

## NEWSLETTER – Issue 23 – December 2024

### WELCOME

**Welcome to our 23rd Newsletter - issued to all SUEPA and Shrimpers Trust members.**

Well, yo ho ho and all that, warm festive season wishes to you all. Time to take a breather maybe – if we can remember how. The last quarter has been hectic to say the least with some big things achieved, but as we hurtle towards 2025 there is more in the melting pot. We want to build on what we are all about, though it's always good to reflect and celebrate and in the last month we reached this little landmark:



**SOUTHEND UNITED EX PLAYERS  
ASSOCIATION (SUEPA)**

**OVER £50,000  
NOW RAISED SINCE WE STARTED!**

**CREATING  
NEW  
MEMORIES**

We'd like to think that SUEPA has embraced this new COSU-era with open arms, isn't it just so good to have a club owner that appreciates and cares?

We'd also like to put on record that our first ever sponsor – JLS Building Services Limited – is just fantastic. We are not just saying that because they've parted with some funds to help support the club and also what SUEPA does. No, it's more than that – their owner Justin Slowley has dived in at the deep end and simply got involved in everything that we've done, every event we've had he's been there, not only enjoying the occasion but also by immersing himself in it – selling tickets (and he can sell!), meet and greet, provide ideas, shift furniture .... thanks Justin, you are a top man.

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So, in this Newsletter, covering what has happened in the last three months and our plans ahead, we cover:

- **Introducing ..... The SUEPA Fund.**
- **'Match for Micky' – what a great day.**
- **Working with the PFA.**
- **'An Evening with Red Card Roy' – oh what a night!**
- **An emotional meeting.**
- **Huge Roots Hall welcomes for our returning heroes.**
- **Our Former Players' Club meeting on 13 December – what's in store?**
- **Membership update ..... steady as she goes.**
- **You are losing your best friend .....**
- **Catching up with Keith Hackett.**
- **News bits – Pitch Invasion, Jimmy Thomson pics, three men went to Hull, our Damian is an author, SUEPA the art broker, Billy Best prints.**
- **A sad farewell to Trevor Whymark.**
- **How to keep up to date with SUEPA news, contacting your old team-mates, and SUEPA.**
- **The full current SUEPA membership list.**

Right, are your mince pies warmed up? Time to feast .....

Andy Leeder, SUEPA Organiser

## INTRODUCING ..... THE SUEPA FUND

**SOUTHEND UNITED F.C.**  
Ex-Players Association

# INTRODUCING THE SUEPA FUND

**AS OUR CLUB MOVES FORWARD, WE WANT TO HELP  
PROTECT OUR HISTORY AND HERITAGE  
SO WE ARE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT**

**SOUTHEND UNITED F.C.**

**WE GENERATE INCOME VIA EVENTS, SUEPA SPECIFIC MEMORABILIA,  
SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS**

**80% OF SUEPA GENERATED PROFITS NOW GO INTO A SEPARATE FUND, MANAGED BY  
THE SHRIMPERS TRUST (OF WHICH SUEPA IS PART OF) TO MEET SUEPA PROJECTS**

**IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT MORE, CONTACT US AT [SUEPA@SHRIMPERSTRUST.CO.UK](mailto:SUEPA@SHRIMPERSTRUST.CO.UK)**

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**We are really excited to announce the new SUEPA Fund.**

In short, monies raised by SUEPA (and expenses incurred) will now be recorded specifically against SUEPA within the accounts of our mother ship, The Shrimpers Trust.

Specific fundraisers such as what we have done in the past for former players will continue to be recorded separately. But for all other SUEPA-related monies (for example, relating to our recent 'Evening with Roy McDonough' event) we will then use the profits to target SUEPA specific undertakings, not least with the aim of supporting our club to help with projects to protect and celebrate our club's history and heritage.

SUEPA remains an intrinsic part of the Shrimpers Trust (indeed, SUEPA relies upon key Trust functions such as IT and accounting .... as well as frequently tapping into the ready army of volunteers on the Trust Board!) and we are just one of the many parts that go to make up what the Trust is all about. However, this new initiative gives SUEPA a real focus, and for those who are specifically interested in helping with SUEPA work, they can now be assured that help will be targeted to SUEPA. By 'help' we don't just mean financial (though that is always welcome!), but also in contributing ideas or practical 'hands on' help at events, organising, etc.

You will notice from the accompanying poster that we have a new email address – so if you do have any questions, suggestions or whatever, please do contact us at [suepa@shrimperstrust.co.uk](mailto:suepa@shrimperstrust.co.uk)

And, if you do want to help financially and have that money targeted to SUEPA, you can now do that via a new donation facility on the Shrimpers Trust website. Just click on the following link - <https://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/donation/> - select 'SUEPA' from the drop-down menu and follow the website instructions from there.

From time to time, we will report on the progress of the SUEPA Fund – we will always be transparent in what we do.

## MATCH FOR MICKY – WHAT A GREAT DAY



**It had been some four months in the planning, and the night before we kicked things off with a meal for Micky and a few of his old teammates at the Radison Park Inn – oh the stories! Then we opened the curtains on the big day itself, 20 October, the first named storm of the season (Ashley) was on its way, and it was blowing a gale and raining – oh joy. Forgot to tick the 'sort the weather out' box on the planning list.**

Still, onwards and upwards, the advance party arrived at the home of our wonderful hosts Bowers & Pitsea FC around noon, and we started to put things in place. A top replica kit from that glorious 1980/81 season was laid out in the changing room, refreshments for players set up, the officials and paramedic and Amy the physio and the stewards and the programme/raffle sellers and the turnstile operators and so on all arrived on time closely followed by Legends manager Frank, the club bar and food stall opened up, then the players plus opposition plus

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ex-player guests (Spurs and Shrimpers) joined the throng, and then the fans started to file in. Micky and his wife Tracey were there to greet everyone, and Glenn Hoddle/Peter Taylor gave a pre-match team-talk to the Legends opposition (the good men of the Carli Lansley Foundation FC) – what a moment to treasure that was for them.

