

January 2003

The next meeting of the North Middlesex Referees' Society will be held at 7.30 pm on Friday 11th January 2003 at Cockfosters FC, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters Barnet Hertfordshire. The Training School will be presenting a UEFA video highlighting actual match incidents, the main topic being "communication". So be prepared to take part in the evening's discussion!

FROM THE CHAIR

It is hard to believe we are now writing "2003", what happened to 2002?

One of the low points of the year must be the loss of Frank Collins. Frank was a Life Vice-President and a stalwart of some 50 years; in fact he was awaiting presentation of his 50-year award when he died. The society invited his wife and family to a presentation evening, which although a very sad occasion left all those present humble but proud, as Frank would have been of his 50-year award, but especially of the fine family who represented him.

Of course, for every 'low' there has to be a 'high', this surely was our own Phil Sharp officiating in the 2002 World Cup Final. What a proud occasion for Phil and his family? Indeed, for everyone concerned, including all of us in the Society. Surely Phil could not better this achievement? Yes, he could! Soon after arriving home from the Far East, his wife Debbie gave birth to their son, Ben Anthony James – lovely!

So, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our officers, members, their families and all our friends, not forgetting our printers Kemar and advertiser, Ackerman Group plc.

A Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year

Tom White



A number of members have expressed surprise and disappointment at the cancellation of the December Society meeting, scheduled for Friday, 6th December. The meeting was planned as a mainly social event with Society business being kept to a minimum. The majority of members found out by a flyer in the envelope containing their magazine. One Vice Life-President points out that not since 1972 has a Society Meeting being cancelled. The reason for not holding the meeting was that a number of Council members were unable to attend. Council will have to brace itself at the next meeting if, as seems likely, some disgruntled members express their chagrin! An article on this subject written by a senior member of the Society is included in this edition of the magazine.



Mick Osborn writes in this issue on "Crime and Punishment" and Peter Dace has stayed in this country long enough to pen his usual reminiscences on what was happening a decade ago. We also welcome a new contributor, Steve Wildgoose, who writes on refereeing and Gillingham FC. The 4th RA Implementation Team report is also included.

Finally, the recent landmark ruling in the High Court where a rugby referee was held liable for serious injuries sustained by a player, will have 'horrendous consequences' for all sport, according to the WFU. The subject is further discussed elsewhere in this issue.

Closing date for the February 2003 magazine is 21st January 2003

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

by Mick Osborn

My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time –
To let the punishment fit the crime –
The punishment fit the crime.

I recently heard these lyrics from Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado", and they gave me food for thought. In this game of ours, does the punishment always fit the crime? Does the crime always fit the action?

As referees we have to decide, often quite quickly, whether the conduct we have seen or the words we have heard, are against the Laws or the spirit of the game. If the answer is yes, we then have to decide whether the "crime" merits only the award of a free kick (or penalty,) or the addition of a caution or dismissal of the perpetrator. Where we have decided to caution or dismiss, we advise the appropriate authorities, for it is they that must endeavour "to let the punishment fit the crime." But, do we fulfil our role in this as best we might?

There are so many elements that come into play. Did we *see* the player kick his opponent? If so, was he careless, reckless or did he or she use excessive force? If it was more than carelessness should we caution or send off? If we decide to send off, of what was he, or she, guilty – serious foul play (S1), violent conduct (S2) or denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick (S5), which of course would then include the careless factor?

Using the above example, if, in the opinion of the referee, a caution was appropriate, then the recommended punishment, according to a guide issued by the F.A. would be seven days suspension plus a £10.00 fine. A sending off for serious foul play would incur a 21 days suspension plus £10.00 fine but if we considered that violent conduct was involved, possibly a thin dividing line, then the player could look forward to a rest period of 35 days plus a £20.00 fine.

Those of you that went through the training school in recent years may recall that one of the homework exercises involves writing a misconduct report based on the incident of a player loudly accusing the referee of being a cheat as he was "never off-side." A surprising number consider that the player only deserves a caution for dissent, (C2). Others find being called a cheat, offensive or abusive and send off the miscreant under S6. In this simple matter of opinion, the guilty party either gets 7 days plus a £10.00 fine (C2) or 35 days plus £20.00 (S6) for directing such language at a match official.

