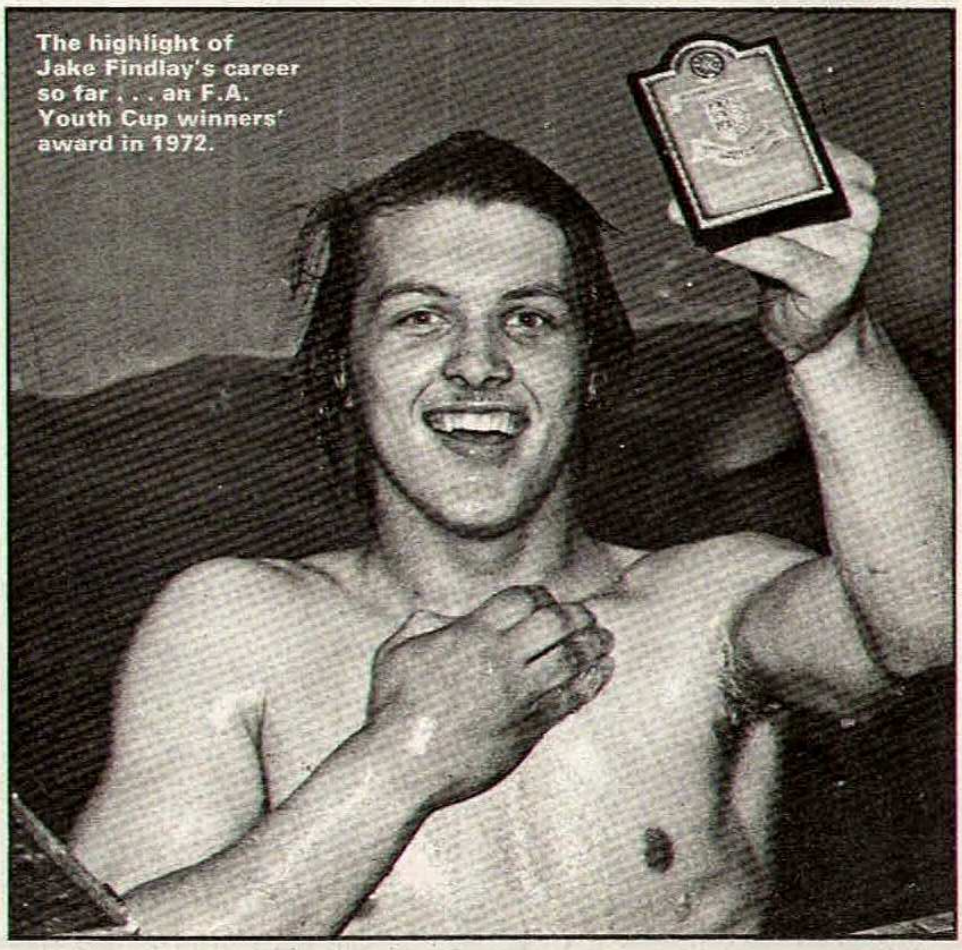
Jake has grown nearly three inches in height and has put on nearly three stone since he first came to Villa and admits that he has a huge appetite, but he has no weight problems and today's coaches have recognised the need for goalkeepers to be both physically powerful and alertly agile. For this reason, all the Villa 'keepers receive specialist training suitable to the requirements of their specialist position.

"We are taken on special stints of stretch exercises to build up our springing ability and have abdominal exercises which improve our agility," Jake says. "While Jimmy Cumbes and myself are both big fellows, and are able to cope with the demands of general training, I think we have both been known to struggle in pre-season when the really hard slogging takes place. Those runs over the hills and slopes really murder me."

On the subject of specialised training for goalkeepers, Vic Crowe told me recently: "They must be taken separately for if you involved them in everything the other players did, no doubt they might begin to look pretty useful centre-forwards but that wouldn't be making them any better goalkeepers."

Which is strange for Jake started out as an optimistic centre-forward during his schoolboy days and is now looking a pretty useful goalkeeper!

JOHN MOXLEY



The highlight of Jake Findlay's career so far . . . an F.A. Youth Cup winners' award in 1972.

