



What it takes
to be elected
to the strongest
football league in the world.

What does it take to attain Football League membership?

This is the searching question being asked by a number of enthusiastic clubs with varied qualifications.

Clearly, there is no single characteristic which would qualify a club for League status on its own, but the first consideration for applicants must be a high standard of team performance: without it, no club could expect even to be considered.

Yet there are other and, to some experts, equally important considerations. Will the club be a credit to football generally? Is it well and conveniently located, and will that location bring League football to a wider personal audience? Are its ground and facilities of a good standard? Are its supporters enthusiastic and well organised? Will its public appeal be such as to ensure good attendance? Is it financially stable, and perhaps most important of all, well managed and directed?

A number of football's leading experts in various aspects of the game were approached and asked to look at League requirements.

In the light of their comments Ken Jones – Chief Sports Columnist of The Sunday Mirror interviewed Alan Cherry, Chairman of Chelmsford City FC and General Manager, Dave Bumpstead.

John
Charles



on Performance.

Leeds United are now among the most powerful clubs in the world. It certainly wasn't that way when I joined them as a young professional 24 years ago.

The main difference between the Leeds I played for then and the one I occasionally have the privilege of watching now is consistency.

Week in and week out they maintain a level of performance which many clubs would be happy to reach now and again during a season.

Sometimes Leeds are better than just good. Sometimes they are simply brilliant. But rarely if ever do they fall from that standard which they have set themselves.

A lot goes into consistency. Teamwork, confidence and, of course, great individual skill. When those things come through as often as they do at Leeds then you have a special product.

I was always aware of it when playing for Juventus in Italy. The good teams and we were often one of them, always managed to keep things going.

Here at home in the Football League, consistency has never been more necessary. The competition is fierce and just a couple of bad performances can ruin a Championship bid or drop you down among the relegation candidates.

It is why I suppose that we tend to suspect the footballer whose outstanding skill is linked with a wayward temperament. We want to believe in him but can we afford to?

Truly great players reveal a level of consistency. Pele, Puskas, Di Stefano, the young George Best, Billy Bremner and my old pal at Juventus, the Argentinian Savori.

But it is no less important lower down the scale. It has been important to me in the Southern League and I think that Chelmsford have had consistency over the years.

They have been good to play against but difficult to beat and in my Hereford days I always felt that they would beat us to League status. Consistency is something they know a lot about.



Joe Dunwell in the thick of Barnet's defence seen under pressure at New Writtle Street.



All set for a close range volley. Frank Peterson clear of Grantham's defence.



Some members of the 1973/4 season Chelmsford City squad.

Left to right back row:

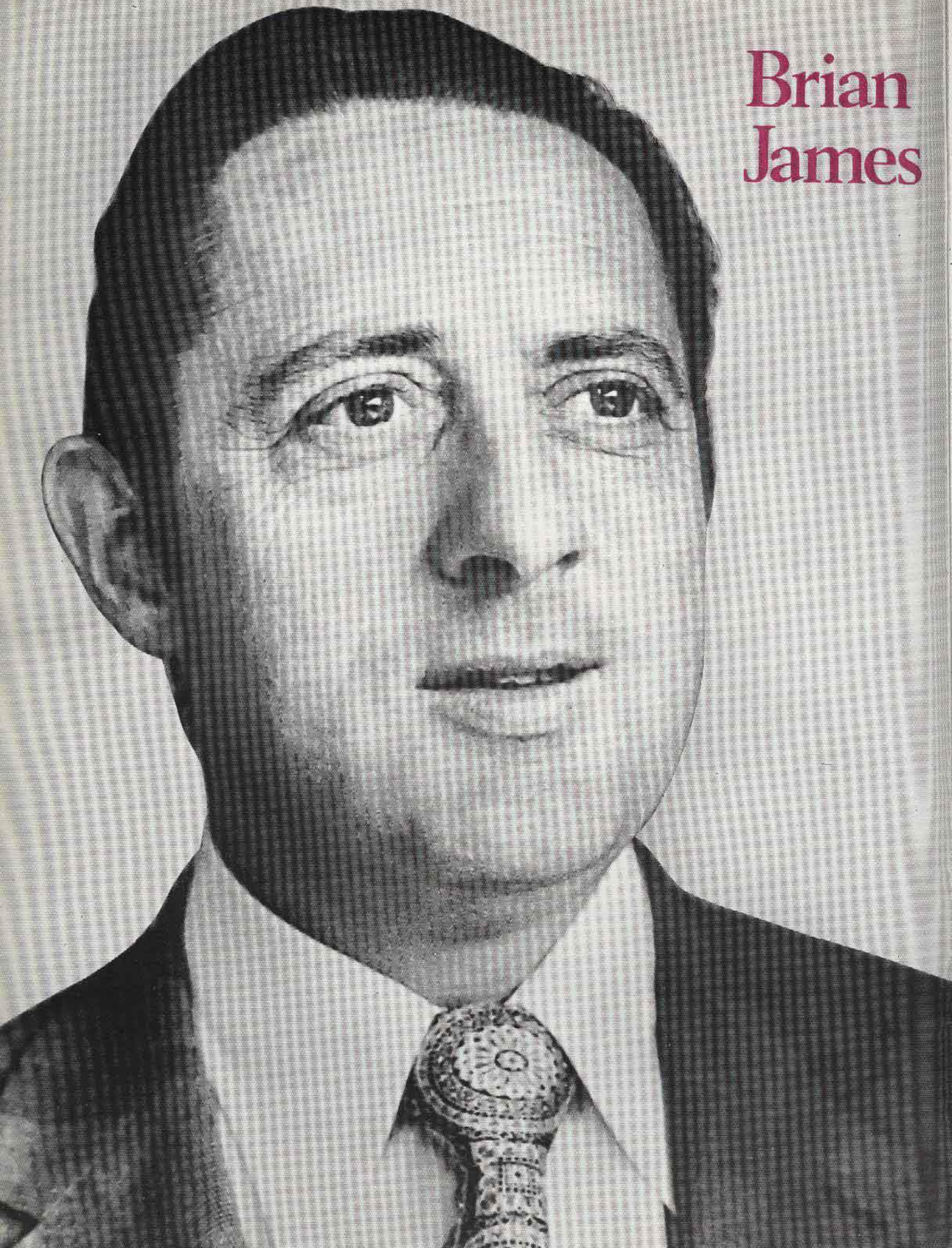
Len Wills (Physiotherapist), Don Walker (Trainer), Willie Carrick, Terry Price, Vincent O' Kane, Dennis Oakes, Frank Peterson, Paul Delea, Vic Gomersall, Mick Loughton.