The weather? Well, as the teams lined up and Micky made his way on to the pitch to give a brief thank-you speech, it began to pour ..... but very quickly stopped and we were then blessed with decent conditions for the duration. The Legends team, sporting five who had played in the first team with Micky a few decades earlier, ran out 8-6 winners, the whole afternoon was an autograph-hunters dream, and we all retreated to the bar afterwards to toast Micky and deal with the raffle. A good day – certainly! Will we do it again – well, not straight away, but the buzz everyone gets from these events does make all the effort so worthwhile.

Ace Shrimper reporter D1versity was there to record it all, you will find his highlights video at: <https://youtu.be/NlxQGs02LZY>

## WORKING WITH THE PFA

**For some time now we've been lobbying the PFA to set up a national network of former player groups. At times we thought we were getting close, but other times not. Whoever we speak to about the initiative the reaction is the same – 'what a great idea'. Yet nothing to date has happened.**

So, we recently contacted the other former player groups we are in regular dialogue with and received pretty much immediate responses from 14 of them to lend their name to an open letter to the PFA which was posted out on social media on 29 November 2024.

**An open letter to the Professional Footballers Association (PFA)**

As former player groups (FPG's), we firmly believe that the former player community would benefit immensely from having a national network of such groups established by the PFA.

We see FPG's as being a win-win for clubs, ex-players and fans alike. Such groups, whilst still being left to operate autonomously, would find the sharing of ideas that a national network would encourage, to be immensely beneficial. Further, a network could encourage clubs/their supporters without an FPG to set one up.

FPG's can be a great way too of helping to spread news of the services provided by the PFA, not least the Brain Health Fund which to date has been significantly under-utilised.

The PFA has the credibility to operate a network, and we call for it to be set up as a matter of urgency. Without a network we fear that many of the PFA's 50,000 former player membership will not be reached and so needlessly suffer from a lack of information.

Signed by:

- Blackpool FC Former Players Association
- Bristol City Former Players Association
- Bristol Rovers Former Players Association
- Chesterfield Former Players Association
- Everton Former Players Foundation
- Exeter City Former Players Association
- Forever Green (Plymouth Argyle)
- Lincoln City Former Players Association
- Pompey Former Players Association
- Reading FC Former Players Association
- Southend United Ex-Players Association
- Stoke City Old Boys Association
- Wimbledon Old Players Association
- Wolves Former Players Association
- York City Past Players Association

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The proposal is not critical of the PFA in any way – we are great supporters of all that they do. It is instead just an attempt to see if we can get something done which we believe will benefit so many far beyond the reaches of what SUEPA alone can achieve.

Let's see what happens .....

## AN EVENING WITH RED CARD ROY – OH WHAT A NIGHT!



**Roy promised us a good laugh ..... and duly delivered by the bucket load at our latest 'Evening With' event at the Essex Bowls Club on Saturday 23 November.**

Before the evening came a gathering at Roots Hall for the highly entertaining Forest Green Rovers match, and the big man received a top welcome from the Roots Hall faithful when he was introduced to the crowd shortly before kick-off.

Then, after an obligatory beer or two, at the evening event Roy was on top form from start to finish. Glenn Pennyfather as host, as ever, was excellent, steering us all through Roy's career and just getting it all to flow with ease. Justin Rees kicked things off with a warm and heartfelt intro – carrying forward our history and heritage and making it an intrinsic part of our future is assured under his watch. It was a real pleasure to have the classy Tony Currie with us, as it was all of Roy's old teammates. And Frank's cameo was, of course, just hilarious. We even had Roy's old Layer Road Chairman at the event underlining just what high regard there is for the big man.

Roy's passion shone throughout. Yes, there are some stories that that are quite colourful (or at least ginger ..... 'crab football' now has a whole new meaning), and he often took things to the limit (or beyond). But his love for the game, his 100% effort, his care, and his desire to play for the team, cannot be questioned.

The top-quality pics shown here were all taken by the wonderful Dave Shields, whose support for all-things SUEPA continues to be just fabulous. Other thanks go to our hosts at the Bowls Club, all of the Shrimpers Trust volunteer helpers whose commitment to working for the cause is total, and of course to everyone who came along to the event and made it another top fundraiser. Some of the profits have been donated to the appeal fund to help former Shrimper Nick Thurston (who had a fabulous night with us – more on him later), and the remainder has been credited to the SUEPA Fund.'

Again, D1versity was there to record it all: <https://youtu.be/hKOSDAkqGBI>

So, who next?!

## AN EMOTIONAL MEETING



**Every now and then at SUEPA something quite unexpected and lovely happens.**

At our 'Evening with Roy McDonough' event the great Tony Currie was one of our former player guests, and one of our event helpers was Blue Boar landlady Michelle Gargate. Let's now scroll back a bit.

Back in the late 1970's, when Tony was turning on the style at Leeds United, Michelle's mum and dad were ardent Leeds fans, and on one occasion had their pictures taken with a young TC. Those pics are amongst Michelle's treasured possessions, her dad sadly passed away at the all-too-young age of 43 when Michelle was just 5 years old.

Michelle hadn't known that TC was attending until the night itself, and so on learning that was instantly taken back to recalling those old pictures and was delighted to meet the great man. It proved to be quite emotional.

SUEPA - creating new memories. It's what we do. 

## SOME TRULY MEMORABLE RETURNS

We have been blessed this season with some memorable match day visits – as reported in our last Newsletter, Steve Phillips kicked things off, and Roy McDonough as already noted received a top reception v Forest Green. Adding to this over the last couple of months we've also had Ian Benjamin, Billy Best and Garry Nelson return to their Roots.