CALENDAR

FOOTBALL LEAGUE—DIVISION TWO

DATE	OPPONENTS	ATT	F	A
Aug 18	**LEICESTER CITY (Friendly)**	15,153	0	1
25	**PRESTON NORTH END**	28,861	2	0
Sept 1	MILLWALL	12,009	1	1
8	**OXFORD UNITED**	28,078	2	0
11	CRYSTAL PALACE	20,858	0	0
15	MIDDLESBROUGH	19,656	0	0
19	**FULHAM**	30,162	1	1
22	**ORIENT**	26,685	2	2
29	NOTTS COUNTY	15,872	0	2
Oct 2	FULHAM	11,776	0	1
6	**CARDIFF CITY**	24,473	5	0
9	YORK CITY (L.C. 2)	7,981	0	1
13	BOLTON WANDERERS	19,206	2	1
20	**BRISTOL CITY**	26,918	2	2
23	**CRYSTAL PALACE**	26,670	2	1
27	NOTTINGHAM FOREST	17,718	2	1
Nov 3	**SHEFFIELD WED**	28,559	1	0
10	PORTSMOUTH	12,678	0	2
17	**HULL CITY**	23,773	1	1
24	SWINDON TOWN	8,476	0	1
Dec 8	SUNDERLAND	20,784	0	2
15	LUTON TOWN	10,020	0	1
22	**NOTTS COUNTY**	20,825	1	1
26	W B ALBION	43,084	0	2
29	OXFORD UNITED	10,149	1	2

DATE	OPPONENTS	ATT	F	A
1974				
Jan. 1	**MILLWALL**	20,905	0	0
5	**CHESTER** (FAC 3)	16,545	3	1
12	**MIDDLESBROUGH**	26,906	1	1
19	PRESTON NORTH END	10,766	0	0
26	ARSENAL FAC 4	41,682	1	1
30	**ARSENAL** (FAC 4 Replay)	47,821	2	0
Feb. 2	**LUTON TOWN**	26,180	0	1
16	BURNLEY (FAC5)	29,301	0	1
23	CARDIFF CITY	12,310	1	0
27	**BOLTON WANDERERS**	18,952	1	1
Mar 2	**W B ALBION**	37,323	1	3
9	**SOUTHAMPTON (Friendly)**	3,881	3	0
13	**CARLISLE UNITED**	12,007	2	1
16	BRISTOL CITY	12,759	1	0
23	**PORTSMOUTH**	15,517	4	1
Apr 1	SHEFFIELD WED	22,094	4	2
6	**SWINDON TOWN**			
13	HULL CITY			
15	**BLACKPOOL**			
16	BLACKPOOL			
20	**SUNDERLAND**			
24	**NOTTINGHAM FOREST**			
27	CARLISLE UNITED			
30	ORIENT			
May 4	FA CUP FINAL			

HOME FIXTURES IN **BOLD**

CENTRAL LEAGUE

Aug 25	W B ALBION	0	0	Nov 7	BLACKPOOL	0	0	26	BOLTON W.	1	0
28	SHEFFIELD U	2	2	10	**MANCHESTER C.**	2	1	Mar 2	NEWCASTLE U.	0	1
Sept 1	**BURNLEY**	1	1	21	**W B ALBION**	1	0	9	BURY	0	1
5	**BLACKBURN R**	0	0	24	**DERBY COUNTY**	2	0	13	BLACKBURN R	0	1
8	SHEFFIELD W.	0	1	Dec 8	**LEEDS UNITED**	2	1	16	**LIVERPOOL**	2	0
12	LEEDS UNITED	2	0	15	**NEWCASTLE U.**	0	0	19	COVENTRY CITY	0	2
15	**HUDDERSFIELD T.**	1	0	22	STOKE CITY	1	3	23	MANCHESTER C.	1	0
29	**EVERTON**	2	0	29	**NOTTINGHAM F.**	1	1	26	PRESTON N.E.	0	0
Oct 2	NOTTINGHAM F.	1	1	Jan 1	BURNLEY	2	1	30	**BLACKPOOL**	0	3
6	MANCHESTER U.	2	0	12	HUDDERSFIELD T.	1	5	April 6	DERBY COUNTY		
13	**BOLTON W.**	1	1	19	**SHEFFIELD W.**	2	0	13	**PRESTON N.E.**		
15	**WOLVES**	0	2	Feb 2	EVERTON	1	1	16	WOLVES		
20	LIVERPOOL	0	0	13	**SHEFFIELD U.**	1	1	24	**MANCHESTER U.**		
27	**BURY**	2	0	23	**STOKE CITY**	2	0	27	**COVENTRY CITY**		