I am not advocating that we should let consideration of the probable outcome rule the severity of our action on the field one way or another. I have merely tried to illustrate the effect that our alertness, tolerance level and our state of mind at the time of the offence can have. Our job is not easy. No one ever said it was. We can only strive for perfection and hope justice will be done.

Let me end with another quotation from W. S. Gilbert, which I have amended: "Ah, take one consideration with another - a referee's lot is not always a happy one!"



An extract from Mick's "November's Offering", was reproduced in December's issue of the Cheshunt and Waltham Cross RS magazine, "You Must Be Joking Ref". Ed.

REFEREES ASSOCIATION - FOURTH INTERIM REPORT - NOVEMBER 2002

Our proposals will significantly benefit grass roots referees, but not overnight. The new Board of Management will not take office until 2004 and so we cannot expect all the benefits to become tangible until two to three years hence.

Separate RAs

The restructuring of the current Association into separate national RAs for England, Northern Ireland and Wales will highlight and identify the distinct interests of members in each of the three Countries. It will strengthen the case for closer liaison with, representation on and financial support from the three national Football Associations. The preservation of the Referees

Association as a central organisation is pivotal in preserving the key membership benefits such as supplies, insurance, the benevolent fund and membership administration. The establishment of a smaller-sized Board with its committees will provide a more efficient structure for decision-making and communication. As explained in our third interim report, it will release some £20,000 p.a. of current expenditure for better use elsewhere.

Electoral System

The new electoral system is designed to improve democracy and maintain a regional voice at the top table. It will be a significant change and one that must be evaluated to ensure it is meeting its objectives. We will propose a Motion that the new Board does this formally after a bedding-in period.

Magazine

The consultants identified poor communication within the RA as a problem to be solved urgently. The current "Football Referee" magazine does not appear to be popular and could be improved. The new Board should re-examine the need for a high quality periodical to be delivered direct to all members at the very least four times per year. This should be possible with other sources of income including advertising, sponsorship and fund-raising being vigorously pursued. This proposal will also be the subject of a Motion at Conference 2003. Such a journal will bring the meaning of membership of the Association much closer to the ordinary members, providing a greater awareness of the benefits of membership of the Association and a sense of belonging. It will be an improved vehicle for communication and give much greater direct publicity to the services and support available through the Association. It will build on the good efforts of the Editor, continuing to bring news and opinions to members. This will further enhance the retention of members, and provide a tool to promote further recruitment.

Conference

After it takes office, we would encourage the Board to review and update various aspects of the organisation of the Association, including some revision of the programme at the annual conference, with sessions dedicated to younger, active members whilst preserving the event as a great social reunion for old friends.

Evolution

The consultants came up with 40 recommendations. It would be impractical to proceed with them all simultaneously. We need evolution, not revolution. The changes must be prioritised and planned as a smooth but speedy transition. A number of matters will be recommended for deferral until the new Board is in office. Of course, Council already has some of the developments in hand - office efficiency etc. - and these will be continued through the change-over period in 2003/2004.

As we write this, the Implementation Team is putting the finishing touches to the principal documents that will be debated at Conference 2003 in Cheltenham. These will be the rule changes for the formation of the English RA and the re-definition of the Referees Association itself. Our members in Wales and Northern Ireland were alerted to our intentions to form an inclusive organisation at last year's Conference. Their need to form their own national RAs in parallel with the English RA is understood.

IT members as Guest Speakers?

IT members are willing to accept invitations to speak on our proposals to Societies and Divisions, if invited. Contact may be made to any member of the team directly, via e-mail to ra_it@hotmail.com or to our Administrator Brian Ridgard at 34a Thorndike Close, Beeston Rylands, NOTTINGHAM NG9 1LS.

Steve Wildgoose writes:

I write this article as every game I go to I hear constant shouts of 'referee, you're a ****.' I want to try and use this space to let the readers know what it is like to watch the game as both a Gills fan and a qualified referee.

Just to explain a little about my background, I have been a referee for nearly ten years and I have been a Gillingham supporter for just over twenty. I live in North London and I travel to all of our home games, as I am a season ticket holder in the Rainham End. The reason I took up refereeing was because when I played football I was tired of being kicked up in the air and seeing the hapless referee do nothing about it. I thought I could do a better job so I took the exam.

