



All At Sea
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editorial

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WE know it's tough, June in an odd-numbered year. Yes there's the Women's World Cup and the Copa America, but despite these distractions, the football enthusiast is struggling at this time of year. The only thing managers, players and agents are concerned about in June is Instagramming pictures of cocktails and beaches, which means in the 24/7 information age, us fans are struggling to get our fix.

Shrimperzone has turned into a mad place where 12 pages of threads about what the new kit might look like has become acceptable, while social media has been full of panicky comments about how we should have signed half a new team by now and that momentum has already been lost ahead of the new season.

But don't worry. We're here with our first summer edition to at least part-fill the void by giving you something to read and at least distract you for a few minutes.

We've taken the decision to offer this up online only. It has no issue number and no advertising. It does not count as part of subscriptions. This is partly because it's June and there's no games to sell it at, and partly to see if we can attract a few of the online community, many of whom don't even know what a fanzine is. We have 1,700 Twitter followers, but sell around 300 copies per month. That doesn't seem right to us, so we'll see what happens with this.

One thing is for sure though – we're not going to be abandoning print. This is a one-off, so the traditionalists can rest easy. Normal service will be resumed in August when we hit the streets with Issue 56 for the visit of Swindon on the 22nd.

The bulk of this special edition will be taken up with celebrating promotion. When we've brought out post-promotion issues before, it's been the following August and all thoughts have turned to current matters, so it will be nice to be able to properly celebrate

getting out of the basement league.

If you're bored of Wembley talk (you're not), there's other stuff too. We delve deep into the past with Peter Baker on how tough it was to go up before play-offs, and Andrew Roach takes the club to task on arguably the most bizarre missive to appear on their homepage since the famous Sturrock-sacking "statement". We pay tribute to Barry Corr, who has decided to move on to pastures new, with a look back at his top 10 moments in a Southend shirt. And we'll dish out our prestigious player of the year award.

This month, most of the talk has been about contracts. Phil Brown has finally signed his three-year deal and my sources tell me that because of the length of time that took, they're already negotiating on the next one. Of course, managers rarely last that long these days and whether the contract will be honoured remains to be seen but let's hope it will – it will mean things are going in the right direction.

We've had our fair share of swipes at Brown over the past couple of years but he delivered us a promotion and you can't argue with that. The club also seems to be moving forward with a strong backroom team and as long as we continue to progress, there's no harm in keeping things the way they are.

Michael Timlin is away on his honeymoon and as such has not signed a new contract yet, but the Echo told us this week it's not far from being done. Deegan looks likely to leave with the parties a fair way away on a deal, but Will Atkinson will sign his two-year deal when he returns from holiday.

There's been no new signings as yet, but recent seasons show this is fairly normal. Transfer activity tends to hot up towards the end of June, and clearly a couple of strikers need to be the club's priority, with only Jason Williams currently on the books in that position.

Club hero Adam Barrett has been persuaded to delay his retirement which is great news. He proved a lot of people wrong with his contribution at the end of last season and it has to be said, what a



penalty that was. If Alex Lynch had got to that, he'd still be in hospital now.

The usual stock of pre-season games have been arranged, with the highlight probably the home game with Charlton. Trips to Great Wakering, Canvey and Braintree have become annual events but it is important to help local non-league clubs out. We all moan at how selfish the Premier League clubs have become, shunning games with Football League clubs in favour of trips to Dubai, the Far East and the USA. Non-league clubs are important in their communities and deserve a pre-season pay day, so get down to some of those games if you can.

Enjoy the issue and the summer.

Jamie Forsyth
@Jaimundo_ESX

what a feeling

I HONESTLY never thought anything would top the playoff final of 2005. Seeing the net bulge as Freddy slammed the ball home at the Millennium Stadium to send us up was my best ever football moment until about 8.27pm on Saturday, 23rd May 2015.

I didn't realise Dan Bentley had saved it at first. Like many others around me, it wasn't until Sam Wood flicked his leg helplessly as the ball came back to him that I realised the net had not bulged. It was that and the wall of yellow haring towards the orange-clad goalkeeper that convinced me we had won it. And then everything is just a blur of arms and legs.

That penalty overtook Freddy's goal. In fact, Freddy's goal had already been over-

taken about 20 minutes earlier, when Joe Pigott's angled shot hit the net in front of us as we waited for the referee to blow the final whistle. My coat was on, I was ready to leave Wembley in a dejected huff.

My brother informed me afterwards that, during the celebrations for Pigott's equaliser, he'd never seen me like it. I was "like an animal". A whole season's joy, frustration and hope all coming out in a series of tribal roars directed into the night sky around north west London. The ten-hour round trip to see us blow it on the final day in the rain at Morecambe. The horrible defeat to 10-man Burton, who had cheated their way to victory 10 months earlier. Banished in one night

that none of us will ever forget.

The day had begun in a rather more subdued fashion, in the surroundings of Farringdon's strategically positioned Wetherpoons. We gathered at 1pm, arriving from our different entry points into London, but unlike the last game of the season, there was no boistrousness, no singing, no souvenir mobile phone videos being filmed in readiness for glory. Just pure nerves.

I was fine in the pub, but I left alone at about 2.45pm to meet my best mate Si in JJ Moons, Wembley. Once on my own, the nerves well and truly set in. The overground train from Euston to Wembley Central, devoid of all but a handful of Wembley-bound supporters, saw my heart rate double as, away from the distraction of conversation, the significance of the occasion dawned.

On arrival, Si was in good spirits despite being irked by denied initial entry to the pub by "Wether-Nazis" because he was munching on a sausage roll. Si's attendance this season was non-existent until the playoff semi final

second leg, for a variety of reasons, not least a newborn son. But let there be no talk of daytripping here. He and I spent many a Tuesday night away losing to some northern outfit in the dreadful days of the late 1990s. Before the final appearance had been confirmed, he had booked this weekend up in Liverpool, to see one of his relatives get, er, confirmed. Having travelled up on Friday, he



got back on a train to London on Saturday morning, and booked a place on the last train back to Liverpool that night. It was at 7.56pm. Extra time would be no good, he'd have to be out of the stadium by 7.25pm. I thought that was more than a little ambitious with both clubs finishing on exactly the same points and showing similar form.

It was also nice to bump into a few other friends and old faces in the pub, before after a few drinks the pub closed up at 4.45pm to allow the clearup ahead of the Saturday night crowd.

We split up after the short walk to the stadium and the only negative part of the day came, when walking to the turnstiles, I could hear an aggressive, clearly drunk Southend fan singing "fuck off Wycombe" in the faces of any unfortunate fans in sky blue that happened to be walking past, including at least one family with young children. I'm ashamed to say I didn't risk taking him to task – I really hope he was one of those fans later shamed on national telly for leaving early.

The atmosphere in the ground was noticeably better than when some 10,000 more Blues had turned up for the JPT a couple of years ago. The free scarves left on

chairs made for a great spectacle, even if some unscrupulous types had been reportedly hoovering them up and bagging them before the fans whom they were meant for had taken their seats. Not very classy, but fortunately most of them seemed to have made their way into the right hands.

I thought during the first half, we were the better side. My main gripe was that the full backs, especially Coker, had been reluctant to support the attack. Marcus Bean, their makeshift right back, was clearly vulnerable, as was their rookie keeper Lynch, and I felt we should have tried harder to make inroads down the flanks.