General Manager Dave Bumpstead.

Left to right front row:

Bernie Lewis, Colin Grant, Tommy Coakley (Captain), Colin Hall, Len Tomkins.

Brian
James



on Spectator Facilities.

To the question "what facilities must a club offer its supporters to succeed in the Football League?" I would answer simply "a great deal more than most clubs have offered in the past."

A survey I saw recently revealed some chilling statistics. Despite the millions spent on up-dating grounds in the First Division alone, seating is provided for less than one quarter of would-be fans; and the number of tea and snack bars works out at one for 2,670 fans at a capacity-packed ground. Fancy waiting in a queue of 2,670 for a drink at half-time? And toilets, according to the report, are hardly more numerous.

If it is true that the established clubs are losing support because of these inadequate facilities, it seems to me important that a club trying to *become* established must aim at doing a great deal better. Some supporters may be loyal enough to go on watching their League favourites despite poor provision for their comfort – but a new audience with no old ties to a club will need convincing that the facilities are available before they begin to acquire the habit of League football every Saturday.

The football fan of the 1970's is entitled to ask these questions of the club soliciting his support: Can I get to your ground easily, i.e. is there a good transport service, or somewhere convenient to park? Can I get a seat, if that's how I want to watch? Can I get a meal or at least a snack? Can I find a toilet if I need to?



The regular disco-nights at Chelmsford City's social club are always well attended.

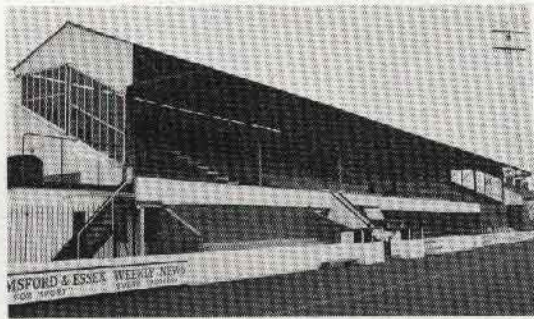
If a club can't answer "yes" to most of these questions, then its chance of success is small now and will get steadily more slender as the decade goes on. By the time the 1980's dawn, people will watch football in comfort – or they will not watch at all.

One further thing is no less important – the attitude of the club towards its customers. For that is what football fans are, customers. The days are ending, too, when fans would submit to being herded like sheep by officials who can't be bothered to smile, to help or explain.

Any club that wants to stay in business over the next few years is going to need to take a long look at its administration staff; if everyone concerned from the chairman down to the office boy doesn't realise he's in the business of **SELLING** football, then he's in the wrong job.

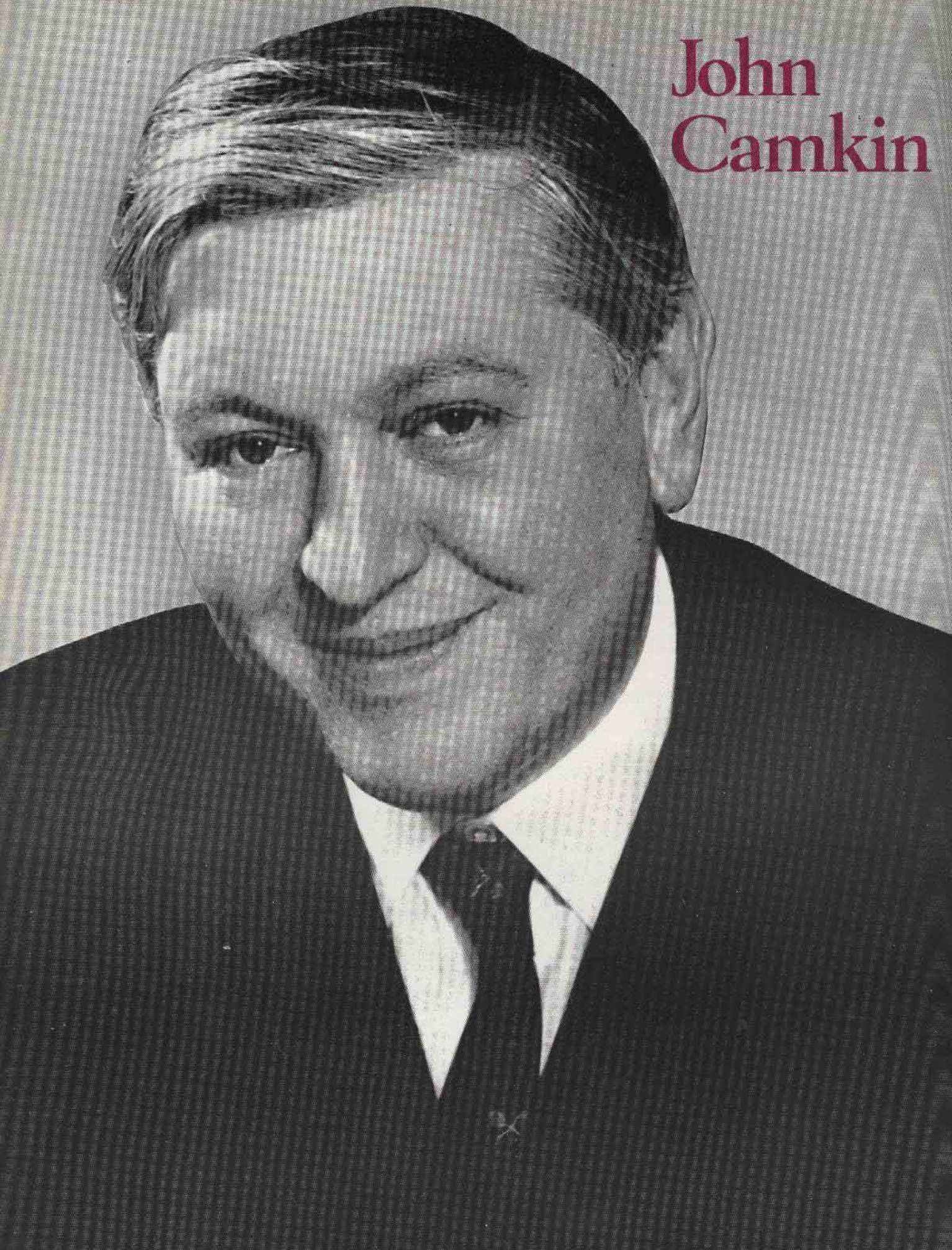
The man waiting in the office for a ticket is NOT a nuisance, he's a paying client. The lad waiting for an autograph is NOT a pest, he's a patron the club are going to need for a long, long time. The reporter ringing up for news of the team is NOT a nosy busybody, he's someone whose words can get another thousand fans through the turnstiles.