MIDLAND INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE

Aug 25	BIRMINGHAM C.	1	1	24	DERBY COUNTY	1	2	9	BRISTOL CITY	0	3
Sept 1	LEICESTER CITY	2	3	Dec 1	**BIRMINGHAM C.**	4	0	16	**SHREWSBURY T.**	0	1
8	MANSFIELD TOWN	1	2	8	BIRMINGHAM C.	1	1	23	W B ALBION	0	2
15	**DERBY COUNTY**	0	5	22	**COVENTRY CITY**	2	7	30	**MANSFIELD T.**	2	2
22	COVENTRY CITY	0	1	Jan 5	**W B ALBION**	0	1	April 1	LEICESTER CITY		
29	**BIRMINGHAM C.**	1	2	19	**WALSALL**	2	2	6	**BRISTOL CITY**		
Oct 6	**LEICESTER CITY**	0	2	26	SHREWSBURY T.	0	1	13	STOKE CITY		
13	**MANSFIELD T.**	5	3	Feb 2	**WOLVES**	1	0	20	**LEICESTER CITY**		
20	DERBY COUNTY	2	2	16	**DERBY COUNTY**	1	0				
27	**COVENTRY CITY**	0	0	23	COVENTRY CITY	0	5	To be arranged	WALSALL		
Nov 10	**WOLVES**	2	2	Mar 2	**STOKE CITY**	1	3		MANSFIELD TOWN		

DIVISION TWO STATISTICS

Up to and including Monday, 1st April, 1974

Teams	Home P	Home W	Home D	Home L	Home F	Home A	Away W	Away D	Away L	Away F	Away A	Away P
Middlesbrough	36	14	3	1	28	8	10	7	1	30	15	58
Luton Town	35	10	5	2	32	18	7	4	7	18	22	43
Blackpool	36	9	5	4	28	14	5	8	5	20	20	41
Carlisle United	35	10	5	3	35	16	6	4	7	19	23	41
Orient	35	8	5	4	23	13	6	8	4	26	23	41
Nottingham Forest	35	11	4	3	35	15	2	9	6	13	18	39
W. B. Albion	36	7	7	4	25	22	6	6	6	20	19	39
Sunderland	35	9	6	3	27	11	6	2	9	18	22	38
Notts County	37	7	4	7	27	33	7	6	6	24	20	38
ASTON VILLA	**34**	**7**	**8**	**2**	**28**	**16**	**5**	**4**	**8**	**12**	**18**	**36**
Bolton Wanderers	35	11	3	3	27	13	3	5	10	14	22	36
Fulham	35	10	3	5	21	16	4	5	8	11	18	36
Hull City	37	8	8	2	22	13	2	8	9	17	31	36
Millwall	36	8	5	5	24	14	4	6	8	21	30	35
Portsmouth	36	8	7	3	23	14	4	3	11	16	44	34
Bristol City	36	7	5	6	22	18	4	4	10	18	30	31
Cardiff City	36	7	5	6	22	16	2	7	9	19	38	30
Sheffield Wednesday	36	7	5	6	29	22	3	4	11	18	30	29
Crystal Palace	35	6	6	6	24	20	3	4	10	12	27	28
Oxford United	35	6	7	4	24	19	1	6	11	7	25	27
Preston North End	36	7	6	5	22	19	1	6	11	12	34	27
Swindon Town	37	5	7	7	21	26	0	3	15	11	40	20

Up to and including Monday, 1st April, 1974

Leading Scorers
League and Cups

Byrom, Bolton	23
Brown (T), Albion	22
McKenzie, Forest	21
Halom, Sunderland	19
Wood, Millwall	19
Fairborther, Orient	18
Bullock, Orient	16
Clarke, Carlisle	15
Davies, Portsmouth	15
Foggon, M'Boro	15
McCulloch, Cardiff	14
Rogers, Palace	14
Anderson, Luton	13
Burns, Blackpool	13
Randall, Notts Co	13
Butlin, Luton	12
Curran, Oxford	12
Clark, Millwall	12
Joicey, Shef. Wed	11
Lyall, Forest	11
Mills, M'Boro	11
Owen, Carlisle	11
Prendergast, Shef. W.	11
Queen, Orient	11

APPEARANCES AND GOALSCORERS

Div Two Name	Lge A	Lge G	F.L.C. A	F.L.C. G	F.A.C. A	F.A.C. G
Aitken	34	2	1	—	4	—
Brown	23	—	1	—	—	1
Cumbes	34	—	1	—	4	—
Evans	22	3	—	—	4	1
Gidman	24	—	—	—	4	—
Graydon	15	6	1	—	2	—
Hamilton	22	1	—	—	4	—
Hockey	24	1	—	—	—	—
Leonard	3	1	—	—	—	—
Little (B)	28	7	1	—	1	—
McDonald	1	—	—	—	—	—
McMahon	12	4	—	—	3	—
Morgan	15	5	1	—	3	4
Nicholl	33	—	1	—	4	1
Rioch (B)	18	7	1	—	4	—
Rioch (N)	3	—	—	—	—	—
Robson	10	—	1	—	—	—
Ross	34	—	1	—	4	—
Stark	1	—	—	—	—	—
Turnbull	4	—	—	—	—	—
Vowden	15	2	1	—	2	—
Own Goal	—	1	—	—	—	—