However, you can hardly blame the players for being cagey on such an occasion, particularly as it has been our default stance for much of the season. Barry Corr had the ball in the net and I was a good three seconds into a frenzied celebration before realising the referee had ruled the goal out thanks to a push by Corr's fellow compatriot Bolger.

The game was tense and there seemed little in the way of danger for our defence until the latter stages of the second half. Hayes should have done better when put through by Holloway but Bentley denied him

and Coker cleared away. Then Bentley made an even better save from Aaron Pierre's header, which looked to me like it may have been hitting the crossbar.

Southend should have had a penalty when Corr was clattered over by Jacobson when trying to meet Michael Timlin's diagonal cross, a trademark of the midfielder's that has led to a few goals this season. At the time I appealed but was unsurprised when it wasn't given. Having seen it back, it was a stonewall penalty.

It was no surprise when the game went into extra time. I don't think either team had really done enough to win it. Four minutes later, the tension turned to despair. Jacobson curled a free kick off the bar and into the net. I didn't watch the big screen behind me for a replay, but it later emerged the ball had gone in off Bentley's back. It was not something I was aware of at the time, nor had I made the connection that Jacobson should have conceded a penalty some 20 minutes earlier. I'm glad I didn't, as I got frustrated enough watching Wycombe constantly time-waste and feign injury for what seemed the whole of extra time.

We looked a beaten team. Payne, Weston and Pigott had been brought on to try and turn the game in our favour, but we looked tired and bereft of ideas. When Pigott sent a header well wide in the last minute, it was the signal for me to text my good lady just one word: "Lost". It was only fair she be aware of the kind of mood I would be in when I returned home that night, season over and promotion gone for the third time in five years.

I remember Weston getting the ball and looking hesitant, perhaps looking for a long ball into the box. The crowd pleaded with him to do something, anything. He did. He beat his man and swung a decent cross into the box, but it was behind everyone. I didn't see who knocked it down, nor did I see Pigott get his shot away, there were too many blue-shirted bodies in the way. All I saw was the ball suddenly appear from the crowd, and it seemed to be as much as a surprise to Alex Lynch as it was to me. The goalkeeper never moved as it flew into the bottom corner. We, on the other hand, did. I

don't think I've ever experienced such pandemonium after a goal.

The relief was incredible, but we'd not won it yet, we had next to no recovery time before we would have to watch our entire season go down to a penalty shootout. Celebrations turned to tension once more as our entire group of mates in our row linked arms in solidarity with the teams in the centre circle.

Pigott stepped up, Lynch got a hand to it but couldn't stop it. Murphy sent Bentley the wrong way. Then Ben Coker stepped up. I'd told everyone who would listen in the pub earlier that he'd be my choice to take a penalty in normal time, with Barry having offered up the penalty duties after his semi final miss. Coker, surely would score. He went down the middle, Lynch went to his right, but saved with his legs. Despair once more.

Mawson's penalty pressed home the advantage – Bentley went the right way but it was too good. Leonard smashed his into the roof of the net. Hayes sent Bentley the wrong way, the Wickford lad was never going to miss. At this stage, it really wasn't looking too good.

Jack Payne, apparently the best penalty taker at the club, lived up to his mantle. Then up stepped Matt Bloomfield, Wycombe's longest-serving player, who had lost the ball needlessly in extra time and cost his team. He put it to Bentley's right, a good height, saved. He'd cost his team again.

With Southend going first, once Michael Timlin had sent Lynch the wrong way, we now had the advantage. It was all on Marcus Bean – being a Col Ewe reject I was praying for him to miss, but it wasn't to be: he sent Bentley the wrong way. Now we were into sudden death and Adam Barrett walked forward. He smashed it into the top corner and we were treated to the famous double fist salute once again. Jacobson then sent Bentley the wrong way and walked away taunting the young goalkeeper.

Up stepped Myles Weston, I could barely watch. I'd stuck up for Myles all season in spite of the idiot boo boys and he'd repaid me by setting up that goal in extra time. If he missed, it would be unbearable. He did-





n't. Bottom right, cool as you like. Aaron Holloway, in off the post. So close Bentley. Now Cian Bolger, who had managed to turn his season around in recent weeks. Top right corner, another fantastic penalty.

This looked like it was never going to end. Up stepped Sam Wood, a left-footer who had set up the flukiest goal seen at Roots Hall in a long time back in March when his volley hit Steven Craig's heel and bobbed in. His luck was out now. Bentley flung himself to his left and the rest is history.

I don't remember much about the celebration immediately afterwards, just the noise. 20,000 Shrimpers fans going berserk in the national stadium. Will it ever get any better than that? Up the steps the lads went to get the trophy, a great moment in any player's career, before the champagne was popped on the pitch. Fantastic to see White and Barrett, Essex boys and captains past and present, dancing with the trophy in front

of the fans.

I hadn't realised Brown and Ainsworth had watched the penalties together with great dignity, rightly praised by the national media the following day. For Brown, this was redemption for all the people that had labelled him a figure of fun.

After bumping into several old pals on the way out of the ground and embracing about 100 people, many of whom were complete strangers, it was back to Baker Street to celebrate in the only way we know how. After a brief dither prompted by the number of people outside the Globe, we opted to head for the Volunteer where we managed to persuade the bouncers we meant no harm.

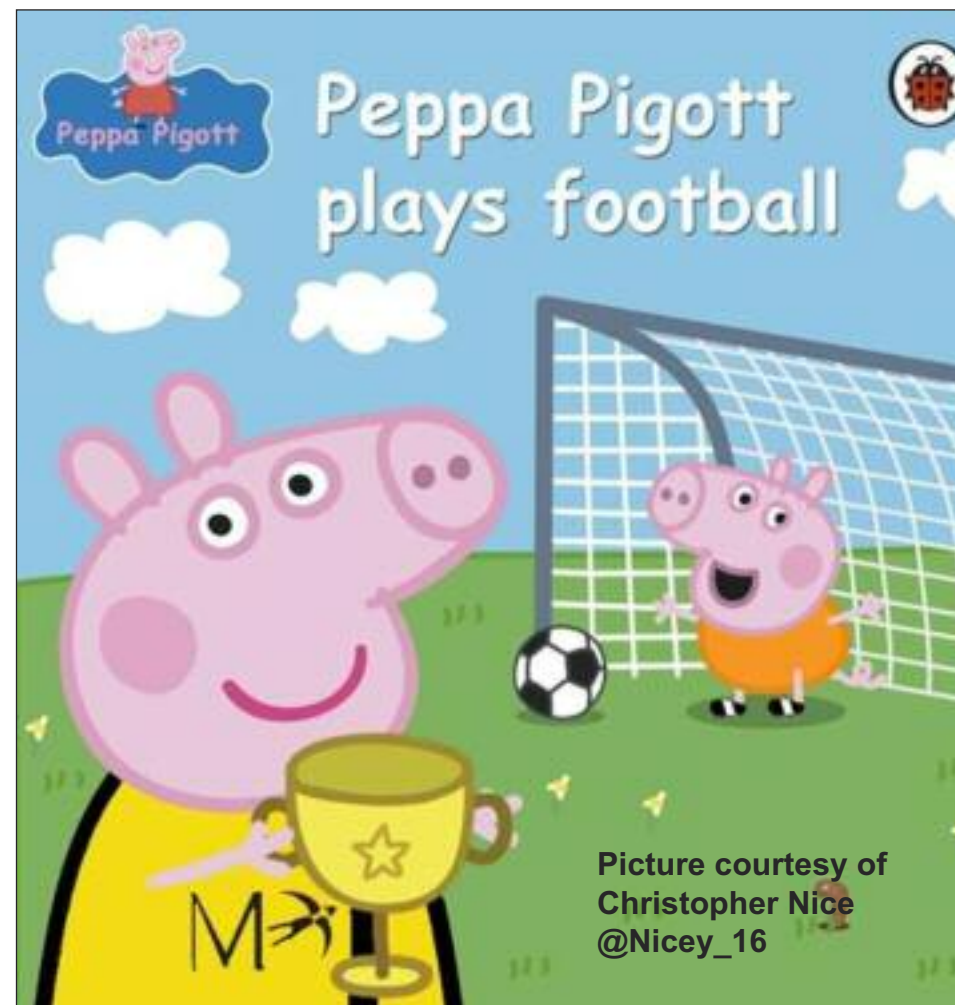
After a few ales, who should we see coming down the street but Si, who had sat in a different tier to us during the game. He'd missed his 7.56pm train to Liverpool, because he couldn't miss that finish for the