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Benji has always been a fans favourite, and he was quite taken aback to hear a loud rendition of 'his song' echo out from the stands when he visited on 5 October v Maidenhead. Garry then got a loud cheer when he was introduced prior to that pulsating cup tie v Charlton – he actually played more times for the Addicks and so was forgiven for applauding the sizeable away contingent too (only to be greeted with silence from that quarter as the North Bank PA system was not working so the Charlton faithful had no clue about what was happening!).

The most emotional return of a Shrimper for many a year, however, has to be Billy Best's visit on Saturday September 28th v Gateshead. It really was quite something, and we don't think we've heard a louder and such a sustained welcome as our goal scoring ace received when he came on to the pitch accompanied by his good friend Dave 'Nobbler' Brabbing. It will live long in the memory.

### OUR FORMER PLAYERS CLUB MEETING ON 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – WHAT'S IN STORE?

**OK, we can't quite stretch to a three-course festive spread with all the trimmings (even if Roy offered to supply some jokes for the crackers), so we're instead calling this a more modest 'mince pie special'.**

As ever, all guests will receive a warm welcome, and this time we will be joined by Mark and Steve Watson, sons of the late Peter Watson who was such a great servant to the club in the 1960's (Peter is also the brother of England international Dave). We hope to relive a few memories from Peter's playing career and are really looking forward to that.

The guest list for it starting to grow, with players from the 1960's onwards registering their attendance, including Micky Stead who will also be joined by his old 1980/81 championship winning teammates Tony Hadley, Ron Pountney and Garry Nelson.

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**THE SOUTHEND UNITED  
FORMER PLAYERS CLUB**

**OUR MINCE PIE SPECIAL**  
Our next meeting will be on  
**FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER 2024 1.00 to 3.00 pm**

At the d2 Lounge, Roots Hall, home of the Shrimpers



All former players of any era (and their partners) are very welcome  
Come along , catch up with old friends and make some new ones?



The Former Players Club is run by SUEPA  
To book your FREE place(s) contact SUEPA by email at  
[suepassoc@gmail.com](mailto:suepassoc@gmail.com)  
This event is sponsored by The Blue Boar

If any former player from any era would like to join us then do please let us know – see the contact details at the end of the Newsletter.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE – STEADY AS SHE GOES



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Since our last Newsletter we've had four new members to the SUEPA family and now have 508 current members. One more season (1970/71) is also now a 'full set'.

No additions between the sticks where the shot-stopper squad remains at 52, nor to the coaching/backroom staff brigade which still numbers 18, but there are a sprinkling of additions in the outfield departments.

## ***At the back***

Our defence has been bolstered by the addition of **Jason Demetriou** whose playing career came to an end just as the current season was getting underway. JD increases our back line to 144, and it was good to then see him back at the club in a scouting role. Amongst all of those full back appearances (and some crunching tackles) he also has that rarest of things – a 100% record as our manager (thanks to being in charge in a caretaking capacity for our 4-1-win v Chertsey Town in the FA Cup in October 2021).

## ***Midfield***

In the middle of the park **Nicky Thurston** and **Jimmy Lumsden** bring an already crowded centre area up to 167.

On 24 July this year, aged just 54, former Shrimper **Nick 'Froggy' Thurston** was dealt a crippling blow by being told he has incurable stage four cancer. It has spread to his liver, lymph nodes and lungs. He is having chemo treatment and is handling it with wonderful bravado which, in an hour's chat with him recently, came shining through, and he is determined to celebrate life as much as he can. But times are tough and, no longer able to work, living costs are exceeding the income his wife can bring in.

Nick joined Southend United on YTS terms (having previously played for us at junior level) in 1987, and then signed a one-year £75 a week pro contract – it was a time to be proud, he cleaned Glenn Pennyfather's and Richard Cadette's boots dreaming of a football career ahead of him, and celebrated with the first team as we won promotion at Stockport in 1987. He was with a great bunch of lads, Justin Edinburgh included, and many of that group still meet up regularly today – Andy Dixon, Mat Jones, Brad Weaving, Paul Newell, Micky Newell, Neil Gray, Jon 'Fingers' O'Brien, Mark Whittington, Paul Smith, Adrian West, Paul Taylor, John Heffer, Steve Heffer, Iain O'Connell, Rob Savage ..... the team spirit forged on the muddy playing fields that Bobby Moore had to find for them to practice on as youngsters still endures decades later.

Nick was a hard-working (his words!) left-footed midfield player, and just as he was making his way into the reserve team it all then went wrong. He ran forward into the penalty area from a long pass forward in a 1988 pre-season friendly at Enfield and was brought crashing to the ground by a defender. A spot-kick was awarded but, as his teammates were celebrating what proved to be the winner, Nick was being carried off with a bad ligament injury. Three days after his op the club had him doing some training which probably didn't help, and with budgets tight Nick found himself shipped out to Witham Town. A season there proved to be it – Nick was left to focus instead on a sports shop business he had bought in to.

His entrepreneurial spirit then led him to setting up the 'Nick Thurston Soccer School' (which he cheekily renamed 'Premier Soccer School' when the PL was established to try and earn off that ever-increasing gravy train), and worked on that for ten years with the likes of Paul Newell and Mat Jones. He then set up a sunbed company ("timing wasn't great, health scares re excessive sunbed exposure had just started and it was just before the TOWIE fake tan boom started up when folk decided tans were cool again") and so he turned to the construction industry which he has been in for 20 years until his recent diagnosis.

Nick has been married to Paula for 34 years and she remains the rock on who he relies. He has two children, Billy and Madison, who he is immensely proud of, and two very young grandchildren Remi and Beck. In a lovely twist of fate, Billy, who now lives in Australia, found that he lived a couple of minutes away from his dad's old teammate Spencer Prior (it's not a small landmass), and they both recently met up for a catch up.

We welcomed Nick to our 'Evening with Roy McDonough' event and gave him a top night out. Nick came along with his great friend Reece Bayliss, who has set up a GoFundMe page to try and help Nick manage through the financial difficulties caused by his diagnosis: <https://gofund.me/6ef70d04> - SUEPA has made a donation.