Central League

	A	G		A	G
Betts	31	7	McDonald	33	3
Beard	18	1	McMahon	13	2
Brown	8	—	Morgan	8	2
Campbell	27	6	Overton	15	—
Cumbes	1	—	Pelosi	4	2
Deehan	1	—	Peyton	2	—
Evans	3	1	Pimblett	5	—
Findlay	34	—	Rioch (B)	2	—
Gidman	4	—	Rioch (N)	29	1
Graydon	7	—	Robson	23	1
Hamilton	10	1	Stark	31	2
Hockey	4	—	Turnbull	26	—
Hunt	5	1	Vowden	7	—
Leonard	7	—	Willisma	1	—
Little (A)	33	4	Wright	8	1
Masefield	6	1			

CENTRAL LEAGUE

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Liverpool	36	23	7	6	68	29	53
Coventry City	36	19	9	8	58	43	47
Everton	36	18	10	8	61	34	46
Blackpool	36	19	6	11	59	42	44
Aston Villa	**37**	**15**	**13**	**9**	**36**	**30**	**43**
Wolves	35	16	10	9	60	42	42
W.B. Albion	35	16	9	10	55	41	41
Sheffield U.	35	15	9	11	50	40	39
Manchester C.	35	15	8	12	66	48	38
Sheffield W.	34	14	10	10	50	39	38
Derby County	34	12	13	9	45	34	37
Manchester U.	33	12	11	10	36	32	35
Nottm. Forest	36	8	16	12	42	54	32
Stoke City	30	12	6	12	40	40	30
Bolton W.	35	10	10	15	55	61	30
Blackburn R.	35	11	8	16	36	48	30
Newcastle U.	32	10	9	13	46	44	29
Leeds United	35	9	11	15	33	57	29
Preston N.E.	37	8	9	20	42	67	25
Bury	34	7	6	21	37	85	20
Huddersfield T.	36	5	10	21	36	71	20
Burnley	34	7	4	23	31	61	18

INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
W.B. Albion	19	12	5	2	33	16	29
Leicester City	17	10	4	3	37	24	24
Derby County	19	9	4	6	33	24	22
Shrewsbury T.	18	10	1	7	36	31	21
Bristol City	17	8	4	5	37	22	20
Birmingham City	18	7	4	7	28	25	18
Stoke City	17	8	2	7	30	29	18
Wolves	18	6	3	9	26	24	15
Coventry City	17	7	0	10	34	28	14
Walsall	18	4	4	10	25	53	12
Aston Villa	**16**	**3**	**4**	**9**	**17**	**32**	**10**
Mansfield Town	16	2	3	11	15	43	7

MIDLAND YOUTH LEAGUE

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Leicester City	17	9	6	2	24	11	24
W. Wanderers	18	10	2	6	30	27	22
W. B. Albion	19	7	7	5	26	22	21
Aston Villa	**19**	**7**	**7**	**5**	**39**	**33**	**21**
Coventry City	18	7	6	5	36	26	20
Birmingham City	14	6	7	1	27	20	19
Bristol City	18	8	3	7	33	30	19
Notts County	18	6	5	7	26	31	17
Swindon Town	17	5	4	8	27	25	14
Nottingham For	18	5	3	10	22	31	13
Oxford United	18	3	3	12	24	41	9
Northampton T.	14	4	1	9	16	33	9

Up to and including 21st March 1974

FOR THE RECORD

26th February—Central League
BOLTON WANDERERS 0, VILLA 1

Scorer: Little (A).

VILLA: Findlay; Robson, McDonald; Turnbull, Stark, Overton (sub: Pimblett); Little (A), Brown, Leonard, Campbell, Rioch (N).

27th February—League Division Two
VILLA 1, BOLTON WANDERERS 1

Scorers: Villa: McMahon. Bolton: Byrom. Attendance: 18,952.

VILLA: Cumbes; Gidman, Aitken; Hockey, Nicholl, Ross; Graydon, McMahon, Evans, Hamilton, Little (B). Substitute: Leonard.