world. He'd booked himself on the overnight Megabus, leaving Victoria at 11.30pm and arriving in Liverpool at 5am Sunday! What a story, dedication well and truly rewarded and he had time for some backslaps and a couple of pints before heading to get the long bus up north.

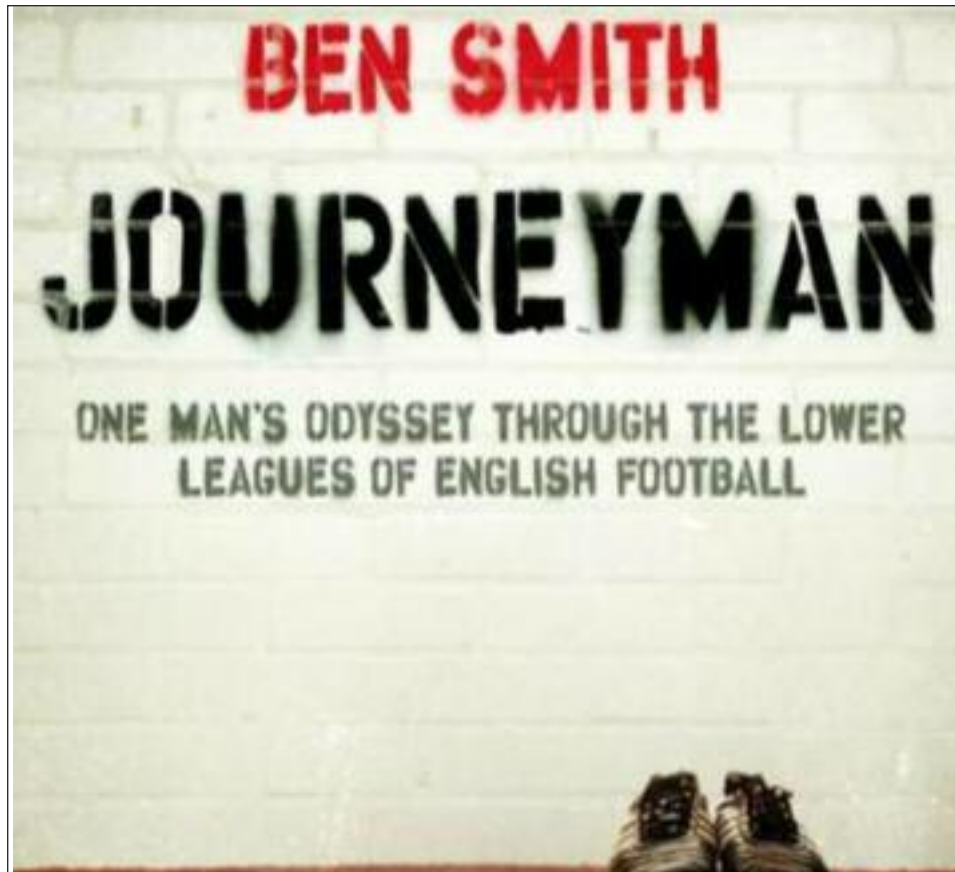
The game and the aftermath had gone on so long, our drinking time was curtailed somewhat but it didn't matter. If you could bottle and sell that feeling when Bentley saved that penalty, you would put every

Colombian drug lord out of business overnight. A few beers was enough for us, we were exhausted as we headed back to Essex. Home by 1am, hangover dodged. I was even thanked the following day by the wife for not getting into the state I usually return from away games from. I will remember it all, and I'll remember it forever.

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Picture courtesy of
Christopher Nice
@Nicey_16



word smith

THE tagline for this book reads: "Ben Smith, professional footballer. Recognise the name? Of course you don't". Well I do, and many other Southend fans will have done in the past, but may have forgotten him. Unsurprising really as Ben made just one fleeting substitute appearance for the Shrimpers back in 2001 because injury and bad luck decimated his year-long stay at Roots Hall.

This book documents Smith's entire 17-year professional career as well as an insight into his struggle trying to make it as a secondary school teacher following his retirement and a few words about his formative years living in Witham and his youth career with Arsenal.

Before reading from cover to cover, naturally I cheated and turned straight to the chapter on Southend, which he states "won't take long to read" because his time at the club was "an unmitigated disaster". Smith



followed Dave Webb to the club from Yeovil Town, where he had impressed as a creative attacking midfielder. I remember being very excited with his signing, as I've always liked players in that mould. Unfortunately a series of injuries combined with Webb's retirement due to ill-health meant he never had the chance to shine at Roots Hall. Signed on a year's contract, he was understandably released by Rob Newman, of whom Smith does not hold fond memories. Newman is described as changing from an amiable and insightful assistant into a manager who constantly sniped at him for lacking fitness and struggled to deal with the distance required of a manager from his players. That whole period of our history is best forgotten although Newman had been a very popular player amongst supporters.

The more interesting side of the rest of the book concerns his time at Crawley when the reader gets an insight into the character of Smith's then-manager, Steve Evans. "Evo's" temper tantrums and madcap antics dominate the final few chapters as Smith documents the twilight of his career at a club rising fast through the leagues – too fast as it turned out for the protagonist, who despite playing a big role in their rise to the Football League, spent his final season in

professional football being farmed out on loan to glamorous locations like Aldershot and Kettering (incidentally it was the season when Crawley pipped us to promotion on the last day after spending suspicious amounts of money on higher-level players and their wages).

Any anoraks of the lower leagues, and I include myself in their number, will enjoy this book for the insight it gives to some of the well-known characters of the game. At times it is a little too meticulous, with almost every result detailed throughout long seasons, along with an assessment on Smith's own performance in almost every one. He must have spent a lot of time on Soccerbase, or have an amazing memory.

However, Smith is man enough to own up to his failures as a young professional, too much boozing and late nights and not enough hard work. Although he attempted to make up for this in later years, adapting to the required professionalism was too little, too late to reignite a career which promised loftier heights than those he reached. The thinking behind his decisions on which clubs to join and how to conduct his contract negotiations is also interesting and serves as a reminder of how precarious the career of players at our level can be. A favourite passage of mine was when he went to renegotiate his contract at Yeovil after drinking in the club bar and slapped a full pint on chairman John Fry's desk as he sat down to begin talks.