No club can succeed without loyalty. But loyalty is a two-way thing: loyalty is the fans cheering the team through a bad patch, but it is also the club telling each individual supporter "You're welcome – now how can we help you enjoy yourself?"



The main stand at New Writtle Street holds spectators in comfortable seating, well protected from the weather.

John
Camkin



on Location.

The clicking of the turnstile is the best barometer of need. It indicates a population hungry for football, a large catchment area, an efficient system of roads and public transport and a ground well-sited and equipped to take advantage of the situation.

Where these factors exist today and have existed for several years, the case for opening the doors to the Football League, is, in my opinion, irresistible. If only because, more than ever today, it is in the interests of every member of the League to promote a healthy competition.

In the last 35 years, only ten new clubs have joined the Football League whilst five associated members, New Brighton, Gateshead, Accrington Stanley, Bradford and Barrow, have retired.

Let's look at those ten 'new' boys. Ipswich (1938) have won the Championship and are firmly established amongst our very best clubs.

Oxford United (1962) are comfortably at home in Division II and Hereford United (1972) are in Division III.

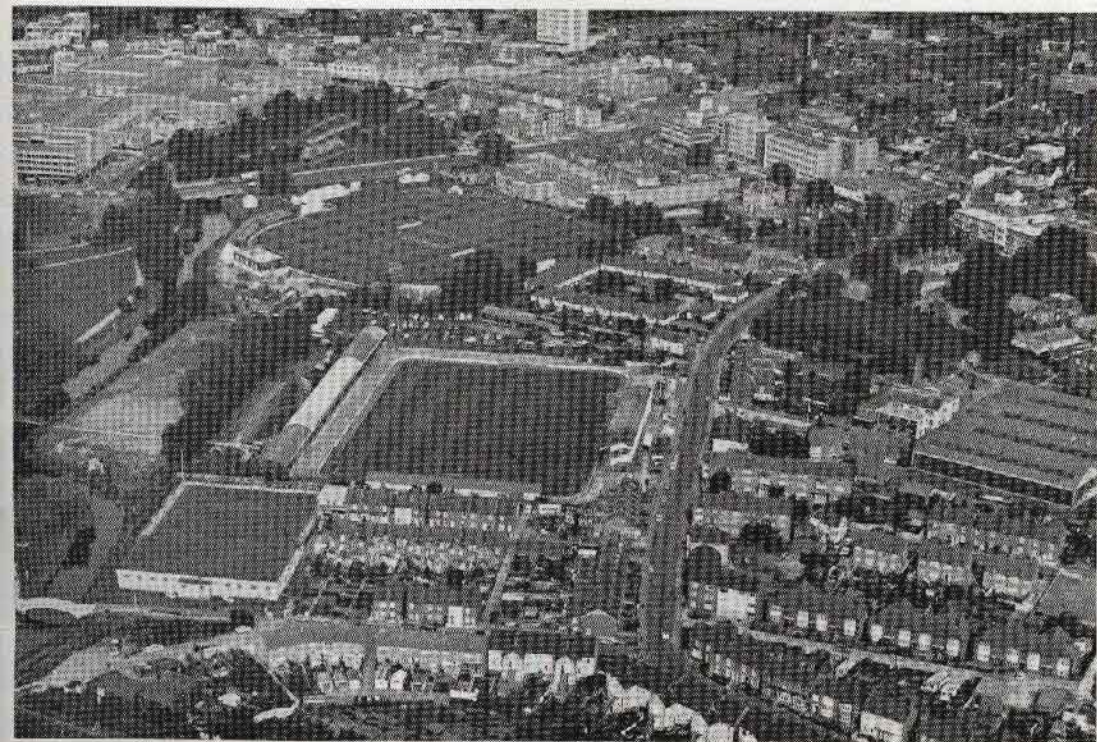
Of the other seven, Colchester, Gillingham, Scunthorpe and Shrewsbury (all 1950), Workington (1951), Peterborough (1960) and Cambridge United (1970), only Cambridge have failed to win promotion at least once.