BOLTON: Siddall; Ritson, Dunne; McAllister, Jones (P), Nicholson; Byrom, Jones (G), Greaves, Whatmore, Thompson. Substitute: Darling.

Midland Youth League
W.B. ALBION 1, VILLA 1

Scorer: Overton.

VILLA: Clough; Masefield, Jackson; Overton, Smith, Williams; Davidson (sub: Campbell), Pimblett, Deehan, Lee, Ridley.

2nd March—League Division Two
VILLA 1, W.B. ALBION 3

Scorers: Villa: Morgan. Albion: Wile, Brown (T). (2). Attendance: 37,323.

VILLA: Cumbes; Gidman, Aitken; Hockey, Nicholl, Ross; Graydon, McMahon, Morgan, Hamilton, Evans. Sub-Little (B).

ALBION: Latchford; Nisbet, Wilson; Cantello, Wile, Robertson; Johnston, Brown (T), Astle (sub: Shaw), Merrick, Glover.

Central League
NEWCASTLE UNITED 1, VILLA 0

VILLA: Findlay; Robson, McDonald; Turnbull, Stark, Betts; Pimblett, Little (A), Overton, Campbell, Rioch (N). Substitute: Williams.

Midland Intermediate League
VILLA 1, STOKE CITY 3

Scorer: Sandilands.

VILLA: Dawson; Wright, Ward; Evans, Jackson, Ridley; Sandilands, Hunt (K), Deehan, Davidson (sub: Hughes), Thompson.

6th March—Junior Floodlit Cup
VILLA 2, W.B. ALBION 3

Scorers: Campbell, Deehan.

VILLA: Lawrence (M); Masefield, Evans; Pimblett, Overton, Williams; Ridley (sub: Hughes), Davidson, Campbell, Deehan, Sandilands.

8th March—Intermediate League
BRISTOL CITY 3, VILLA 0

VILLA: Fletcher; Masefield, Goss; Hughes, Young, Evans; Hunt (K) (sub: Ridley), Hevingham, Deehan, Barrett, Davidson.

Harry Parkes

THE COMPLETE SPORTS OUTFITTERS

ASTON VILLA
BRI-NYLON TRACK SUITS

Sky Blue Jackets, Maroon Pants, with contrasting stripes and A.V. on the pocket

26 in	28 in	30 in	32 in	34 in	S.M.L.
£5.20	£5.20	£5.70	£5.70	£6.40	£7.90

JERSEYS

Cotton by Umbro. With an Embroidered Badge

	22/24 in	26/28 in	30/32 in	34/36 in	38/40 in
	£1.25	£1.25	£1.35	£1.50	£1.70
Plain	22/24 in	26/28 in	30/32 in	34/36 in	38/40 in
	£1.00	£1.00	£1.15	£1.25	£1.35

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All Colours

22 in—65p 24/26 in—70p 28/30 in—70p 32/34 in—75p

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PRINTED SCARVES—70p
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2000	£11.95	Brazil	£4.70
		Gerd Muller	£9.28
		Mexico	£5.99
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Wembley	£11.20	Flamengo	£4.75
Benfica Super	£8.95	Pioneer	£4.50
Pele Rio	£7.75	Racing	£5.60

GOLA

International	£8.35	League	£5.45
Goal Master	£6.35	Star	£5.15

WINIT

Saturn £5.20

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ADIDAS

Achill	£12.34	Samba	£7.95
Gazelle	£8.99	Bamba	£5.98
Olympia	£8.73		
Rom	£5.98	Patrick	£2.90

PUMA

Top Fit	£4.49	All Round	£7.95

GOLA

Royale	£4.25	Cobra	£5.60
Supa Cobra	£7.95		

ADIDAS SQUASH SHOE

Jonah Barrington £5.98

FULL RANGE ADIDAS RUNNING SPIKES

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PROGRAMME AWARDS

Villa's long reign as the best programme in Britain has come to an end. This season we have finished second.

Our sincere congratulations go to our successors, Leeds United, who won the competition by the smallest margin in its history in a contest which, we are advised by the British Programme Club, changed almost with each week.

The voting is based on a Top Twenty system whereby the club named in the first position gets maximum points right down to the last who get only one point.

Out of 400 members over 320 voted. Only three coupons did not gain any votes by Aston Villa—the smallest 'loss' recorded.

INDEED, ASTON VILLA RECEIVED NINE MORE VOTES FOR FIRST PLACE THAN LEEDS UNITED, BUT THERE WERE VOTES FOR SECOND PLACE—WHICH TURNED THE RESULT—IN THE ELLAND ROAD TEAMS FAVOUR.