Smith's time as a professional had as many lows as highs, but he rightly mentions that he has been lucky to play at Old Trafford, enjoyed several promotions and to have been paid relatively well for 17 years in a job he would have done for free. His diary as a struggling teacher will also strike a chord for anyone who has had to change career and shows how difficult it can be for lower league professionals to re-join the real world after they retire. This book is well worth the £12.99 cover price, especially for the lower league enthusiast and fans of clubs Smith has played for.

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cheering from afar

AT about 12.40am on Sunday 24 May 2015, a new generation of Southend fans in India were inaugurated.

After sitting through 120 minutes of dross, Daniel Bentley's stunning penalty save in the play off penalty shoot-out sent Southend back to the promised land of League One, and about 20 students and their history teacher (me) into a seething morass of joy, rolling around the floor of a dormitory lounge. "We won Mr Beavan, we won!". The first person pronoun used by one student for Southend gave me great pleasure, as part of my mission here in India was done.

Let me give you a bit of context. I am a history teacher at Woodstock School in northern India, an international school in the foothills of the Himalayas. I teach four sections of Grade 9 (4th year) history, with about 40 football-mad boys in the classes. Predictably they support the usual suspects in the Premier League – Man U, Arsenal, Chelsea, and Liverpool (no Spurs fans though), while others follow the Spanish giants Barca and Real. A few follow the razzmatazz of the Indian Premier League which started last year, but ultimately the excitement of the Premier League is the main attraction.

It's fair to say lower division English football was not really on their radar before I became their history teacher this year. Therefore every Monday morning, as we studied Genghis Khan, the Renaissance, the Battle of Hastings or whatever, I would put up the Southend result from the previous Saturday on the projector. Over the weeks, they learnt more about the mighty Shrimpers, our best players, our most famous results (I took great joy showing them the Freddy free kick v Man U and Peter Clarke's equaliser v Chelsea), while Barry Corr, Ben Coker et al were often included as multiple choice options in tests.

As the season wore on I would show

them the goals from our games, while boys would often come in having seen our results from the weekend, either congratulating or commiserating me. One Korean student even decided to support Cheltenham Town just to irritate me (that didn't end well for him – and he was also a Man City and Bayer Leverkusen fan – so a terrible season all round!). After a trip home at Christmas, I put up the posters of the players from the 2015 calendar. Some of the girls got interested as they thought some of our players were attractive ("Ryan Leonard's really fit Mr Beavan!"). Daniel Bentley had also kindly recorded a video message for the students when I saw him after the York game in January – further building up a rapport between a random international school in India and Southend United.

After the gut-wrenching defeat at Morecambe on the last day of the season which consigned us to the play offs, I did manage to see one positive. There is a channel here which shows Football League games, and all the play off matches would be shown. Finally there was a chance for my students to see the mighty Shrimpers live!

Unfortunately the timings of the semi-finals v Stevenage were not ideal, kicking off at about 11pm and midnight on school-nights. Some of the boys sat through some of the first leg v Stevenage, although like me gave up at half time as it was so dire. The second leg was on too late, and in any case the broadcasters decided to show Wycombe v Plymouth instead. I decided to not watch the game and go to bed, as I knew it would be too stressful. However, I could not get to sleep as I was so on edge thinking about it, so eventually my wife said I should just get up and follow online.

I went to the BBC text updates to follow – quite possibly the most painful way of following football available to mankind. When I first logged on it was 1-1, then the last minute penalty came. After what seemed like an eternity, "Barry Corr misses – hits bar

with penalty" came up, and with it I thought our chance of progressing. I was in purgatory. I then managed to find a live stream and see McLaughlin and Tims notch the vital goals to put us through.

So it was game on for the final! I told my students I'd be coming to their dorm to watch the game which kicked off at 10pm Indian time. About 20 turned up and stuck it out for 120 minutes, as once again it looked like we would blow our chance in a big final. But when in the 122nd minute Joe Piggott (who had been criticised for missing a few chances by some students) controlled the ball and found the back of the net through a sea of Wycombe legs, the celebration was almost as good as being there (for me it was more of relief than anything – although the prospect of penalties was still daunting). But then Dan Bentley and the boys did the business – and the rest is his-

tory.

In those 140 odd minutes of football those boys went through a microcosm of my Southend United supporting life in 25 years. They sat through a huge amount of terrible football, but then experienced the thrill and surprise of an amazing victory to send us all into "dreamland" (sorry for awful cliché).

As Dan palmed out that final penalty, I felt these boys had become proper Shrimpers, and it solidified my great relationship with them. Now it is my hope these guys will one day get over to watch us in the flesh at Roots Hall.

Now, let's see, how's about a medieval history field trip to England via Roots Hall next winter?!

Ed Beavan
@edbeavan



the bumpy road to wembley

Stevenage 1-1 Southend

IF there was any doubt about Southend's travelling support dwindling after the heart break of Morecambe, then that was quashed as early as 8am the following Monday as fans queued the length of Roots Hall car park to make sure they were at Stevenage for the first leg of the play-off semi final.

The day and time of the game kept many of the usual AAS travelling crowd away, but I travelled in hope that we could at least take a draw back to the Hall for the second leg.

Before the game, we headed to the Best Western Hotel – not the usual pre match kind of establishment but everyone was a little to nervy to really worry about the pub, especially on a Sunday. After hooking up with some old faces, a few swift pints were had before we made our way to Broadhall Way for the second time in three months.

The travelling Shrimpers were in full force, and making plenty of noise behind the goal. The opening was cagey as expected, with neither side wanting to go behind. The first half will be memorable for a clash of heads that left Michael Timlin needing several stitches and having to be replaced by Gary Deegan.

The home side went in front at the start of the second half, a cracking strike from Dean Parratt flew in past Dan Bentley from 20 yards. In truth, Blues didn't really deserve to be behind and for five minutes after the goal seemed to lose their composure totally. But a fortunate corner and a deflected header from Barry Corr levelled the game up and secured a draw for Southend.

It was only half-time, and 1-1 had probably been fair, but it would be a lie to say even the most pessimistic Southend fan was not hopeful of securing a place at Wembley.

Southend 3-1 Stevenage

SO, it was back to Essex for the second leg. Rain all day in the south of the county had threatened to make the pitch unplayable and

play into hoof ball Stevenage's hands, but the club were quick to cover the pitch and the game was on, despite the rain.

Blues started better and had several half chances in the first half, but the game only really came to life on the hour.

It was the visitors who took the initiative on the night and on aggregate. The ball pin balled around in the box before falling to Tom Pett who fired past a helpless Bentley. However, there was to be no repeat of Crewe in 2012 or Burton a year earlier, and Blues were soon level with Ryan Leonard smashing home in front of the South Stand to square the tie again.

With the match destined for extra time, Blues were awarded a penalty. Leonard was adjudged to have been barged over and from nothing, Southend had the chance to secure their place in the final. Corr stepped up, and as Roots Hall held its breath, smashed the ball against the bar and over. The referee blew for full time almost immediately after and another 30 minutes was required.

It would have been very easy for the players' heads to drop and fans to get frustrated at that point, but the atmosphere inside the ground remained positive as the players piled on the pressure in the first period of extra time.

Finally, Southend got themselves in front in the tie – John White crossed for Stephen McLaughlin to head home from close range to send the Southend fans into a frenzied celebration, one matched by the home bench and the players.