Further, on Saturday 14 December for our home match v Hartlepool, we are hosting one of Nick's teammate reunions. There will be a pre-match party at the Blue Boar then, thanks to the support of our club, they will all be watching the match that afternoon ..... with a pre-match crowd introduction thrown in when we are sure the Roots Hall crowd will show its support.

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We had noticed that **Jimmy Lumsden** had attended a visit to Ashton Gate arranged by the Bristol City Former Players Association and so got in touch to obtain contact details. It was great to catch up with the Scot on the phone and join him up to SUEPA - so we now at last have all 21 former players still alive from our 1970/71 squad as part of our ever-growing family.

Jimmy, now 77, was kicking a football about as soon as he could walk and that led to representative games for the Glasgow Schools Football Association and a place in the Scottish Schoolboy international trials. As soon as he left school he was snapped up by Leeds United, where he stayed for six seasons, captaining their reserve side and playing a handful of first team matches before responding to some interest from Arthur Rowley. Jim recalls being asked how much he wanted as a signing on fee, he hadn't got a clue what to say so said he'd been offered £2,000 from another team (completely untrue!). It worked, Arthur offered £3,000 and he signed!

He did say in our chat that it took a bit of adjusting to playing at Southend - he remarked that Lawrie Leslie liked the team to train hard the day before a match whereas at Leeds Don Revie insisted on light duties only just before a game. He recalled playing under the lights at Roots Hall on a Friday night and that the crowds always were a good number.

Likened at the time to being an 'embryo Billy Bremner', Jimmy made his debut for us soon after signing in September 1970 in a 1-0 home win v Northampton Town, and went on to make a dozen first team appearances in the run up to Christmas. However, he picked up a hairline fracture of the foot injury and sadly never made it back into our first team, so ended up returning to his native Scotland to find regular football. He played for Morton, St Mirren and Clydebank (where he helped them win two promotions to the top tier).

After finishing playing Jimmy had a long career in coaching, being Eddie Gray's assistant at Leeds, working at a boarding school in Wetherby, then undertaking managerial roles at Bristol City and Rochdale before returning to an assistant coach role alongside David Moyes at Everton and Manchester United.

Jimmy today keeps fit by going on long walks in the Yorkshire countryside where he has settled, and we hope to meet up at a future date when Southend are playing in the area.

## ***In attack***

And finally, thanks to our friends at the Wimbledon Old Players Association, up front the sole addition is **Roscoe Dsane**, who becomes our 127th striker. Roscoe made his EFL debut for us under Rob Newman in the 2001/02 season and made two appearances before going on to play for the likes of Aldershot. He is now a fireman not far from Wimbledon's Plough Lane.

## YOU ARE LOSING YOUR BEST FRIEND ....



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In the build up to the recent England v Republic of Ireland match, ITV showed a short film about Penny and Dave Watson's struggles with Dave's dementia diagnosis. It was passionate, emotional, and sad. Ian Wright afterwards spoke brilliantly about the need for action and that the issues cannot just keep being kicked around.

We met up with Penny and Dave on 1 November at a Rotherham United Memory Club meeting. It was a lovely afternoon - over 20 former players were present plus friends and family. These guys, led by John Breckin, plus Penny/Dave Watson, were the inspiration for us setting up our own regular former players club gatherings earlier this year. Not every player attending was a dementia sufferer – many came along simply to rekindle the camaraderie of being teammates back in the day. But dementia hangs like a cloud for some – the significantly increased risk from years of heading the ball is a fear for some and is a reality for others.

Groups like Rotherham's provide support, and help raise awareness of, the extensive support provided by the PFA's Brain Health Fund, something we learned about in more detail the day before when attending a PFA dementia presentation at Sheffield Wednesday (where we also bumped into SUEPA members Tony Currie and Jason Lee). The help provided by the PFA is extensive, and any PFA member can seek help from it (with assistance from their family or friends as appropriate in the application process) through a dedicated and caring service which can provide both practical and financial help. The PFA's streamlined offering makes this as straightforward as possible – a copy of the PFA Brain Health Fund leaflet is shown here.



**FOOTBALL BRAIN HEALTH FUND**

The Football Brain Health Fund, a joint initiative by the PFA and Premier League, supports former players and their families who have been impacted by dementia and other neurodegenerative conditions to improve their quality of life.

It can be accessed by former PFA members with a diagnosed neurodegenerative condition or dementia.

Families can apply for financial support towards a wide range of support and services, including:

<b>Respite care</b>	<b>In-home care</b>	<b>Domestic support</b>
<b>Diagnosis and medical costs</b>	Social interventions: attending memory clubs, gym memberships, relevant social activities	
<b>Full-time residential dementia care costs</b>		
Assistive technology like walking aids	<b>Travel assistance</b>	
<b>Carer relief payments</b>	Home adaptations such as accessible bathrooms or stairlifts	

**How to apply:**  
To apply, simply call or email below to access the application form:

0204 583 4168      fbhf@thepfa.com

Decisions on applications are made by an Independent Grants Panel, comprising sector experts and family members with lived experience of caring for a former footballer with dementia. The fund also uses an Independent Occupational Therapist and Benefits Advisor to ensure families receive the support they need.

**PFA Brain Health Team:**

The PFA Brain Health department has a team of player support associates available to provide practical and emotional non-clinical support for families dealing with dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases. Our team members have personally cared for former players with dementia and supported hundreds of footballing families, offering first-hand understanding of your experience.