However, we are grateful yet again for our extremely high standing in the programme world and my thanks go to all who contribute in making it a publication worthy of the club. The full voting list is as follows:

THE TOP TWENTY

1—Leeds United
2—**ASTON VILLA**
3—Everton
4—Q P R
5—Crystal Palace
6—Manchester City
7—West Ham Utd
8—Chelsea
9—Burnley
10—Birmingham City
11—W B Albion
12—Coventry City
13—Wolverhampton W
14—Southampton
15—Sheffield United
16—Norwich City
17—Fulham
18—Hull City
19—Newcastle United, Ipswich Town
20—Nottingham Forest

VILLA VOUCHERS

Have you been saving the Villa Vouchers printed on the inside back cover of each programme this Season? If so, and if you have a full set numbered 1 to 18, you may take part in a ballot to purchase one standing ticket (price: £1) for the F.A. Cup Final at Wembley on 4th May, or a pair of standing tickets (price: 70p each) for the Scotland v England International at Hampden Park on 18th May. In total, 20 tickets for the F.A. Cup Final will be available, and five pairs of tickets for the International.

If you wish to take part in the ballot, which will be drawn by a well-known personality, complete the form below and send it WITH YOUR PROGRAMME VOUCHERS BUT NO MONEY to Ticket Ballot, Villa Park, Birmingham B6 6HE, not later then 13th April, 1974. The winners will be notified by post, and a full list published in a later programme this season.

I wish to take part in the Ballot for a £1 standing ticket for the F.A. Cup Final and/or a pair of 70p standing tickets for the Scotland v England international. (Delete one section if you only wish to take part in one Ballot).

I enclose a full set of Villa Vouchers for Season 1973-74 numbered 1 to 18.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

SEND NO CASH—ONLY THE ENVELOPES OF THE WINNERS WILL BE OPENED

SECOND

SUNDERLAND manager **Bob Stokoe** almost doubled his personal transfer fee record when taking Manchester City's **Tony Towers** as part of the exchange negotiation which delivered Roker stars **Dennis Tueart** and **Mick Horswill** to Maine Road.

The England Under-23 international was rated at a reported £125,000 when joining Sunderland, who thus became the first of the present Second Division clubs to have bought two six-figure players while actually competing in this division. Their other big signing was centre-half **David Watson** from Rotherham United.

Only three other Division Two clubs have bought £100,000 players while at this level in the League—Portsmouth (**Paul Went**, from Fulham, this season), Crystal Palace (**Peter Taylor**, from Southend United, this season) and ourselves (**Bruce Rioch**, from Luton Town, in 1969).

Two other clubs entered such a market when in the First Division—West Bromwich Albion (**Colin Suggett** and **Willie Johnston**) and Nottingham Forest (**Jim Baxter**).

Sunderland's signing of Towers was easily the biggest conducted by a Second Division side in the rush to beat the transfer deadline last month. The buying market was particularly quiet, and apart from SWINDON TOWN's purchase of **Peter Eastoe** from Wolverhampton Wanderers, there were only two other important deals.

Most publicity centred, of course, on FULHAM winning the stern competition to buy former England skipper **Bobby Moore** from West Ham United, but, in fact, NOTTS COUNTY spent a slightly larger sum on a virtually unknown Manchester United reserve defender.

He is **Ray O'Brien**, aged 22, who joined the Old Trafford set-up from Irish club Shelbourne last summer for an estimated £18 000. He did not win a First Division place with United, though he made two Eire Under-23 appearances against France (this cost United an extra £2,000 (and was a member of his country's World Cup squad against Russia.

County manager **Jimmy Sirrel** took action after his side's 5-1 home defeat by Sheffield Wednesday, but he had been keeping tabs on O'Brien for some weeks. "He's got a lot of class," said Mr Sirrel, who also announced that **Bob Worthington**, the left-back in promotion teams from the Third and Fourth Divisions, was open to offers.

O'Brien took the number three spot in an encouraging 2-0 away win at Preston, though his arrival was a little unfortunate for **Eddie Cliff**. A summer signing from Burnley last year, Cliff was given the chance to succeed Worthington, but a succession of injuries prevented him from staking a regular claim.

Incidentally, SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY's win at Nottingham was their biggest away success for nearly seven years and provided a happy comeback present for former skipper **John Holsgrove**, who had been out of action for four-and-a-half months.

Holsgrove, who was laid up by a virus which developed into liver trouble, said: "I couldn't have picked a better time for my return". And, on his first experience of playing in a team managed by new chief **Steve Burtenshaw**, he commented: "Everybody seemed to know what everybody else was trying to do."