Westley threw on another striker as the visitors realised the tie was slipping away from them, and with seconds left, Michael Timlin's moment came. Complete with skull cap, Timlin picked up the ball, twisted and turned his marker before curling a left footed shot into the corner of the net to send Southend United to Wembley for the second time in just over two years.

James Falkingham
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TALENT spotting

TOWARDS the end of last season, the club announced a new ticketing system for next season to be run by Advanced Ticketing, using their "ecommerce platform" TALENT Sport. The full caps for Talent were used by the club, not me, and are by far the least offensive thing about the article. Get your bullshit bingo cards out folks, and follow me for a journey through business speak not seen since the last days of The Office.

The whole thing was an exercise in specialised language and corporate bollocks, promising an "integrated online purchasing journey" (it will look the same as the rest of the website) and a "fully responsive web experience" (if you click a button it will do something), littered with "strategic's and mentions of "the cloud", offering "solutions" and talking about "devices". Apparently fans can now order tickets from any device. I have a vacuum cleaner at home. That's a device. Can I order a ticket with it? No, can I bollocks.

It reminds me of something I read a while ago where a beautician asked someone what products they used, only to be surprised when they replied "well, pens, notepads that sort of stuff". They've fallen into the same trap of using industry specific terms and applying them to another field.

Oh, and be fully prepared to receive more crappy advertising from the club as well. The new system will allow the club to "analyse supporter data" (look at what you're looking at on the website, see what tickets you buy) and "engage with fans in a more tailored way through its campaigns to reward loyalty with more relevant offers" (send you more shit e-mails flogging you stuff, only this time they've got your name on the top and keep referencing that Blues ruler you bought online three years ago as a stocking filler for your nephew).

The one thing I've learnt from this article

though – the board has goals. Yes, they're not content to sit in the board room flicking paperclips at each other and drawing straws to see which one of them has to ring Sainsbury's to get some more money to stave off the latest winding-up order. No, at one of their meetings it seems they drew up some goals for the club to advance. And not just fairly obvious ones like "Actually start work on the new stadium" or "get a footpump to blow up that dome we bought". No, way down the list, probably about number 36, in between "find out if anyone remembers who Mads Ibenfeldt is" and "get around to giving Kevin Maher a testimonial", was "To be at the forefront of technology changes". It's good to see these captains of industry making good use of their time. There are, obviously cost cutting reasons behind this though.

According to Steve Kavanagh, a "cloud-based solution removes reliance on IT staff at our end which allows us to streamline our processes" – classic business speak for "we're going to be making some people redundant" – "and free up staff to do what we do best – run a football club". No, I can't believe he said that last bit either. And not having the ticketing system based in the ticket office means when it goes wrong, the club won't be to blame. They can pin it on "the cloud" and post some waffle on the website about how all these systems aren't quite as fully integrated as they hoped whilst some poor teenager from the ticket office spends 45 minutes on hold to a third party helpdesk to try and get it up and running again, only to be told to "unplug it and start it up again, that should do it".

The whole thing looks as though it essentially is a press release published by Advanced Ticketing and just slapped onto the club website without any thought as to whether it's written for the average fan or for some industry site where people are forced to spend all day conversing not in plain English but in premium, grade A bull-

shit. They've even kept the contact details for some PR company in the article as though these poor (I say poor, but they chose to work in PR so f**k 'em) people actually won't mind speaking to season ticket holders wondering how the new system will offer them an integrated online purchasing journey.

I'd suggest that the club's media officer should have rewritten it, but he's probably too busy gathering pictures for the next transfer deadline day so he can pull off more

"Messi Signs"-style "banter" using joke formats at least four years out of date and more suited to when your twitter browser didn't automatically load pictures attached to posts. At least they used the word Supporters though, and not Customers. That would have been the final insult.

Andrew Roach
@Roachmeister

To read the original article on the Southend United website, click here

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farewell barry

THE departure of Barry Corr to Cambridge United at the beginning of June came as a shock and a blow to Southend fans.

While deep down we were all a little concerned about his ability to adapt to League One football and the fact he was always off-side, there's no denying Corr was a fans' favourite at Roots Hall having scored 63 goals in five years.

His never-say-die attitude, his link-up play and ability to ruffle even the most experienced defender's feathers were also trademarks of his play.

The period in which Corr was at the club will be remembered in our history as a difficult transitional period, where financial constraints resulted in a "make do and mend" attitude towards the playing side. Aside from that nightmare 18 months out injured, Corr was a rare constant and without his goals in this period, particularly his 21 in 2010/11, who knows where we would be.

Barry may have left us for pastures new, but we at All At Sea hold on to some fantastic memories from the big man's time at Roots Hall. Even if you don't rate him (and plenty don't) as a striker, there's no doubt you'll read some of these and smile. Good luck Barry.

10: Stevenage 1-1 Southend

Back in November 2010 there wasn't too much to shout about, but Barry Corr was a standout performer in that season of consolidation. This was probably his best moment that season (a campaign in which he netted 21 times). Having come on as a sub just eight minutes earlier, he sent a crisp angled strike into the net for an 85th-minute equaliser in Southend's first ever visit to Broadhall Way.

9: Southend 3-0 Chesterfield

Friday night under the lights at Roots Hall is always a special occasion, especially when



it's the week before Christmas and you smash the league leaders. Corr wrapped up the points with a deft chip over the advancing goalkeeper, surely one of his best goals for the club.

8: Southend 2-2 Brentford

Southend looked down and out of the FA Cup at the 3rd round stage when two first-half goals put their League One visitors in the ascendency. Southend looked to their talisman for inspiration and two textbook Barry headed goals put them back in the game and forced a replay at Griffin Park.

7: Oxford 3-3 Southend (3-5 penalties)

Two goals from Corr had a massive influence on this dramatic encounter which set up an Area Final with Leyton Orient. His second on the hour was a splendid sidefooted long-range strike which looked to have won it until a late goal by the hosts, by which time Corr had been substituted for Elliot Benyon.

6: Southend 4-1 Millwall

One of the most famous FA Cup games ever to be played at Roots Hall was sparked into life when Corr headed powerfully into the net early on to put the Championship side on the back foot – and they never recovered.

5: Stevenage 1-1 Southend

Stevenage, like Wycombe, must have been sick to the stomach when they found out Barry Corr would yet again be facing them next season. Boro have been on the receiving end of Barry's goals four times in recent years and this one was by far the most important. It was scrappy, a far post header deflected in off a defender, but it snuffed out the momentum Stevenage had found having gone a goal up in this vital play-off semi-final just a few minutes earlier.

4: Portsmouth 1-2 Southend

Our first trip to Portsmouth since the mid 1990s was not going well. A goal down early on, Cauley Woodrow was sent off leaving Southend with an uphill task to get anything from this trip to Fratton Park. However, we had not reckoned on Corr. First, his reverse pass set Will Atkinson away to equalise. Then, with eight minutes left, having won the header that started the move, the striker met John White's cross with his trusty bounce to give Southend a delightfully illicit three points.

3: Southend 2-2 Leyton Orient (3-2 aggregate)

Left out of the side as Paul Sturrock opted for a 4-5-1 to protect a first-leg lead, Corr was brought on after just half an hour for Alex Woodyard after Shaun Batt spoiled the Scotsman's plans. Dividends were paid just after the break, when Corr volleyed home an Assombalanga knock-down to put Southend back in front in the tie and almost take the roof off a sold-out Roots Hall.