0330 236 8859      brainhealth@thepfa.com

**Admiral Nurse:**

The PFA has partnered with Dementia UK to provide a bespoke football-centric virtual Admiral Nurse Clinic. Admiral Nurses have the time to listen and the knowledge to solve problems. They can help with any questions and concerns about dementia, including:

- understanding a diagnosis
- practical tips and advice for caring for a person with dementia
- understanding symptoms and changes in behaviour
- managing your own feelings
- transition into a nursing or residential home, or stays in hospital

To access a confidential appointment, please visit: [DementiaUK.org/pfa](https://DementiaUK.org/pfa)

Penny and Dave's daughter is currently making a film ('Forgotten') to highlight her dad's plight and raise further awareness – SUEPA is one of the many small sponsors involved in the fund-raising process to help with the costs of making the film. As Penny said in the ITV shortened version of the film, living with someone with dementia can be like gradually losing your best friend. However, help is available, and any PFA member (or a close friend or family person who has concerns about them) who feels that dementia could be an issue should make contact with the PFA without delay. It could make a huge difference.

## CATCHING UP WITH KEITH HACKETT



**We recently had the privilege of speaking to someone who had perhaps the most important role in perhaps the most significant match in our club's Roots Hall history.**

We connected recently with former referee Keith Hackett on LinkedIn and, seeing a comment from him on one of our posts when he referenced his part in that wonderful snowy night back in January 1979, we thought we'd see if he was up for a chat ..... and were delighted to find that he was.

Keith, who turned 80 back in June, was an experienced man of high regard in his field by the time Andy Polycarpou's replay winner v Watford in the second round set up our date with the reigning European Champions. In refereeing circles, the bigger the team, the more experienced the match official tends to be the rule, and none at that time (or even today) were much bigger than the Anfield Road men. So, the occasion demanded a man with the whistle of Keith's standing.

A red team full of internationals who most of us who were there can still quote the 1 to 11 of now (today maybe we might not manage to recall more than that Egyptian chap and a couple of others despite their earning capacities), Liverpool FC commanded top treatment. So, on the Friday the day before the game was due to take place. Mr KS Hackett of Sheffield had an early start on the M1. But it was clear that, along with many of the fixtures that day in icy England, no ball was going to be kicked. The game was put back four days to Wednesday 10 January 1979. A wise move so it seemed, and Keith, with business to attend to in nearby Romford, stayed 'down south'.

On late Wednesday afternoon he made his way to Roots Hall (for what turned out to be his first and only visit), took a look around the green pitch and its vast empty surrounding terraces, and retreated to the claustrophobic warmth of the officials' room ('cupboard' would be a better description) to prepare for the match. Though at the time it was the newest ground in the UK, a title it would hold for 33 years until 1988, it was far from luxurious – albeit the old bath in the home dressing room did, when the boiler worked, receive warm water.

The good folk of Essex were streaming in, a ground which typically housed 5,000 would that night have to squeeze in over 31,000, and queues of up to what proved to be over two hours long to gain entry were beginning to form. Some 6,000 scousers, many on away day train specials on British Rail's finest rolling stock, were adding to the mix. John Motson was staring in disbelief at the wooden ladder he had to negotiate to get to his commentary position on top of the West Stand roof. Then it began to snow.

About half an hour after Keith had settled into the cupboard, one of his linesmen asked him to pop outside to view the scene – snow was falling heavily and dear old Sid Broomfield and his merry band of ground staff were fighting a losing battle to keep the pitch clear. The local constabulary were worried – the masses descending on Roots Hall were better managed within the ground rather than being left to roam outside, and they wanted the game on. What to do with 6,000 guests from Liverpool was a key concern – the trains to take them home would not be in place until 10 pm and the thought of bands of marauding scallies swamping local hostleries for several hours was not on the agenda.

Keith spoke to managers Bob Paisley and Dave Smith – they were positive and appreciated the police position. He rang the FA for guidance – no response despite repeated attempts to call them, they'd probably all gone home early because of the snow. Life before mobile phones was a mess.

So, despite the snow continuing and a thick layer beginning to build on the pitch and making the terraces look like a Christmas card, it was 'game on'. A supply of orange balls was found, and Sid was ordered to focus clearing the lines and to try and find some red dye for the touchline paint.

Paisley told his team they'd be playing - they couldn't quite believe it. Smithy told his men - they were delighted, the conditions would certainly help to level things up a bit. The ground filled up, Roots Hall had once seen a

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crowd of almost 29,000 in 1957 for the visit of Birmingham in the FA Cup (when a Jimmy Thomson goal, today 93 years young and SUEPA's second-oldest member, had seen off Liverpool in the previous round), but it had not really come close to that since. The massive South Bank open terrace alone was rammed with some 15,000 snow-capped hardy souls, and a steward with a loud hailer was going round the perimeter of the pitch shouting at folk to move back to relieve pressure at the front.

Meanwhile, perched on top of the double-barrelled West Stand roof, Motty wiped away the snow from his notes and hid under a blanket wanting to think of a warm car home but trying to block from his mind a descent back down that ladder to get there. Liverpool fans were housed in the traditional home fans North Bank abode and had brought a few red flares with them to ward off the cold, whilst the main stand on the East side, then the only (partially) seated area, bristled with activity as match officials wrestled with the challenges of managing something they'd never seen anything like before (or, as it turned out, since). The ageing bulbs of the four traditional floodlight pylons hummed and hissed to light up the scene below them.

The two teams came out on time to a tumultuous roar, Keith recalling that the atmosphere was electric. Emlyn Hughes and home skipper Alan Moody met him in the centre circle for the coin toss. Keith remembers getting out his trusty 50p piece (half the price of a match ticket back then), Emlyn calling tails, and the coin then disappearing in to the snow never to be seen again. Keith said it was heads, Emlyn went mad, and Alan chose to forgo kicking off and play towards the South Bank in the first half. Keith told us that many years later he met up with Emlyn at a function, and the Liverpool skipper quizzed him about that coin toss – competitive to the last was 'Crazy Horse'.

"The snow was fairly level and the ground soft underneath at least to start off with", Keith remembers, "the ball bobble was not too bad, and I decided from the outset to give all the players some leniency to take account of the conditions. Some tolerance and common sense was what was needed, and afterwards both managers came up to compliment me on how things went. After the match I drove back home to Sheffield, I had my day job to do the day after, it was a long trip!"