I know that it is very easy to blame the referee when things are going wrong on the pitch as I used to do it before I became a referee. Why not blame the ref - he's easy pickings? He cannot fight back as most are gagged with regard to speaking to the media but with the current crop of full-time 'pro-refs' this is changing as they are now being allowed in front of the after-match cameras.

But when I hear some of the shouts it's obvious that some fans are not totally aware of some of the basic laws of the game. When Ashby was sent off last season for his foul on Nathan Blake in the home game against Wolves, one shout was 'it was an accident, what's ***** up with you ref?' Whether a foul is intentional or not any contact, which denies a goal scoring opportunity, has to result in a red card against the offender. The word 'intentional' left the laws of the game some while ago.

Recently I heard another bizarre shout. Gillingham had to shoot at the Rainham End in the first half. A fan said 'typical, ***** ignore your loyal fans!' With regard to the tossing of the coin the rules for this are clear: The loser has to kick-off the 1st half and the winner chooses which end to shoot at. So, if the Gills shoot at the Rainham End in the 1st half it is because they lost the spin. This law changed about 3 years ago, when the winner used to choose ends or to kick off.

I also get annoyed when we do not get a 100% deserved penalty, like the one against Walsall. But these things work both ways. Look at the penalty we were awarded against Bradford! However, things even themselves up over a season. In the Walsall match the referee was big enough to put his hand up and admit he had made a mistake!

I know there are referees who are poor and I cringe when I see them down to do our games. Mr Cooper generally had a poor game when he took charge of the Brighton game, but with regard to Kevin James' second yellow card the referee was right. Kevin was not cautioned for taking his shirt off as some media reported. This was a cautionable offence for one season only and the powers of FIFA decided to withdraw this rule. He was actually cautioned for the excessive time his celebration took. I am led to believe the distance he ran to the crowd was a long way and the celebrations were excessive. If we were losing 0-1 at home after a late goal would we be happy with that sort of carry on?

Referees are now scrutinised by assessors and they have to follow mandatory instructions whether they like it or not. Another thing to note is that if a referee is consistently poor they will be withdrawn. Remember Rob Harris of Oxford? The referee who allowed Tranmere to continue playing with 11 men after one had been sent off. He's 'disappeared' from the League now after too many poor shows. What about the referee who 'took control' of the infamous England v Holland game where Ronald Koeman should have been sent off for bringing down David Platt? After that game he 'disappeared.'

So next time you go to shout something at the referee try and think about what you are saying. Do you know the laws of the game? Could you do the job better? Could you manage 22 players and their frustrations?

Steve Wildgoose from the Gillingham FC fanzine, 'Brian Moore's Head'.



Laugh with Vince

A referee was struck by lightning during a football match and went straight to heaven. An angel met him and asked if he wanted to see the football pitch. "I didn't know you played football here," the ref said. The angel replied, "We've got a big match on tomorrow, that's why we sent for you!"



"Regarding Law 2"

From Gary Cobden – who otherwise this month has "writer's block"!

According to an article in the Sunday Telegraph of 8 December, the shape of a football, made up of those 12 pentagonal and 20 hexagonal panels, is not a sphere but a truncated icosahedron. Will you tell the FA or shall I? Personally, I'd still like to know how they stitch them all together from the inside.

(Stupid boy! Ed.)



Paul Gascoigne

According to Gary Cobden, Paul Gascoigne cannot understand why his sister has two brothers and he only has one!



DECEMBER SOCIETY MEETING HO! HO! HO! – WHAT HAPPENED?

I was all geared up for our December meeting – all those nice mince pies, sausage rolls and sandwiches – and the odd pint, chatting to all my mates about the usual things, like what happened in my last match. It's always a good meeting in December, just a social get-together we all enjoy – and Vince plays his mouth organ and tells jokes! (Not at the same time Ed.)

But what's this? The Normidian says the meeting will be held on 6th December as arranged – so far so good. However, the piece of paper threaded between the pages says it's off. Reason being, apparently not enough Council members available. Sorry, not good enough! We would have had a good time anyway. See you at the next meeting!

Regular attendee.