2: Southend 1-1 Wycombe (7-6 penalties)

Barry Corr's final touch of the ball for Southend United was arguably his most important. With 122 minutes on the clock at Wembley, the referee was about to end Southend's hopes of promotion for another year as they trailed 1-0 to Wycombe Wanderers. More in hope than expectation, Myles Weston sent a cross into the box. It was behind Corr but he managed to direct a cushioned header to Joe Pigott, who controlled and sent a low shot into the corner of the net. Season saved, and the rest is history.

1: Southend 2-1 Exeter City

Having endured 18 months out injured, many thought Barry Corr would never play football again. He received a huge cheer when coming off the bench against his former club Exeter City on 72 minutes, with Southend trailing. But that was nothing. Within six minutes, a right-wing cross came towards him, 12 yards out and at an acute angle. While others may have opted to put the ball back across the goal, there was only one thought in Corr's mind. He sent a thumping header, the unfeasible power generated by a year and a half's frustration, into the bottom corner of the net. A few minutes later, another returning hero, Freddy Eastwood, completed the comeback in one of the most memorable games at Roots Hall in recent years.

Jamie Forsyth
@Jaimundo_ESX

promotion is never easy

SOUTHEND endured an epic struggle to gain promotion last season, promotion secured by lifelines.

The automatic spot, taken away on the last day of the season but saved by the play-off lifeline. The semi-final again saved by the lifeline of extra-time and again at Wembley in the final seconds of injury time and then penalties again saved by lifelines.

No one could say it was easy, but there were those lifelines. However, up to 1958 there were no lifelines, you had to be champions of your division or you were not promoted nothing for second, or third. During this time Southend were not promoted but had two good attempts.

In 1931/32, Southend went 15 games unbeaten at the start of the season and promotion seemed a formality. But two wins and a draw was all they had to show from their next thirteen games and saw them fall to tenth place. They finished the season fourteen games unbeaten and if only they had a couple more games they could have made it. It was manager Ted Birnie's finest year, but finishing third meant nothing.

In contrast, 1949/50 saw the Blues, under manager Harry Warren, with a strong home record – their first twelve home games produced eleven wins and one draw – but if that was promotion form, they were badly let down by their away form.

Their first thirteen away games produced NO wins, six draws and seven defeats, with such contrasts promotion could never be a possibility and although they maintained a place well within the top ten that was as far as it could go.

The away breakthrough came with a win at Millwall and then inevitably four of the next five away games resulted in wins. Notts County were by this time in a virtually unreachable position but there was hope.

**Saturday 1st April 1950
Torquay United 2-4 Southend United**

To win at Torquay was no mean feat, they smashed the home side's unbeaten home

record which stretched back over a year.

This win was achieved with the minimum of chances, opportunistic goals being the secret of Southend's success. Stubbs scored after six minutes, but Torquay equalised after 20 minutes.

Southend won the game in the early stages of the second half after only two minutes Wakefield added then Stubbs added the third.

After 20 minutes Torquay pulled a goal back, with ten minutes to go Clough scored with a header. After Notts County drew 1-1 at Swindon, they led the table by nine points (only two points for a win).

**Good Friday 7th April 1950
Notts County 3-1 Port Vale
Southend United 2-2 Ipswich Town**

Leslie Stubbs, a former Great Wakering centre forward made his first appearance before the 17,000 Stadium supporters.

With seven games to go Notts County led by 10 points.

**Easter Saturday 8th April 1950
Notts County 1-1 Torquay United
Southend United 3-0 Aldershot**

With six games to go Notts County led by nine points.

**Easter Monday 10th April 1950
Port Vale 3-1 Notts County
Ipswich Town 1-3 Southend United**

With five games to go Notts County lead by seven points.

**Saturday 15th April 1950
Aldershot 2-0 Notts County
Nottingham Forest 1-2 Southend United**

With four games to go, Notts County lead by five points.

So what had seemed like a lost cause suddenly seemed more than a dream with Southend having won their last two away games and Notts County having lost their

two. Just four games left, five points adrift with eight to play for, but then:

Saturday 22nd April 1950 Southend United 1-2 Northampton Town.

The Blues' slender hopes of promotion to Division Two crashed when they suffered their second home defeat of the season against Northampton.

United disappointed their 15,000 supporters, not by losing the game but by their poor display, at times it seemed like it was one player, Albert Wakefield against Northampton and had the visitors been steadier in front of goal the score could have been much greater than 1-2.

Northampton went ahead after twenty five minutes with a hard drive which Hankey got his fingers to but the ball flew into the net. The reverse was a shock to the Blues but Northampton fully deserved the lead, they were the more dangerous of the two sides with the Blues a shadow of their former selves. Blues troubles got worse after 32 minutes when a free kick was headed home. After 56 minutes United opened their account, Clough was fouled in the area and the referee had no hesitation in awarding a penalty from which Wakefield made no mis-

take.

The second half saw Southend in all the opening exchanges, at one stage Wakefield burst through and netted, but the goal was ruled offside, a decision that was hotly disputed. United crammed everything they had into the closing stages but the Northampton defence stood firm.

Team: Hankey; Lindsay and Walton; Wallbanks, Sheard and French; Davies, McAlinden; Wakefield, Stubbs and Clough.

Notts County beat rivals Nottingham Forest 2-0 to extend their lead to seven points with just six to play for. The Promotion dream was over.

In hindsight, like 1932, a few more games and just perhaps. The spectators were treated to a good season at the Stadium as they only witnessed two home defeats, but a successful season without any reasonable hope of promotion was disappointing. Perhaps one similarity was that both seasons they had the advantage of a centre forward who could score goals Jimmy Shanky in 1932 and Albert Wakefield in 1950.

Peter Baker

ON THE ROAD Fleetwood Town, Highbury

NOTHING says you've gone up a division like an opening day trip to Fleetwood.

Glamorous it may not be, but a seaside trip in early August is never to be sniffed at, even if it is in Blackpool's nondescript suburb.

The Cod Army had a decent season last year under Graham Alexander, finishing in mid-table, and chairman Andy Pilley continues to invest in the club, who are punching extraordinarily above their weight. The stadium is the best example of this – Highbury is a compact but modern ground with a terrific steep away terrace.

At 276 miles, this is the furthest we will have to travel all season and the logistics are a little tricky if coming by train. It involves a trip to Blackpool North (which in itself requires a change at Preston) followed by a tram north to Fleetwood, six miles or so from the resort. Alternatively, the nearest station is Poulton-Le-Fylde, about five miles away from the ground. The fishing town of Fleetwood is very small



(smaller than Rayleigh) and has limited options for pre-match entertainment. However, AAS drank in an excellent pub on our last visit called the Strawberry Gardens, which is large and serves a great selection of the ale. Alternatively, further into the town is the Thomas Drummond, a Spoons, but this is a little further from Highbury. Tickets for the terrace are £20, with seats available in a side stand for £22.

as good as it gets

ALMOST a month has passed since our evening out at Wembley and still I find there are questions to be answered. Like, how is it possible to have the ball in the opposition's half with 40 seconds of injury time of extra time to go, when you're 1-0 up in a play off final and still not secure promotion? What was Adam Barrett THINKING when he took his penalty? Surely he didn't think it was going in? Take the net off and that could have hit the arch. Why did some people who left early and were walking down Wembley way when we equalised still just carry on walking home? Did Gareth Ainsworth actually think he could take Cocko?