That night for us Shrimpers was magical. Certainly, Keith played a huge part, and his 'light touch' approach to the whistle was key – Jimmy Case received a booking (nothing new there), but that was about it. And close your eyes tight as you get to the moment in the first half in the YouTube Sportsnight highlights when Derrick Parker breaks free, and our number 9 rounds Ray Clemence to score a glorious winner. In reality of course, the England shot stopper runs out of his box to block the shot and we all trot off to Anfield for a bit of scouse hospitality and a 3-0 defeat.

There will never be a night quite like it again – all of us who were there have a treasured memory to last forever, and it is only right to acknowledge the calm and assured way the man in the middle dealt with it all. Maybe it's time, Keith, that we prised you out of Sheffield once more and treated you to another day at Roots Hall, this time as our match day guest – we'll check the weather forecast first though.

## NEWS BITS



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## SUEPA Fashion Wear!

The Pitch Invasion prints we introduced in our last Newsletter now have an accompanying item, as we have now launched the same design on polo and t-shirts! Priced just £20 and £15 respectively, we have already sold out of some sizes, but intend to order more soon and will be adding them to the Shrimpers Trust website in the 'shop' section. However, if you would like to reserve one now, please just get in touch via email and we will sort things out for you.

## Back to the 1950's

We received some fabulous pictures recently from the daughter of our second oldest member Jimmy Thomson. A couple are included in the picture montage shown here, but to see more just visit our SUEPA Facebook page. We just love to receive old pictures – if you have a hidden gem lurking in the attic then do please seek it out and send it to us so all can enjoy. We'll then store it in our archives so it will always then be readily accessible.

## SUEPA the Art Broker

We've mentioned before the fantastic prints of Roots Hall that are available on the Shrimpers Trust website based on artwork produced by Shrimper fan Keith Bird. Well, it did seem a shame that the original oil paintings had then remained under a cover at Keith's home, so we got in touch with COSU to see if they might be interested. They were, a visit to Roots Hall with Keith to meet COSU Chairman Justin Rees and CEO Tom Lawrence was set up, they viewed his paintings 'on site', and the end result was that two of them are now on display in their true home!

One of the paintings acquired by the club was of that snowy night in 1979 v Liverpool, and the other was actually a new one that Keith was inspired to paint after the visit depicting that wonderful win v Manchester United in 2006.

It's great to see the paintings where they really belong – initially in the Boardroom, but we suspect at some point a more public display might be arranged. And yes, that Man U one will soon be available as a print from the Shrimpers Trust shop – just in time for Santa's visit this Christmas we hope.

## Damien the Author!

It was great to see SUEPA member Damien Scannell (who was a true hero in helping us last year with our 'Match for James') publishing a new book and attending his first ever book-launch. It is already getting rave reviews:

"You may think this will be like other self-development books. You'd be wrong! This book has more actionable advice that is practical to the large majority of men than a lot of the best books in this category do. That's because it is relatable and actionable. Couldn't recommend more!" or

"Incredible book and insights from Damo. I brought the book and couldn't put it down as soon as I brought it. I've been following Damien's work for a long time now, he has influenced me in many areas of my fitness & professional life. Great read for anyone looking to improve in all areas of their life."

Top work our Damien! 

Check it out on Amazon: <https://amzn.eu/d/dV3ewpZ>

## Three men went to Hull

2026 sees Southend United celebrate their 120th anniversary, and we hope to work with the club to plan for it. Meanwhile, Hull City are a couple of years ahead of us.

So, on 29th September three top Shrimpers - Peter Taylor, Frankie Banks and Dennis Booth – were part of the Tigers' celebrations. Indeed, Frank, who notched over 300 appearances for them during his 'Hull holiday decade' from 1966, will be back up at the MKM Stadium on New Years Day as their chief host for their match v Middlesbrough. Don't become a Hull regular again Frank – us Shrimpers need you!

## Billy Best Prints

When Billy visited Roots Hall in September, we presented him with a special picture montage depicting some of his memorable moments as a Shrimper. Our SUEPA friend Dave Shields, who helps us with many of the prints we produce, then visited Billy at his home in Northampton armed with a whole bundle of them which the great man duly signed. If you are searching for present ideas then this might be just what you are looking for, all profits go direct to SUEPA and at the time of writing there are still some available, this time direct from Dave's website at:

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[https://footballstadiumphotography.co.uk/products/southend-united-billy-best-print?\\_pos=1&\\_sid=d8ce515f9&\\_ss=r](https://footballstadiumphotography.co.uk/products/southend-united-billy-best-print?_pos=1&_sid=d8ce515f9&_ss=r)

## RIP TREVOR WHYMARK



**It was sad news to hear back on 31 October that Trevor Whymark passed away at the age of 74.**

He made his name at Ipswich over 10 years and won an England cap, ultimately arriving at Roots Hall in 1984 from Grimsby. He scored eight times for us in 45 appearances during a difficult time in our club's history. We never quite managed to make contact with Trevor to invite him to join SUEPA, which was a huge shame.

He is yet another ex-pro who had sadly been battling with Alzheimer's, and will be missed by all those that witnessed him play at the top of his game when this country had many top centre forwards. Our condolences go out to all his family and friends.