Some, like Ipswich, Oxford, Hereford and Peterborough, have been more successful than others. Possibly it's no coincidence that each of them, in a geographical sense, fills a void.

Populations and transportation systems have changed vastly since the last major reorganisation of the Football League, the formation of two Third Divisions in 1920.

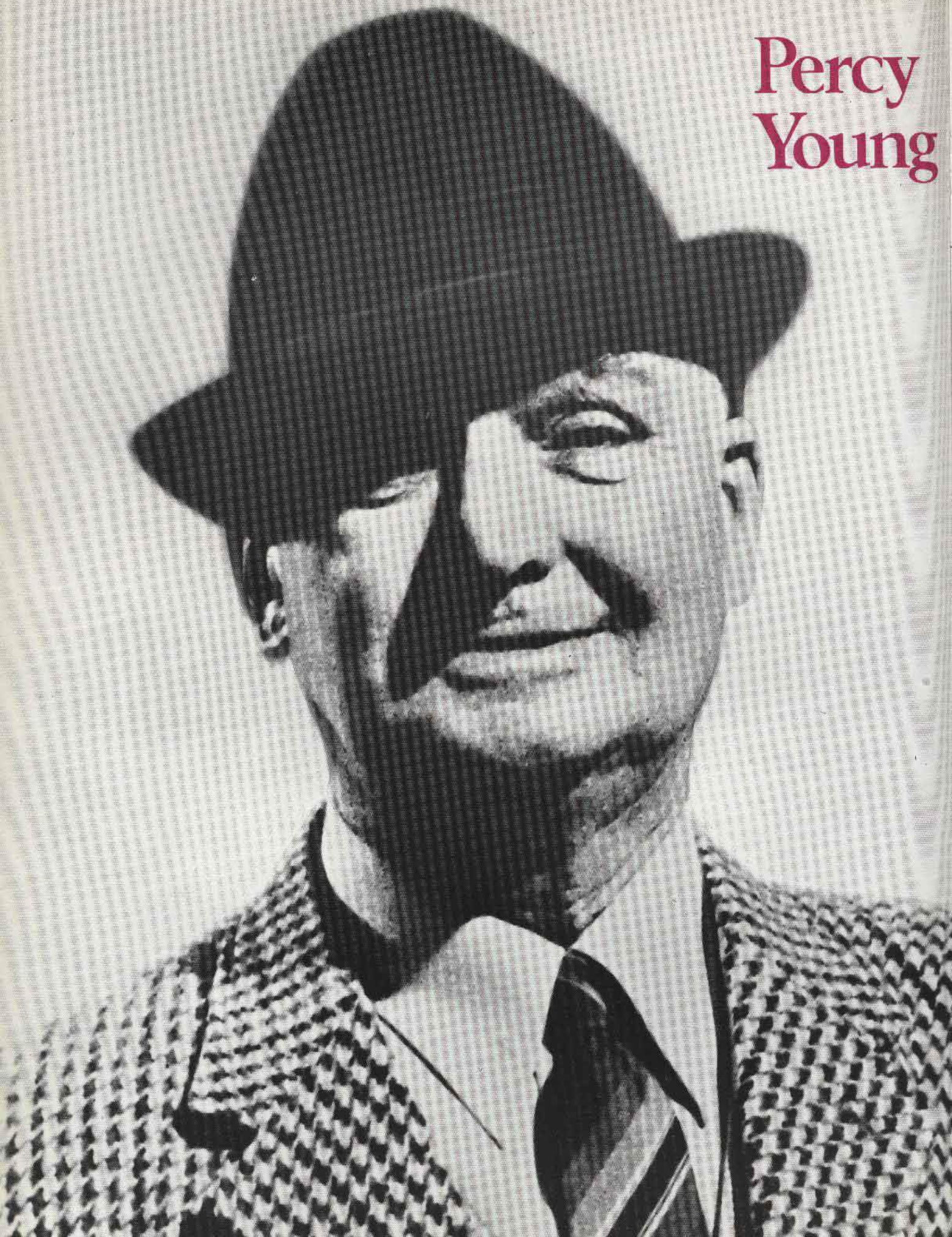
Lancashire, South Yorkshire, and the Midlands, possibly London, all have too many clubs. Others are condemned perpetually to struggle in isolated areas of declining industry and population.

New and thriving areas, growing quickly on the back of modern transportation, have no access to League football. It doesn't make economic sense.



Chelmsford City's New Writtle Street ground is located close to the town centre and adjacent to the Essex County Cricket Club ground. The potential for a total sports complex in this development area County Town can clearly be seen from the air.

Percy
Young



on Playing Facilities.

I'm lucky to have the famous Wembley turf to care for. That's a big responsibility. But there's no luck in maintaining its reputation.

True I've the advantages of less usage and the best equipment and raw materials to work with, but it is using them to good effect which keeps the ball running straight and true. It's knowing how and when to repair the damage, and having a management that listens to expert advice that really maintains the Wembley reputation.

The needs are the same at League club level. First employ an expert who is well qualified and can advise the club on what is needed as well as doing the job with knowledge and care.

The pitch depends on good drainage above all, so get that right to start with. Then it has to be level. A slight crown is a good thing but it must start and stay level throughout each season. Use good proven hardwearing grasses—and you'll need them if the pitch is to respond to maintenance and enhance the look of your stadium.