Of course the context to the end of our evening at the home of football goes way beyond the three hours we spent in there. To be honest it goes back five years, possibly more. As exciting as our yo-yo up and down the divisions was in the last decade, these last five years have been a frustrating time to be a Southend fan. Yes, we have been a top-half team, and we have certainly had some good times, winning more games than we have lost every year, and if not flirting with the play-offs every time, then being in them (and failing, miserably). But these home games playing against the likes of Morecambe/Accring-

ton/York/Northampton/Dagenham/Cheltenham (I could go on) have taken their toll. The negative mentality of some away teams in this division has not been easy on the eye, even at a time when the quality of footballer generally at this level has been on the up. This stems from only two teams getting relegated, something which means a point is so much more precious in League Two. Basically, for a team that



doesn't actually play to draw that often, I think we've all had enough.

Without meaning to get too serious, I thought this a year ago too, and our play-off defeat to Burton last year hit me like a train. And I just don't get as upset about losing as I used to either. So this year, I spent the whole time begging the football Gods not to stick us in the play offs again. Please, no.

In boozy moments around February I think I may have taken 12th rather than the play-offs. Of course, I'm an absolute twat and totally wrong, but that is how I felt after three too many pints of Doombar*.

And then, on Good Friday, we went on a delightful run that promotion dreams are made of. Seven wins in a row without conceding a goal. And the drama of that run, despite not strictly meaning much by the end, will live long in the memory. Hanging out in the car way beyond arriving home just to listen to end of the Hartlepool game without missing a second. Almost filling my pants there and then on the terrace at Exeter after Timlin netted our 96th minute

winner (now that would have been an awful journey home). Polluting my lounge with BO whilst listening to the agony of the Bury game (I have discovered that really, for health reasons, big games on the radio are probably not for me). And the hilarity of our winner against Luton to propel us into the top three prior to the final day of the season, and the delight on people's faces in the pub afterwards with the acknowledgement that finally, we were going to get out of this God-forsaken division.

And then Morecambe. If Morecambe away was an election campaign it would have been Nigel Farage's this year. ("I actually think we're going to do this lads". Er, no you're bloody not pal, and you're going to want to bugger off and go on holiday straight after to forget about the whole debacle as well). The whole thing was crap. It was like dribbling in your keks after you think you've finished in the bog. It was like finding out the cat has taken a slash in your slippers. It was like putting petrol in your diesel engine. And it was in Lancashire. Honestly, what a day. What a stupid, pointless day.

But as we all know, at some point, and normally after way longer than we would like, all our cash spent behind the bar of hurt and disappointment will come good. The barman will suddenly, out of nowhere, hand out a whole weekend's worth of Jagerbombs, at no cost, for one and all, until you can drink no more. And that moment came VERY suddenly, and VERY clearly, at around 8.10pm on Saturday 23rd May.

When Joe Pigott swung his left peg at that ball with 10 seconds left we held our breath (we actually did – listen to the crowd from the fan video taken from our end in the corner, it actually happens) and then I swear it wasn't two hours of frustration spilling out then. Despite not actually winning promotion at that moment, I believe that goal let out years of League Two anguish amongst thousands of us. And we were all there, drinking it in, during a moment of absolute ecstasy. I know we still had penalties to go, and they were equally nerve-wracking as exciting, but I

tell you what, I'm not sure I will ever see and experience a moment like Joe Pigott's goal ever again. And I will never forget the look on people's faces. I have literally not seen anything like it. Man Utd at home, Chelsea away, Lincoln in the play offs, Swansea away – forget it. Piggot's goal is my greatest moment as a Southend fan, because of everything that went before it. And for the rest of my life, if I need to switch off for whatever reason, and take myself back to a moment in time in my football life that will forever make me happy, I will always have that moment.

Watching the FA Cup final exactly a week later made it even better. Watching Arsenal fan after Arsenal fan wax lyrical about their achievement and how amazing it all was just left me a bit flat. Don't get me wrong, I have plenty of friends who are Arsenal fans and I was delighted for them. But they have won it before (last year) and they will do it again, and until they win the Champions League (not going to happen) they will always be a bit disappointed. Their context is being pretty good all of the time, but ultimately, not quite good enough. Who wants that? Our context was ugly, and hard fought, and a real test of loyalty at times, ending with a game so lacking in quality I know of one of those Arsenal fans who turned our game off long before my greatest moment as a Southend fan. I am not a football snob, I'm really not, but sometimes I don't think fans of big clubs get it. To fish around in the sea of lower league crap is to suffer, big time. To win a play-off final the way we did with our recent history? Well, it just doesn't happen does it? Except it did.

Where do you go when you've had it as good as it gets? I have no idea, literally no idea. But let's start in League One shall we?

Piers Hewitt
@piershewitt

*Big up to Pete from The Railway for coming good on that.

league one: a rough guide

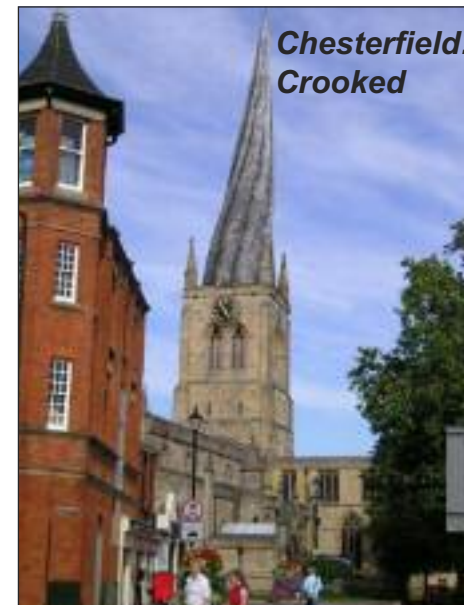
Barnsley: Ee by gum. Grim ex-mining town where southerners found in the town centre are burned on a pyre on a hill at sunset. Nice ground, abiding memory is drinking in a leisure centre.

Blackpool: Spectacularly badly run club who might not even have bottomed out yet. Tradition implies they must begin every season with four players. Play in the most over-rated seaside town in Britain, possibly the world.

Bradford: Cup specialists who dwell in a weird, two up two down stadium. Managed by Phil Parkinson, ex-Col Ewe scummer.

Burton: Cheating bastards who were grudgingly the best team in League Two last year. Real ale mecca, great away trip.

Bury: Greater Manchester club in and out of financial difficulties for years, now proving they've learned nothing by splashing loads of cash with gates of 3,000. Likely to do well before the house of cards comes



tumbling down again.

Chesterfield: Market town, nice pubs, over-aggressive fans in the mould of Mansfield. Church spire has something wrong with it. Team overachieved last season but had manager poached by Pompey.

Colchestaargh: Inferior Essex town where inbreeding is common and the locals are too scared to go out at night because of all the squaddies. Play in Tesco carrier bags in a lego set in the middle of nowhere.





Millwall: Welcoming

Coventry: Groundhopping ex-Premier League club now firmly entrenched in the lower leagues. Stadium almost in a different postcode area to the city. Unhappy home of Freddy Eastwood for a couple of years.

Crewe: Likeable club with reputation for homegrown players, now being rigorously shafted by EPPP and Premier League greed. Ground incredibly convenient for the station. Keep beating us in important games.

Doncaster: Former total bastards of the early 2000s, now a bit more palatable mainly thanks to the passing of time since we last played them. Soulless ground, Dave Penney is fondly remembered here.