Peter Dace reminisces – the Normidian of January 1993

Guest speaker, John Moules Football League Referee

Virtually the whole edition is taken up by articles, for and against, the 'two Referee system'. In a lengthy editorial Ken Goldman prints an article by David Miller, Chief Sports Correspondent of The Times on a special FIFA meeting in Zurich. David says 'the physical stresses now placed upon the referee by the increased fitness of players and pace of the game have become intolerable. Therefore, there is more reason than ever for FIFA to re-assess, by experiment, the possible advantages of the two-referee system'. He goes on to list twelve points in favour of the system including a diagram showing how both referees would patrol the right wing touchline in their own half only.

Ken Goldman says that where he and David Miller differ fundamentally is over the role, and accordingly the positioning of each referee and their viewpoints must be gauged and distinguished in the light of that. He adds the drawback of the two-referee system is twofold. The first is if each referee has a whistle to blow for an incident, which he does not see clearly when the other referee may be better placed. By the same token he may blow for an incident where the other referee may be trying to utilize the advantage system. Finally he may blow for an incident giving it one way whereas the other referee might blow and give it the other way with both referees blowing virtually at the same time for the same incident. The referee has only one half of the field to patrol and control, to make the sole decisions thus avoiding confrontation and confusion. Furthermore there is nothing to stop him blowing the whistle and seeking the assistance or viewpoint of the other referee. Indeed even if an incident occurs 'off the ball' in the other half of the field, when the ball goes dead the 'live' referee can be notified of the fact by the referee in the other half and appropriate action taken. In that event either referee would have the power to punish.

In separate articles Arthur Pearce writes a 'Pearcing comment' and relates when he and Ron Tossell jointly refereed an Easter friendly between Broomfield and Solihull and found a lot to commend the system. David Dickinson writing as 'your wheelchair President' recalls using the two-referee system together with Alan Knighton in a local tournament. Dave says ' yes I am in favour of the two-referee system, why not let us set up a league competition to try it out for a season with observers at all that League's games'.



The following is an extract from the Middlesex County Football League Bulletin.

You may have noticed that Stonewall have not been playing fixtures over the last few weeks. This is because they have been beating the Germans and winning the "World Cup" for England!!

Clubs will be aware that Stonewall is composed of players who are nearly all from the gay community. As such, they have been in Sydney, Australia competing in the "Gay Games" which, as it indicates, mirrors the Olympic Games for the Gay and Lesbian communities from around the World. Some 9,000 competitors took part in a very wide range of sports from badminton to swimming, archery to athletics and weightlifting to football.

Competing in the football tournament, Stonewall (comprised of players who play in our Premiership) (of the MCFL - Ed) representing England, accomplished an incredible feat in winning nine games in seven days against opposition from around the world, eventually beating a German side, 3-0 in the Final.

Just to show their dominance, Stonewall's second team playing in the Plate competition, also reached their Final, missing out on the gold medals, losing to a USA side on penalties. A third team from Stonewall, mainly consisting of players from the club's two Sunday teams, also played in a separate 'recreation' tournament and, although competing well, did not make the final; but hey ho, two out of three isn't bad!!



100 Club

If you would like to join the 100 Club for the remainder of the season, please complete the form below, and return it to me with your remittance of £9.00 to cover the remaining draws.

Gary Cobden
Honorary Treasurer



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NORTH MIDDLESEX REFEREES SOCIETY 100 CLUB
Application for/Renewal of membership – Season 2002/2003

I.....wish to become a member of the North Middlesex Referees Society 100 Club, and subscribe to.....shares each month.

I agree to make payment by cheque/standing order – please delete as appropriate. (If you decide to pay by standing order, bank details will be provided).

The initial term of membership is 9 months; renewal details will be included with Season 2003/2004 Membership Forms.

Please return this completed form to Gary Cobden, Honorary Treasurer

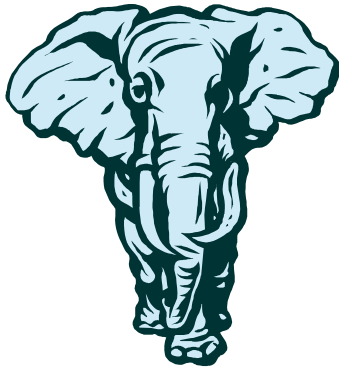


Referee is Found Liable

A Welsh Rugby Union official was found liable in the High Court recently, when a player sustained serious injuries in a match in which he was officiating. The unfortunate player is now confined to a wheelchair and a sum of £91,000 has already been paid out in compensation by the WRU. The WRU accepted ‘vicarious responsibility’ for the referee’s decision. It is now expected to settle a claim for millions more and is considering appealing against the ruling, which appears to make sports governing bodies responsible for duty and care on the field of play.