After that, give it the care it deserves. Repair the ground after every match with special attention around the goal mouths and centre circle. Feed it in Spring, Summer and Autumn. Give it some air with regular spiking and mow it religiously throughout the season. Look after your posts and nets and mark your lines clearly. It looks good and helps referees and linesmen.

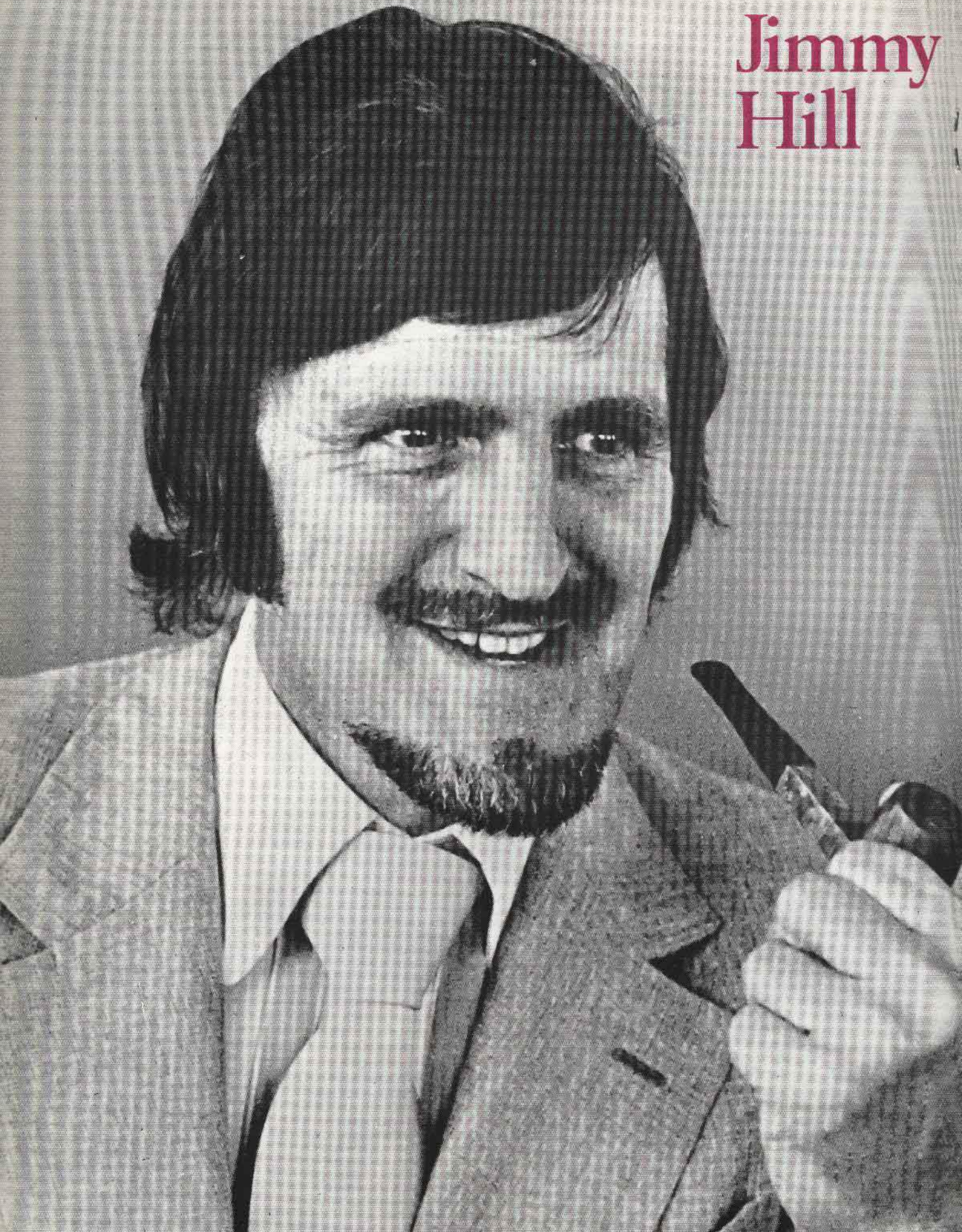
We all know the difference a single point can make in the competitive world of League Soccer, so if major repairs are necessary, make them immediately the season ends to give the grass time to recover and be ready for the demands of the following season.

Do this and you'll benefit from your home ground. You'll attract the fans and other clubs will welcome the visit to a well kept ground. You'll also be an asset and a credit to our national sport.



The pride of Chelmsford City groundsman Ben Ford, the pitch at New Writtle Street compares favourably with that of many League clubs.

Jimmy Hill



on Initiative.

Football is a never-ending race. When Arsenal did the double in 1971 they could not stop there and announce themselves as all time champions. They had to defend their titles. As one Tottenham supporter remarked at their celebration banquet, "Ah, but that was last season."

What I am saying is that if Ipswich and Norwich, to take examples close to home, can fight their way to the First Division, so can other clubs with the right basic qualities and the initiative to build them. To start with there have to be enough people in the area to support the club; there has to be a first class chairman and board of directors, backed by a talented manager; and there has to be all round team effort. By this I mean hard work and initiative from the club and its supporters as well as a resilience to take the rough with the smooth.

I have always believed that if a football club organises itself properly it can, within reason, place itself where it likes in the establishment. Because the Football

League is a closed shop that applies more to clubs who are already there, than the ambitious non-league clubs who try so hard to achieve the exalted status.