Fleetwood: Fishing village famous for the location of the Fisherman's Friend (it's a foul-tasting lozenge). Far too small to have a Football League club, but have a chairman with bags of cash.

Gillingham: Nearest trip as the crow flies, a grim northern town picked up and dumped in the south. Dislikeable chav fans. Effectively impossible to get to in midweek with the QEII bridge the modern-day, equally-impassible equivalent of the Berlin Wall. Luckily, we play there on a Saturday this year.

Millwall: Fans revel in their reputation as hooligans but hate west ham even more than we do so fair play. Managed by Shrimper Neil Harris. Relegated last year, should mount a challenge for promotion.



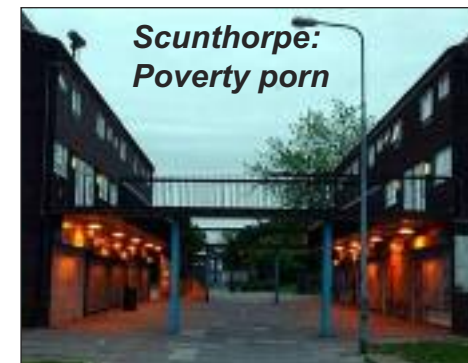
Gillingham: Belongs up north

Oldham Athletic: Depressed Lancashire former mill town with a station called 'Mumps'. Coldest ground in the Football League but mercifully close to a decent city (Manchester) so you don't have to spend too much time there.

Peterborough United: My pet irrational hate. Club that believes it is far bigger than it actually is, run by a Twitter-obsessed cocky chairman and Barry Fry. OK, perhaps not so irrational. Decent city centre ground but they knocked down the best away end in Football League in name of 'progress'.

Port Vale: One of two teams in England not named after a location (Arsenal is the other), the Fail (as their more illustrious city rivals know them) are based in Stoke-on-Trent. Reside in a ridiculously oversized ground and the locals call each other duck and eat oatcakes for breakfast.

Rochdale: Not quite as grim as Oldham but not too far off. Makes up for it by being home to one of the best pubs in the country (The Baum). Club spent 34 years in the basement league but haven't been able to sit still since and threatened to make the play-offs last season.



Scunthorpe: Poverty porn

Scunthorpe United: The only team in the country to have their name banned by swear filters everywhere. Town is famous for a horrific fly-on-the-wall documentary called Skint a few years back. Play at relatively new ground (1988) so bad they're planning to move again.

Sheffield United: Taking over from Portsmouth as the 'must-do' away game for the season, the club has become famous for moaning about west ham, an attitude we find hard to criticise. Will be every bookies' favourite to go up despite being unconvincing since they arrived at this level.



Shrewsbury Town: Moved from arguably the most character-filled ground in England to one of the least a few years back. A fellow promoted club who have previously struggled to stay at a higher level, they now seem to have plenty of cash behind them and will be hopeful of consolidating in League One this time.

Swindon Town: Grotty Wiltshire town famous for a roundabout and for having three Wetherspoons' in one street. Battered in the play-off final by Preston, they bought their way to promotion at our expense in 2012. Accused of exploiting the loan system in re-

cent years with an unofficial link with Spurs.

Walsall: Black country side who play in the shadow of the M6. Ground looks like a B&Q, but convenient for a train trip. Town famous for making saddles and pork scratchings.

Wigan Athletic: Fellow favourites alongside Sheffield United purely because they were in the Premier League as recently as 2013, Wigan have fallen hard. Parachute payments will see them OK for now, but they'll need to go up soon as their gates will drop sharply at this level.

healing the pain

THERE has always been a view amongst football supporters and pundits that play-offs shouldn't be allowed. The view that you can play 46 matches, finish 10 points above a team and then lose to them over a knock out game is, at face value, rather ludicrous.

Indeed, we have suffered in play-offs over the years; defeats to Doncaster, Crewe and Burton still remain scarred in the hearts of Shrimpers, but the trip to Wembley and all the drama that came with it went a long way to covering over those deep scars.

I have been critical this season of the team and Phil Brown's selections. But the reality is that finishing 5th with 84 points and only missing out on automatic promotion on the final day surpassed everyone's expectations given the huge gap between Southend and the top three in March.

Whilst I never thought we were a top three side, and made that point regularly in the fanzine over the season, I was always confident we would finish in the play-offs at ease. Which we did. It was then always going to be about who we played and making the right decisions on the day.

The win over Stevenage was gutsy and totally deserved. The players gave their all and when the chips were down, they re-

sponded in the best possible manner.

Then Wembley. Jacobson's free kick was lucky and amazing considering Wycombe scored an almost identical goal against us the previous season, but the players always believed they would get another chance.

Joe Pigott became the hero and gave us all one of the most special goal celebrations in the club's history. Credit must also go to Myles Weston who made the goal.

The penalties were awful to watch but Dan Bentley's save from Sam Wood will never be boring to re-watch and the the emotional scenes at the end were simply unforgettable.

So can we survive in League One? Well even with the shock loss of Barry Corr I believe the team we have is capable of a top half finish. With a few additions I believe we can be quietly confident of a play-off push, although of course staying up has to be a priority first.

Southend United do have a tendency to get promoted from the fourth tier to the second tier in succession, and whilst that may be a little too much to ask this time, the manner of our win at Wembley proves anything can happen in this game we all love.

James Falkingham
@easymorninrebel

player of the year

WITH Daniel Bentley sweeping the board at the POTY awards organised by the club and the Shrimpers Trust, it's time for the All At Sea jury (basically James) to decide who was the Shrimpers' best player of a memorable 2014/15 campaign.

5. Adam Barrett

Okay so maybe it's a little harsh on other members of the squad who played most of the year, but Barrett's reaction to hardly playing upon his return to the club couldn't have been better – he formed part of a defence that broke a clean sheet record and contributed to the play-off final win by showing his usual level of passion. His penalty in the shoot out at Wembley was arguably the best of the lot and he deserves his contract extension at the club.

4. Ben Coker

Another solid season for Coker that resulted in him being chosen in the League Two team of the year. Despite an injury early on in the season, he seemed fitter and stronger upon his return. His performance at Oxford (three assists) must be up there with one of the best performances under Phil Brown and he will be a valuable asset to the club next season.

3. Michael Timlin

After a slow start to the season that began with another injury, Tims stamped his influence on the team over the second half of the campaign. He often doesn't get the credit he deserves in the centre of the park, playing a role similar to Kevin Maher's during his time at the club, but his heroic performances in

the play-off semi final (both legs) and his late, late goal at Exeter summed up his commitment to the cause.

2. Daniel Bentley

There's not a lot that can be said about Dan Bentley that hasn't already been said. He rightly won the club's Player of the Year award and broke the long-standing consecutive clean sheet record at Roots Hall. The penalty shoot out hero is destined for a move to a much higher level, let's just hope we can keep hold of him for the League One campaign. However he was just pipped at the post for the All At Sea gong.

1. David Worrall

Worrall's Southend career started slowly-limited to a number of appearances off the bench in the opening exchanges of the season. However he never looked back after getting in the team.

The Mancunian constantly showed his class and chipped in with goals for the team at crucial times and countless assists. His goal at Bury won goal of the season, just days after he sad passing of his son. I would expect Worrall to be a regular starter next season in League One.

James Falkingham
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ALL AT SEA SUMMER SPECIAL 2015

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