Safety of players has always been a priority for football referees, and those in other contact sports, but unforeseen incidents do happen during a game. Will amateur enthusiasts continue to referee, with the spectre of landing in a court of law hanging over them? I don’t think so!

Elephant Race Night



Sunday, 16th

February, 7.30pm

Elenborough Table Tennis Club, Enfield

TICKETS: £5.00 includes supper

Advance booking essential. Phone Mick on 01707 650804



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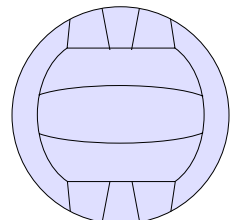
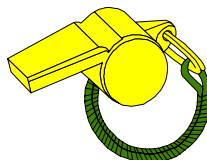
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**Are again pleased to support North Middlesex
Referees Society in Season 2002/2003**



From Other Societies – with Acknowledgements

This from The Ken Grant Column in the magazine of the Cheshunt & Waltham Cross Referees' Society, "You Must Be Joking Ref!!!"

On Sunday morning last, I received my second soaking of the season and found myself driving home like a drowned rat. I wondered at the time if it would be possible for some far-sighted sports equipment company to design waterproof shirts and shorts for the use of grassroots referees who have no covered accommodation and cannot effectively get dry. I actually do use a golf jacket, which is navy blue and nearly but not quite waterproof, but the shorts (RA) get soaked and this affects the whole of the bottom of the torso. At my advanced age I would be grateful to anyone who can do something for the problem.



Recent Law Queries - from Cookie's Column in the AFA Argus

1. A number of people have asked me recently if it is an offence for the goalkeeper to bounce the ball and catch it again whilst in possession. The short answer is no, it is not an offence. It is accepted that goalkeepers traditionally bounce the ball, or even throw it into the air and catch it again. It only becomes an offence if the goalkeeper releases the ball with his feet, and then handles it again subsequently. (See FA booklet "Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game")

2. Remember that a player cannot be penalised for offside if receives the ball direct from a colleague's goal kick.

3. I came across a level 3 colleague recently who was unaware that a free kick taken by a defender from within his own penalty is not in play until it has been kicked beyond the penalty area. Amazing.

4. At the taking of kicks from the penalty mark to decide the result of a game, many referees ask for the names of the players who are taking the first five kicks. Why? This is not a requirement of the Law. Up until 1997/98 the Laws required the referee to record the names of the players *who had taken* the kicks from the penalty mark in order to ensure that each kick was taken by a different player. Even this is not now in the Laws. Assuming numbered shirts, all I do, in order to comply with the Law, is to take the number of the player about to take the kick, as he places the ball. If the team decides to change the order, or even the kickers, then that is quite permissible. Don't forget to apply the equalisation of the numbers of players in a team if necessary at the start of the procedure, and don't forget that all AFA cup matches require a result on the day. You may dispense with extra time if you are convinced that there is not enough time for even the minimum period.



The Nottingham Whistler, the Official Newsletter of the Nottingham Society of Referees

Who Am I?

I was born April 5th 1922. I spent my entire career at just one club. I was named the Footballer of the Year in 1954 and 1957. I was a strong tackler and won 76 England caps and scored 30 goals. I was knighted in the late 1990's and I was known as the Preston Plumber.

Who Am I?