Yet it's still possible to reach the top from anywhere. Take Ipswich Town as an example. In 1937 they were outside the Football League and in 1973 they are in Europe. Subtract the war years, its taken them 20 years of hard work and initiative to achieve their aim and they had their share of ups and downs in that time too. John Cobbold, their Chairman, will be the first to agree that if, contrastingly over the next 20 years, they were to lose their ambition, their efficiency and their initiative, they could find themselves back where they started from.

As I survey the scene, Chelmsford City has plenty of the qualities necessary for long term success and certainly to achieve the initial target of entry into the Football League. I wish them luck, because every club needs a touch of that.



Well known for his speed and ball control, Terry Price avoids four Cambridge City players.



Goals from Chelmsford City strikers are hardly a rarity! There's no doubt what Dennis Oakes thinks as Peterson's header crosses the line before Barnet defender Steve Tom can clear.

Brian Mears



on Leadership.

My first year as a football director was spent watching Chelsea reserves. Not by choice of course. My world was the First Division and had been ever since my father first took me to Stamford Bridge.

But when father, as chairman of the club, took me on the Board he had very definite ideas about how a young director should grow up. I was sent out to meet people, to learn something about a very special involvement. I shall be everlastingly grateful for the experience.

I gradually discovered what the business was all about. That it wasn't simply a matter of turning up to sit in the best seats with a guaranteed view of all the best matches.

Some people may still see us like that. Cartoon figures. Whisky soaked buffoons, lurching from one Boardroom to the next just waiting for the chance to fire another luckless manager.

If so they should pop into Chelsea. Because as far as I'm concerned football and a Chairmanship means giving up most of my time. Not my spare time. But my time.

I do it because I love it. Football is the finest entertainment in the world and I'll stand up all night and preach that.

A director must be involved. A Chairman particularly so. But you must know when to lead and when to be led. It is important that a club has leadership.

It needs leadership on the field where the captain is important and the manager must be capable of leading the players to where he wants them to go.

A Chairman's leadership is perhaps more subtle. He has to be firm without being overpowering. That's something else I learned from my father. Dictators haven't got a price in football these days.

The game has changed so much in fifteen years. The wage structure is different. There is more independence and yet we have to depend more on each other. We have to be a part of the whole but on the other hand we must be capable of influencing it. In many ways I am still learning the job.



Chelmsford City captain, Tommy Coakley is renowned for leadership on the field. His runs from defence into attack often inspire his team at just the right moment.

Joe Mercer



on Management.

Sir Matt Busby's record in English football is second to none. Both in Europe and in our domestic competitions, he has had his full share as manager of the famous Manchester United.

So when Sir Matt talks on any football topic, his views are worthy of the highest consideration. And when he states that a club must get its priorities right, and also work in a constitutional way, I am the first to agree with him.

In short, directors must direct, managers must manage, and players must play. It sounds simple. Yet many football clubs have failed because they overlooked these basic requirements.

Football is big business. The cynics say that when business comes in, sport goes out. That is not necessarily so. A businesslike approach brings a method and expertise which, used wisely, will enable the club to get the best out of its players and remain financially stable in the process.

In principle, the same factors apply to the business of running a successful football club as any other concern. Having chosen a manager with the right qualities, the club must delegate not only the task of managing but the responsibility that goes with it.

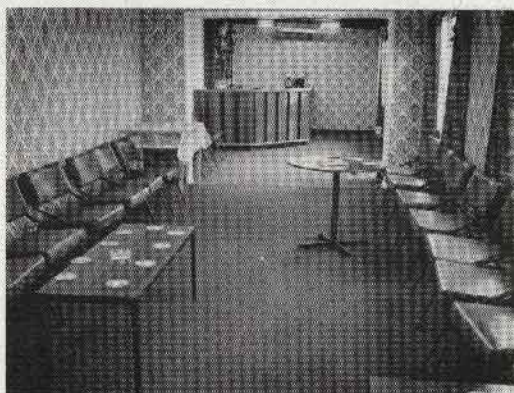
Given this structure the manager can realise his potential. The team will respect his decisions and motivation and he will get the best out of them on the field. Of course, from a constitutional point of view he must always be accountable to the board for his results.

Thus in practice, the likelihood of success will be far greater if the manager is given the freedom the job demands. Freedom to choose his team, develop their skills and plan his strategy.

Most of all though, he needs the full backing of his Chairman and Board reflected by their confidence and commitment to the decisions of the manager they have chosen.



The Board Room at New Writtle Street is attractive and comfortable. On match days visiting directors and managers are entertained here by the Chelmsford Board.



Similar comforts are provided in the club's Vice Presidents lounge where members and their guests relax long after matches to analyse the results and performance.

John Cobbold



on Financial Stability.

We've got it right at Ipswich. At least I think we have. We aren't losing money and we've got a good team and people seem to enjoy our company.

It's the way it was planned long ago by my father who cleared off the debts in 1945 and then set the club adrift to fend for itself.

What people tend to overlook is that we are the most successful of the clubs who have been elected to the League since the Second World War. No I haven't lost my memory. I do recall that we got the vote in 1939. But I think we only played four matches before the lights went out.

We had to begin again six years later and a lot has happened since then. Little things like coming through from the Third division to win the League Championship, and then playing in the European Cup.

During that time we have become self-sufficient. We have learned to look after ourselves in a very competitive world.

That's the only way a football club can be run. Once you start encouraging private money you are asking for trouble. If a man puts his own cash into an enterprise it's only natural that he should want a say in how it's spent.

But can you tell a manager how to run a football team? Of course you can't. I love football but I know very little about it.

On the other hand we have been fortunate in having managers who involved themselves in the running of the club and not just simply in the running of the team.