RIP Trevor, forever a Shrimper 💙

## FOLLOWING AND CONTACTING SUEPA

**Use of social media is key for getting our message across. It's not for everyone we know, but if you like a bit of web- surfing, then make sure to check us out.**

Twitter (ok, 'X') still leads the way and now has 2,917 followers, only a small increase this time and we wonder if this media outlet is losing ground to the new 'Bluesky' social media outlet (we've not yet ventured there). Catch us at: [@SUEPAssoc](https://twitter.com/SUEPAssoc)

Our **Facebook** page – up a respectable 4% to 1,987. Party time when we get to 2,000? Catch us at: [www.facebook.com/SUEPAssoc/](https://www.facebook.com/SUEPAssoc/)

On **Instagram**, where we are up a smidgeon to 482. This seems a popular outlet but it's difficult to grow interest, maybe we need that 'killer pic'. Catch us at: <https://www.instagram.com/suepassoc/>

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And on **LinkedIn** where it's again the star-performer, a 5.1% increase taking us now up to 1,355 followers. Catch us at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/southend-united-ex-players-association-14a823183/>

You can then use any of these social media outlets to send us a private message, or you can contact us via email, now at our BRAND NEW address of [suepa@shrimperstrust.co.uk](mailto:suepa@shrimperstrust.co.uk) However, our old email address of [suepassoc@gmail.com](mailto:suepassoc@gmail.com) is still active and will continue to be monitored for some time yet.

Still not got to grips with Tik Tok, or Threads, or now BlueSky, maybe we need a full-time social media manager. All applications welcome – standard SUEPA rates of pay apply (i.e. zero).

And don't forget, we can always be reached by post at **SUEPA c/o The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 9FD**. The Shrimpers Trust website address is [www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk)

As a reminder, any SUEPA ex-player/coaching staff member can ask to get in touch with any of their former teammates in SUEPA by just asking us to pass on a message. We cannot disclose contact details without permission, but are always happy to pass on a message to ask them to contact you, something we have done to help re-unite former Shrimpers countless times already.

## THE FULL SUEPA SQUAD TO-DATE

### GOALKEEPERS

Terry Alderton, Steve Arnold, Cameron Belford, Daniel Bentley, Derek Bellotti, John Burridge, Mel Capleton, Mervyn Cawston, Steve Collis, Luke Daniels, Barrie Delf, Rhys Evans, Darryl Flahavan, Neil Freeman, Danny Gay, Bart Griemink, Patrik Gunnarsson, Tony Hafford, Tony Henriksen, Kelvin Jack, Glen Johnson, Ian Joyce, John Keeley, Brian Lloyd, Martyn Margetson, Don McKay, Alan Meyer, Steve Mildenhall, James Montgomery, Glenn Morris, Paul Newell, Blondy Nna Noukeu, Jon O'Brien, Mark Oxley, Andy Petterson, Gerry Peyton, Sean Rafter, John Roberts, Ryan Robinson, Simon Royce, Paul Sansome, Harry Seadon. Paul Smith, Ted Smith, Neville Southall, Jim Stannard, David Stockdale, Callum Taylor, Martin Thomas, Malcolm Webster, Ray White and Andy Woodman.

### DEFENDERS

Ryan Auger, Dean Austin, Gavin Axcell, Pat Baldwin, Gary Banks, Frankie Banks, Dave Barnett, Adam Barrett, Mark Beard, Tony Bentley, Graham Birks, Andre Blackman, Darren Blewitt, Mick Bodley, Martyn Booty, Steve Broad, Kenny Brown, Paul Brush, Adrian Burrows, Guy Butters, Peter Cawley, Peter Clarke, Tom Clifford, Sean Clohessy, Ben Coker, Steve Collins, Simon Coleman, Mark Cooper, Leon Cort, Graham Coughlan, Ryan Creswell, Jaden Crowhurst, Garry Cross, Dave Cusack, Craig Davidson, Leon Davies, Jason Demetriou, Timothee Dieng, Andy Dixon, Dorian Dervite, Phil Dudley, Bob Duncan, Steve Dyer, Andy Edwards, Derek Ewing, Kevin Fallon, Anton Ferdinand, Ricky Footman, Andy Ford, Peter Gilbert, Michael Gonzague, Jamie Gray, Tony Hadley, Greg Halford, Steven Hammell, Mick Harmston, Andy Harris, Mike Harrison, Sam Hart, Steve Hatter, Frank Haydock, Johnny Herd, Shaun Hobson, Mark Hone, David Howell, Lewis Hunt, Barry Hunter, Chris Hutchings, Christian Hyslop, Mads Ibenfeldt, Richard Jobson, Duncan Jupp, Brooklyn Kabongolo, Jean-Paul Kalala, Bobby King, Harry Kyprianou, Kacper Lapota, Mike Lapper, Harry Lennon, Kevin Lock, Louis Lomas, Danny Lunan, Scott Malone, Daniel Matsuzaka, Warren May, John McMahon, David McSweeney, Robert Milsom, Tamika Mkandawire, Alan Moody, Taylor Moore, Luke Morrish, David Morley, Bilel Moshni, Jean-Yves Mvoto, Brian Myton, Teddy Nesbitt, Rob Newman, Terry O'Donnell, Danny O'Shea, Gary Parkinson, George Parris, Chris Perkins, Mark Phillips, Chris Powell, Spencer Prior, Luke Prosser, John Pye, Chris Ramsey, Gary Richards, Ian Riley, Paul Roberts, Leo Roget, Osei Sankofa, Pat Scully, Damon Searle, Joe Shaugnessy, Owen Simpson, Alex Smith, Efe Sodje, Jakub Sokolik, Michael Spillane, Micky Stead, Kevin Steggles, Mark Stimson, Ray Ternent, Derek Tharme, Adam Thompson, Neil Townsend, Michael Turner, John Walker, Shane Wardley, Mark Warren, Martin Warwick, Shane Westley, John White, Charlie Williamson, Che Wilson, Deon Woodman, Bob Worthington, Dave Worthington, Mark Wright, Steve Yates and Dave Young.