Wednesday certainly proved that theory by whipping Cardiff City 5-0 in their next match and no player was happier than **Tommy Craig**, who had been on the verge of getting a move from Hillsborough earlier in the season.

TONY TOWERS

He was called up for the Scotland Under-23 side against England at Newcastle and then heard he was to captain the Sheffield team. Manager Burtenshaw watched Craig in the international and said: "The conditions were atrocious. Tommy worked very, very hard and if he had been put in the England side, people would have been raving about him."

After their experience at Hillsborough, it was hardly surprising that CARDIFF CITY went into the market for two defenders who joined them on loan. **Ron Healey**, the Manchester City goalkeeper, and **Clive Charles**, the young West Ham United full-back, both went to Ninian Park with the prospect of winning permanent transfers by their performances in the last few weeks of the season.

Healey, now number three in the goalkeeper's queue at Maine Road, has experienced 'loan' football on previous occasions. He had three First Division games for Coventry City a couple of years ago and spent part of this season assisting Preston North End.

Charles, still only 20 and on West Ham's transfer list at his own request, has until next Thursday to prove himself before Cardiff boss **Frank O'Farrell**. He is the younger brother of former Hammer's defender **John Charles** and played three times for the England Youth-team.

Two Second Division clubs picked up five-figure sums by transferring forwards to the Third Division. OXFORD UNITED, selling **Nigel Cassidy** to Cambridge United, and BLACKPOOL, wishing **Billy Rafferty** well at Plymouth Argyle, still accepted a loss on the fees paid to the players' former clubs.

Rafferty, who was rated at £40,000 in the deal which sent **Tommy Hutchison** to Coventry City, spent most of the season in Blackpool's reserves, but attracted numerous clubs looking for extra strikers in the closing months of the campaign.

Plymouth agreed on a fee of around £27,000, though Grimsby Town were prepared to pay more but couldn't match the Argyle terms offered to Rafferty. Cambridge, before buying Cassidy, also wanted to go through with a deal but Rafferty declined to take part in discussions. And, at the eleventh hour, Preston checked hopefully to see whether the Scotsman's move to Plymouth had suffered any setbacks.

SCENE

Things did go wrong for some clubs at the last minute and it was particularly galling for HULL CITY, and their striker, **Stuart Pearson,** when Manchester City had to suspend a £200,000 transfer because of the failure of another deal involving **Mike Summerbee** going to Leeds United.

City, having spent heavily on Tueart and Horswill, decided that they couldn't commit themselves to immediate cash for Pearson . . . and that blocked the Yorkshire club's plans to spend some of the proceeds on extra players for next season.

However, it was confidently reported from both clubs that the Pearson transfer could still go through before the end of the season. And Pearson obviously meant to stay in Manchester City's eye.

After waiting on transfer deadline day to make the trip across the Pennines with manager **Terry Neill,** he turned out the following Saturday and scored Hull's only goal in a 3-1 defeat at Portsmouth. Then he popped up with the winner at The Hawthorns which gave the 'Tigers' their first away win since last September.

FOOTBALL AT VILLA PARK

MONDAY, 8th APRIL

Midland Counties Federation Cup Final

WARWICKSHIRE SCHOOLS

v

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS

(Kick-off: 6-15 pm)

Warwickshire: Webb, *Aston;* Jones, *Erdington,* Rathbone, *Birmingham;* Price, *Aston,* Ellis, *Nuneaton,* Ahmed, *Birmingham;* Owen, *Coventry,* Hazell, *Birmingham,* McDonna, *Birmingham,* Cowans, *Aston,* Bissell, *Erdington.* Reserves: Raybould, *Coventry,* Davies, *Nuneaton,* Cato, *South Birmingham,* Holmes, *Aston.*

Robert Webb and Gavin Price train with Villa Boys, while Roy McDonna and Gordon Cowans are registered on Schoolboy Forms for Aston Villa.

DIVISION 2 STATISTICS

HOME ATTENDANCES . . .

	Best	*Average*		*Best*	*Average*
ASTON VILLA	**37,323**	**24,870**	Millwall	15,143	9,145
Blackpool	18,575	9,877	Nottingham Forest	29,657	14,459
Bolton Wanderers	23,315	15,036	Notts County	30,036	12,471
Bristol City	25,438	14,474	Orient	20,611	10,820
Cardiff City	14,799	9,831	Oxford United	10,161	7,630
Carlisle United	11,152	7,402	Portsmouth	20,062	14,017
Crystal Palace	33,054	20,544	Preston North End	21,747	12,245
Fulham	18,114	9,618	Sheffield Wednesday	22,094	14,035
Hull City	17,409	8,534	Sunderland	41,658	23,753
Luton Town	19,812	11,312	Swindon Town	13,991	6,976
Middlesbrough	37,038	21,703	W. B. Albion	43,080	16,540

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE . . .

43,080, WB Albion against Aston Villa, on 26th December, 1973.

MOST GOALS IN A MATCH . . .

4—Brown (T), W B Albion v Nottm Forest, on 12-1-74. 4—Clarke, Carlisle v Swindon, on 30-3-74.

TOP LEAGUE SCORER . . .

Duncan McKenzie (19) for Nottm For.

LOWEST ATTENDANCE . . .

2,600, Swindon against Luton Town on 26th February, 1974.

BIGGEST HOME WIN . . .

Luton Town 6, Carlisle United 1, on 1st September, 1973.

BIGGEST AWAY WINS . . .

Notts Co. 1, Sheffield Wed 5, on 9th March 1974. W B Albion 0, Middlesbrough 4, on 16th March 1974. Crystal Palace 1, Notts County 4, on 25th August, 1973. Notts County 1, Sunderland 4, on 1st September, 1973. Nottm Forest 1, W B Albion 4, on 12th January, 1974. Swindon 1, Notts County 4, on 19-2-1974. Fulham 0, Middlesbrough 4, on 19-3-1974.

Up to and including Monday, 1st April, 1974

Advance Bookings for Home League Matches: Reserved Seats for individual home Football League matches are bookable in advance from the Ticket Office either by post or by personal application.

Applications by Post: Are accepted one month before the game and should be accompanied by the correct remittance—cheque or postal order and a self-addressed return envelope.

Personal Applications: May be made during office hours—9-15 am to 5-00 pm during the two weeks prior to the game.

Prices: £1 and 80p for Reserved Seats. Unreserved accommodation: Seats 70p (children and Senior Citizens 40p). Ground 40p (children and senior citizens 20p). All prices include VAT.

All enquiries for back issues of the *Villa News* should be addressed to **H. & H. Promotions Limited, 550 Chester Road, Aldridge, Nr Walsall.**

VILLA VOUCHERS ARE VALUABLE
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Aston Villa v Swindon Town

MATCH No. 19 FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIV 2 SAT 6th APRIL 1974 KICK-OFF: 3.00pm

TEAMCHECK

ASTON VILLA

Claret and Blue Shirts, White Shorts

TEAM CHANGES

1 JIMMY CUMBES
2 JOHN GIDMAN
3 CHARLIE AITKEN
4 PAT McMAHON
5 ROY STARK
6 FRED TURNBULL
7 BRIAN LITTLE
8 IAN ROSS
9 SAMMY MORGAN
10 IAN HAMILTON
11 KEITH LEONARD
12

SWINDON TOWN

White Shirts, Black Shorts

TEAM CHANGES

1 JIMMY ALLAN
2 WILL DIXON
3 JOHN TROLLOPE
4 JOHN McLAUGHLIN
5 RON POTTER
6 KEN STROUD
7 DAVID MOSS
8 DAVID SYRETT
9 PETER EASTOE
10 JOE BUTLER
11 RAY CLARKE
12

SCORECHECK

Arsenal v West Ham	A		Bristol City v Carlisle	L	
Leeds Utd v Derby Co	B		C Palace v Portsmouth	N	
Leicester C v B'ham C	C		Fulham v W B Albion	P	
Liverpool v QPR	D		Luton T v Preston N E	S	
Norwich v Manchester U	E		Middlesbro v Notts Co	T	
Sheff Utd v Coventry	F		Nottm Forest v Sunderland	V	
Southampton v Chelsea	G		Orient v Millwall	W	
Wolves v Tottenham	H		Oxford Utd v Sheffield W	X	
Blackpool v Hull City	J		Brighton v Walsall	Y	
Bolton Wand v Cardiff C	K		Derby Res v A Villa Res	Z	

OFFICIALS

Referee:
G. C. KEW, Amersham

Linesmen:
J. R. SIMMS, Stoneygate *(Red Flag)*
R. S. LEWIS, Bournemouth *(Orange Flag)*

Gordon Kew, an insurance claims superintendent, began refereeing in his native Yorkshire and progressed through the Central League to reach the League list in 1966. He was a linesman for the 1971 F.A. Cup Final. He is married, with three children, and likes listening to classical music and playing squash.