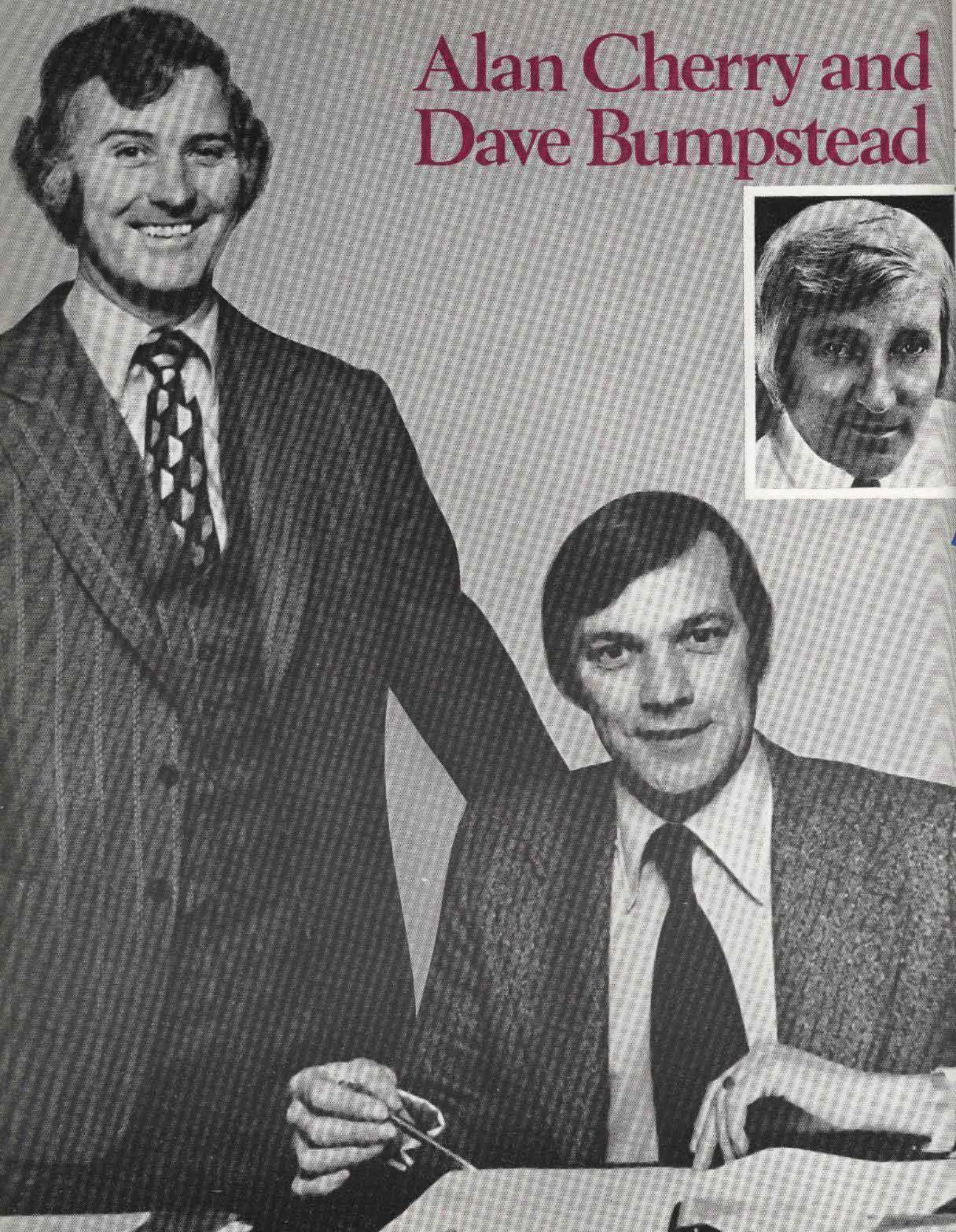
The team of course is all important. Without it you are nothing. But I believe that the manager should be in touch with finance. After all it's pointless bidding for a player if you can't afford him.

Dreams are fine but they must be bolstered by common sense. Self-sufficiency has got to be the target. Chelmsford have shown they recognise this fact of life. I'm sure they will benefit from having done so.



Fund raising at Chelmsford City F.C. takes many forms. The Club owns a Bingo Theatre at Billericay where a regular crowd of enthusiasts win cash and other prizes every night.

Alan Cherry and Dave Bumpstead



on Chelmsford City F.C.

in an interview with Ken Jones of The Sunday Mirror.

Ken Jones - Chief Sports Columnist of The Sunday Mirror, quizzed Chairman Alan Cherry and General Manager, Dave Bumpstead on Chelmsford City F.C.'s qualifications for Football League status.

KJ Chelmsford could be playing in the world's most competitive football league. Is your team good enough to cope with such an exacting challenge?

DB I'm not kidding myself. The players would have to adjust very quickly and there may be a need to strengthen some positions. But we are encouraged by the progress which Hereford United have made since their election two years ago.

Hereford went in with what was more or less their Southern League team and they have never looked back.

Now then, our record over the past twelve years compares more than favourably with Hereford's, so I'm confident that we could hold our own.

KJ Hereford were helped through by the national publicity which came from a spectacular F.A. Cup run. Was that not the most important factor of all?

DB It may well have been. But consistency is the thing which matters most to me. The Cup is usually a once a year day although naturally I would have liked to have made a better show in it.

But who can complain about our League record? Over the past 12 years the club has nearly always been in the running for the Championship. We won it in 1968 and 1972 and there were only three seasons when we finished out of the top five.

We also have a reputation for playing attractive football and I would be determined to further that in a higher sphere. I'm not predicting miracles. We would need to take a long look at standards in the Football League and build our team accordingly. But clubs such as Hereford and particularly Oxford have shown that the adjustment can be made.