WEMBLEY THE FACTS AND FIGURES

1. With **90,000** seats the new Wembley will be the largest football stadium in the world with every seat under cover. There will be NO obstructed views.
2. The arch is **133 metres** above the level of the external concourse.
3. The stadium roof rises to **52 metres** above the pitch. This compares to the **35 metres** tall Twin Towers of the old stadium
4. The new Wembley has a **circumference of 1 km**.
5. **The London Eye** could fit between the top of the arch and the pitch.
6. The new roof will be over 11 acres. Four acres are moveable.
7. The rows of seating, if placed end to end, would stretch **54 kilometers**.
8. **3,700 separate piles** will form the foundations of the new stadium. The deepest of these, at **35 metres**, is as deep as the Twin Towers were tall.
9. There will be **35 miles** of heavy-duty power cables in the stadium.
10. With a span of **315 Metres**, the arch will be the longest single span roof structure in the world.
11. With a diameter of **7.4 metres** the arch is wide enough for a Channel Tunnel train to run through.
12. **90,000m³** of concrete and **23,000 tonnes** of steel will be used in the construction of the new stadium.
13. The roof alone will weigh almost **7,000 tonnes**.
14. At peak construction there will be 1,500 people working on site

15. The new pitch will be **4 metres** lower than the previous pitch
16. Each of the **two giant screens** in new stadium is the size of **600 domestic television sets**.
17. The new Wembley encloses 4,000,000 m³ (cubic metres) inside its walls and under its roof. This is the equivalent of 25,000 double decker buses or 7 billion pints of milk.
18. The total length of the escalators will be the same as a **400 metre** running track
19. There will be **2000** toilets - which WNSL estimate is more than any other building in the world.
20. There is more leg room in **EVERY seat** in the new Wembley Stadium than there was in the Royal Box of the old stadium

Kit Supplies

All your necessary equipment can be purchased through our Supplies Officer, Percy Brown. Items include:

Shirts with affiliated badges

Shorts

Socks

Whistles

LOAFs

Match Record Cards

Red/Yellow Cards

Boots

Watches

Holdalls

Flags

Pumps

North Middlesex Junior Referees and “Promotees”

BENEFIT OF ASSESSMENTS

The attitude you should adopt is one of open mindedness towards the views of a sympathetic person with a strong understanding of your work as a referee. I know this makes certain assumptions about the quality of your assessors, but in all we do, we should aim for high standards.

Read your assessment report several times, making a list of the points where alternative approaches are suggested and another list of your strong points. Underline any that have appeared, in either list, in any of your last three or four assessments, and take it from there.

Build on your strengths, and set about your weaknesses with determination to improve your techniques. There is often talk among the refereeing fraternity, that if the same things keep appearing in your reports, then it is time you did something about them. Although this is true, does it not really suggest that you are not taking your assessments seriously enough? After all, if you were really concerned to improve, would you not have realised on reading the first mention of a glaring weakness that you ought to do something positive about it at once?

Talk to your refereeing friends, trying to cultivate a few who are much more experienced than you are. Ask them to be your helping-hand, sharing your assessments openly with them. Whether still active referees or not, whether as old or older than you, they will ALL have a valid point of view to offer. Whatever you do, LISTEN AND CONSIDER. Just as you do not have any obligation to do as your assessor suggests, neither do you have an obligation to follow the guidance of your friends; but I would strongly urge you to give very serious thought to doing something positive to eradicate your weaknesses. Be bold! Experiment with new approaches to old problems, but don't try too many ideas all at once. Learning to referee effectively is a process that calls for plenty of experience and patience. You will be a far better referee for realism than simple fact.

Some referees think that there is nothing anyone can teach them, but they are not referees in the proper sense of the word, I would suggest. Just be determined that this is not to be your style. You can be both a listening and a true leader, patient and ambitious, modest but openly confident.

It is worthwhile saving all your assessments and filing them in chronological order. Read them regularly, analysing the ways in which you have adopted ideas and changed your attitudes and techniques.

The referees who make the best progress are invariably the ones who are methodical and conscientious in their approach both on and off the field.

Observer



CHELSEA FC ACADEMY MATCHES

We are looking for a number of young or newly qualified Referees to join our regular panel of Referees who officiate at these games every Sunday morning. Age groups involved range from Under 9 through to Under 16, and there will also be the opportunity to act as Assistant Referees. At Under 9; 10; and 11, small sided matches are played, but all other matches are normal eleven-a-side games. If you are interested, or would like further information, and can offer one Sunday morning a month, please telephone me on 01992 469153. If you do not have transport, so long as you are able to get to any junction on the M25, transport can be arranged.

Gary Cobden
Society Treasurer