### MIDFIELDERS

Marlon Agyakwa, Andy Ansah, Scott Ashenden, Barry Ashworth, Will Atkinson, John Baber, Nicky Bailey, Chris Barnard, Sam Barratt, Tony Beanland, Mark Bentley, Jon Benton, Kevin Betsy, Dennis Booth, Gary Borthwick, Terry Bradbury, Graham Bressington, Zak Brunt, Harry Bunn, Peter Butler, Paul Byrne, Francis Cagigao, Jamal

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Campbell-Ryce, Jean Francois Christophe, Paul Clark, Steve Clark, Adrian Clarke, Eddie Clayton, Conor Clifford, Jason Cook, Nico Cotton, Jimmy Corbett, Regis Coulbault, Willie Coulson, Dave Cunningham, Tony Currie, Peter Daley, Gary Deegan, Lyle Della Verde, Miguel DeSouza, Alan Dicks, Scott Donnelly, James Dunne, Mark Dziadulewicz, Craig Easton, Terrell Egbri, Dave Elliott, Nathan Ferguson, Gerry Fell, Kane Ferdinand, Brian Ferguson, Ken Foggo, Scott Forbes, Lil Fuccillo, Lewis Gard, Antonio German, Anthony Grant, Phil Gridelet, Mick Gooding, Steve Goodwin, Mark Gower, Arvid Gundersen, Luke Guttridge, John Gymer, Julian Hails, Derek Hall, Mark Hall, Ryan Hall, Ethan Hamilton, Lee Hodges, Ricky Holmes, Dean Holness, Tommy Horsfall, Scott Houghton, Rob Howard, Jeff Hull, Peter Hunt, Kevan Hurst, Michael Husbands, Carl Hutchings, Isaac Hutchinson, Neil Jenkins, Terry Kent, Kevin Johnson, Leon Johnson, Terry Johnson, Keith Jones, Matt Jones, David Keefe, Danny Kerrigan, Steve Lamb, Micky Laverick, David Lee, Ryan Leonard, Bernie Lewis, Martin Ling, Adam Locke, Alistair Love, Jimmy Lumsden, Kevin Maher, Mike Marsh, Dave Martin, Jae Martin, Danny Maye, Stephen McLaughlin, Alan McCormack, Jacob Mellis, Jermaine McGlashan, Colin Morris, Franck Moussa, Harrison Neal, Garry Nelson, Terry Nicholl, John Nielsen, Kevin O'Callaghan, Iain O'Connell, Stuart O'Keefe, Ricky Otto, Anton Outulakowski, Adrian Owers, Mark Patterson, Jack Paxman, Derek Payne, Carl Pettefer, Glenn Pennyfather, Declan Perkins, Adem Poric, Ron Pountney, Bill Punton, Ken Reynolds, Gareth Risbridger, Martin Robinson, Peter Robinson, Alan Rogers, Andy Rogers, Lee Sawyer, Damien Scannell, Tony Scully, Allan Shires, Barry Silkman, Josh Simpson, Nicky Smith, Paul Smith, Jamie Southon, Gavin Strachan, Anthony Straker, Andy Sussex, Peter Taylor, Stuart Thurgood, Nick Thurston, Steve Tilson, Michael Timlin, Mark Tinkler, Andy Turner, Lars Unger, Paul Vickery, Mauro Vilhete, Sanchez Watt, Myles Weston, Russell Williamson, Harry Willis, Peter Woods, Alex Woodyard, Anthony Wordsworth, David Worrall and Josh Wright.

## **STRIKERS**

Ben Abbey, Peter Abbott, Charles Ademeno, Simeon Akinola, Brett Angell, David Allaway, Lee Barnard, Tyrone Barnett, Peter Beadle, Mike Beesley, Ian Benjamin, Bobby Bennett, Gary Bennett, Billy Best, Norman Bleanch, Stuart Brace, Lee Bradbury, Tes Bramble, Drewe Broughton, Steve Brown, Richard Cadette, Ken Charlery, Leon Clark, Kenny Cocker, Stan Collymore, Leon Constantine, Jim Conway, Barry Corr, Aaron Cosgrave, Simon Cox, Harry Crawford, David Crown, Martin Curruthers, Marcus Dackers, Liam Dickinson, Roscoe Dsane, George Duck, Lawrie Dudfield, Freddie Eastwood, Mickey Engwell, Jackie Ferguson, Eddie Firmani, Anthony Flood, Alan Foggon, Jamie Forrester, Marc-Antoine Fortune, Graham Franklin, Paul Furlong, Bill Garner, Shaun Goater, Brandon Goodship, Roy Goulden, Terry Gray, Wayne Gray, Danny Greaves, Chris Guthrie, Neil Harris, Matt Harrold, David Heaver, Tom Hopper, Bobby Howlett, Noel Hunt, Jake Hyde, Nathaniel Jarvis, Graeme Jones, Gary Jones, Ken Jones, Steve Jones, Daniel Kanu, Charlie Kelman, Francis Laurent, James Lawson, David Lazell, Jason Lee, Stuart Leslie, John Linford, Alex Lumsden, Matt Lund, Charlie MacDonald, Eric Marsden, Roy McDonough, Sammy McMillan, Keith Mercer, Jack Midson, David Mooney, Tommy Mooney, Paul Moran, Dean Morgan, Shamir Mullins, Rhys Murphy, Lee Nogan, Frank Nouble, Derrick Parker, Stuart Parker, Matt Paterson, Jack Payne, Billy Paynter, Steve Phillips, Joe Piggot, Andy Polycarpou, Ken Price, Andy Rammell, Mark Rawle, Ben Reeves, Dave Regis, Alex Revell, Neville Roach, Theo Robinson, Matt Rush, John Russell, Jack Sampson, Henry Sandat, Morriss Scott, Ian Selley, Peter Silvester, Derek Spence, Scott Spencer, Blair Sturrock, Andy Thomson, Jimmy Thomson, Neil Tolson, Micky Tuohy, James Walker, Mario Walsh, Danny Webb, Jason Williams, Chris Wreh and Micky Wright.

## **COACHING / BACKROOM**

Phil Brown, Micky Buxton, Ben Clarkson, Barry Fry, John Gowens, Ron Hanley, Lee Harrison, Steve Parmenter, Luke Purcell, Amy Rogers, Doc Sinha, Paul Sturrock, Steve Thompson, John Threadgold, Gary Waddock and David Webb.