Ambition is a marvellous thing and it would bring the best out of our players. They feel this need to go forward as the whole club does.

KJ It's obvious that football no longer has enough fans to go around. Aren't Chelmsford in danger of running into that problem, one which is threatening the existence of many long established Football League Clubs?

AC I think this is where I come in. I'm convinced that the area is not only ready for League football but desperate for it. Look at our attendances. We averaged over 4,000 in the 1972/3 season. Now look around the Football League.

Chelmsford is the County town of Essex, only 32 miles east of London, so we aren't hard to find. We can draw on an immediate local population of around 120,000 and our audience potential increases to a total catchment area in excess of 250,000 if we take in neighbouring towns.

We are nicely located, right on the communication lines which link Britain with the European Community and as a result, the area is bound to be fully developed in the future.

KJ I appreciate that but isn't the area a little crowded as far as League Football is concerned? For instance Colchester and Southend are close by.

AC Not at all. Both Southend and Colchester have given us every encouragement in seeking Football League status. The entire region is well populated and more than able to sustain three League sides. There would be an increase in local rivalry, extra revenue from derby games and an overall growth of interest in League football throughout the area.

KJ Professionals like to feel good grass under their feet. What can Chelmsford offer in that direction?

DB Quite simply a good playing surface. No one can blame the pitch when they play here. It's recognised that it is well up to Football League standard.

KJ We can't kid the fans. They want a good product and they want to watch in comfort, otherwise they will stay away. Let's assume that the team is good enough, but are there any holes in the roof?

AC Not at Chelmsford. We aren't in the Old Trafford class but there isn't much to complain about. If there is then we want to hear of it.

We offer good facilities that are already up to League standard but we will always seek to improve them.

Our new floodlights are a typical example. They cost us £10,000 but we felt the expenditure was necessary. Players and spectators alike appreciate the difference and our new lighting compares favourably with many League clubs.

Our most ambitious plans so far, in this direction, were announced a few weeks ago. They consist of the redevelopment of our South Stand at a cost of some £500,000. The proposals involve a three-storey building that will increase our covered seating to nearly 3,000. They also include provision for around 10,000 sq. ft. of office accommodation. We'll have new lounges for directors, vice-presidents and players, a new supporters' and social club and lots of other improvements including car parking by the time it's finished.

The target is a sports complex because I'm not overlooking the fact that football grounds ought to be used more often than they are. We are part of a community and recognise the responsibility this implies. In developing our plans for the club we hope to make a significant contribution to the leisure amenities of the town as a whole.

KJ This is the age of spectator involvement. You can't call them up on match days and not encourage their support the rest of the week.

AC You are so right. We have gone with the times and like a lot of clubs we have a Vice-Presidents section and well thought out social activities. This is something you have got involved in Dave.

DB Don't laugh, but we bought a cinema. In fact it has been a very sound investment. It has been converted into a Bingo Theatre and we can take 400 people. It brought in £10,000 in the last 6 months. That can't be bad. In fact we run coaches in from surrounding areas. The Social Club makes £6,000 a year and it all helps to put us on a very healthy footing.

KJ Many Football League clubs are fearful of the costs they will be confronted with if their stadiums don't match up to the new stringent safety regulations. The League wouldn't have been keen on the arrival of yet another club with that sort of problem.

DB There is no problem. We have got a clean bill of health. There was the need to spend some money in this direction recently and it was spent. We have had 17,000 in the ground without any problems at all.

KJ Good planning is essential in a Football League Club. Each day brings fresh problems and there is always the need for decisions. Where does the lead come from?

AC It comes from the Board because we have a very functional Board. We have all had a lot of experience in business and it is an asset.



Pete Brady - Radio 2 Disc Jockey is the regular presenter of music and interviews before home matches, at half time and in the social club after games.



KJ That doesn't always work. Successful businessmen often make disastrous football directors. A football club is a family. It cannot be run like a regiment.

AC I accept that, which is why we have a very democratic system. Dave is the professional who is paid to make the club tick over and to ensure that we have a successful team. But he is involved much more in the general affairs of the club than most managers are.

As Chairman I work very closely with him. I get involved because I think every Chairman should.

KJ These are stern times for football. There is a general shortage of money and the competition for talent has never been as fierce. This is especially so in the Football League. Does that worry you?

DB Finding players is of course a problem. But we are in an attractive area and I am confident that we could appeal to the sort of players who would be required to bring us up to strength.

The stimulus of a Football League environment would spread throughout the district and we would get our share of local youngsters. They all can't play for First Division clubs.

We have a healthy set up. Our reputation is good and our performances over the years are a credit to the club.

Our scouting activities would of course be extended once we were in the League and it would then be possible to encourage a future with Chelmsford City.

KJ More and more moneyed people seem to be buying into football these days. How dependent are Chelmsford on the financial strength of their directors?

AC There aren't many clubs where the directors don't guarantee overdrafts. But our aim is to be self-sufficient in every other way. The club must be able to stand on its own feet. If I wasn't confident that it could, I wouldn't be interested in trying to get Chelmsford into the Football League. Let's be fair about this. We don't expect the League to accept lame ducks.

We are convinced that we have a lot to offer and that in achieving league status we would be doing a lot for the game in our area. We are ambitious. All we ask for is the opportunity to develop that ambition.



CHELMSFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

The Stadium, New Writtle Street, Chelmsford, Essex.
Telephone: Chelmsford 53052.

Chairman: A. H. Cherry.

Deputy Chairman: D. Anderson.

Directors: J. Bairstow. K. S. Orrin. C. Seymour. J. Smith

General Manager: D. Bumpstead.