

RIDDICK SPARKLE FAILS TO SPUR GILLS

Bedford Tn. 0, Gillingham 0

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward admitted when he arranged this friendly with Southern League Bedford Town on Wednesday evening that his team—without a game since 30 December—needed some match practice.

He could not have been more correct. Gillingham never played with the authority one would expect from a League side. The game lapsed into mediocrity and failed to provide a single goal. The 1,000 spectators, who turned out on a bitterly cold night, had little to enthuse over and many left well before the final whistle. Two Gillingham players, outside right Peter Hall and inside left Bill Brown, were playing against their former club and a third, wing half Ray Bailey, was unfit.

Gillingham made a bright opening and Bill Brown sent in a curling centre high over the Bedford defenders for Brian Gibbs to head goalwards. Gordon Riddick, running in, was unable to get in a shot as 'keeper Collier came out sharply to challenge.

BRILLIANT SAVE

In the sixth minute John Simpson was brought into action in the Gills' goal. A brilliant save saw the 'keeper steer a Cooley shot round an upright for a corner. From the kick, Bedford's Kelcher, flashed a header narrowly wide.

Gillingham played neater, tighter football than their Southern League opponents, but Bedford's hard, quick tackling made

them more dangerous near goal.

Howard Moore was always a dangerous Gillingham raider and a hard, low cross from him in the 12th minute caused the home defence some trouble. But Hall was well wide of the goal with his hard drive.

A through ball from Bill Williams gave Hall a good chance to open the scoring four minutes later. But as the winger cut inside the Bedford defenders were able to cover and his shot was charged down by a wall of players.

Moore then ran fully 60 yards to put Hall clear but the ex-Bedford man rolled the ball well wide.

Neither side was able to provide enterprising football—much of the play was aimless midfield stuff with players treating it as a practice match.

The first real shot of the game came in the 23rd minute when Riddick hammered in an acute-angled drive from 20 yards straight at 'keeper Collier.

DAZZLING RUNS

Riddick was the only player to display any sparkle in the dismal affair but even his dazzling runs failed to live up to the Gills' front line. Indeed, Bedford were having far more of the play and always looked like penetrating the visitors' defence.

In the 37th minute Brown missed a golden opportunity to put Gillingham in front after Mel Machin sent Hall away on the left. The winger cut in and found Brown unmarked ten yards from goal but the inside-left crashed the ball over with only Collier to beat.

Gillingham came more into the game now but a gale force wind made conditions difficult. Long passes and high crosses became wildly inaccurate as the wind carried them away.

In the second half Gillingham substituted Derek Bellotti, another ex-Bedford player, for John Simpson and Brian Yeo for John Furie at right back.

Bellotti was soon brought into action when he cut out a dangerous ball with Adams racing in.

The first real excitement of the half came in the 54th minute when a header from Paton—a substitute for Kelcher—was cleared off the goal line by Ralph Miller at the expense of a corner.

Bellotti came to Gillingham's rescue in the 75th minute when he made a cat-like save to stop a low drive from Churchill.

The nearest either side came to scoring was two minutes from the end when Bedford's Massey nipped in smartly to clear a Gibbs' goal-bound effort.

BEDFORD: Collier; Ryder, McCullough (Massey); Skinn, Stevens, Wright; Churchill, Adams, Kelcher (Paton), Cooley, Freeman.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson (Bellotti); Furie (Yeo); Hunt, Machin, Williams, Miller; Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Moore.

Back to action Gills on trial tomorrow

GILLINGHAM are on trial tomorrow in the "crowd-puller" attraction against Third Division pacemakers Torquay United at Priestfield Stadium. The big question is whether they can regain the impetus in their promotion drive which went sour before the snows (writes ALAN HILL).

Manager Basil Hayward, sensibly alert to the signs of falling confidence and lack of match practice since the big freeze-up, on Wednesday took his first team squad to Bedford for a friendly game against the Southern League side.

The result was a goalless draw, but Mr. Hayward said the game had enabled him to sort out a few tactical problems—"we hope to have found a way to beat Torquay."

Gillingham were desperately unlucky not to beat the Devonian club in the Football League Cup at Priestfield Stadium in September and went down to narrow defeats in the replay and in the League at Plainmoor.

Previous

Centre-half Bill Williams, signed from Mansfield on the previous day, has cause to remember the 2-1 defeat at Torquay. He was injured in this debut game shortly after Bill Brown had given the Gills the lead and took no further part in the match. Missing from the Gillingham team at Bedford were link men John Meredith and

Ray Bailey. Mr. Hayward said Meredith was suffering from strained stomach muscles and was ordered to rest after a series of strenuous practice games at Chatham's Maidstone Road ground this week.

Wing-half Bailey is nursing a leg knock sustained in training, but the Gills' chief is confident both players will be fit for tomorrow's game.

Reviewing

Reviewing the incredibly wide open league table, Mr. Hayward said none of the team were playing with enough strength or conviction to be sure of title honours.

"I think you can disregard the four or five stragglers at the bottom of the table, but after that it is anybody's guess who will jump into the promotion race."

Only six points separates Gillingham, at present in a middle-of-the-table position, from top clubs Walsall and Torquay.

Mr. Hayward said: "Most of the top sides are helping us by cancelling out each other. And provided we can regain our form of two months ago, we are still in with a great chance."

He added: "It is frightening. As things stand at the moment you can be going for promotion one week and struggling the next."

The Gills' chief does not contemplate any signings at present. "The Cup defeat was a dreadful disappointment, the lads started worrying and they must start helping each other again."

"We have the players at Priestfield Stadium capable of doing the job."

Gillingham are without a

game a week on Saturday—opponents Orient are engaged in an F.A. Cup third round match—but they will visit Scunthorpe in a league game on Friday night. The game has been brought forward from Easter Tuesday.

The Stadium reserve side are away to Swindon in a Football Combination League game tomorrow and the youth team will visit Selhurst Park for a South-East Counties League fixture against Crystal Palace.

TRANSFERRED from Gillingham to Second Division Rotherham United only a few weeks ago for a reputed £20,000, Charlie Crickmore has now been transferred to Norwich City. This time the fee is said to have been £15,000. Norwich have presumably signed Crickmore as a replacement for left-winger Kenning, transferred to Wolves. Hampton Wanderers for a big fee.

Crickmore could not claim a regular first team spot with Rotherham when Tommy Docherty took over as manager of the Yorkshire club.

Third Division

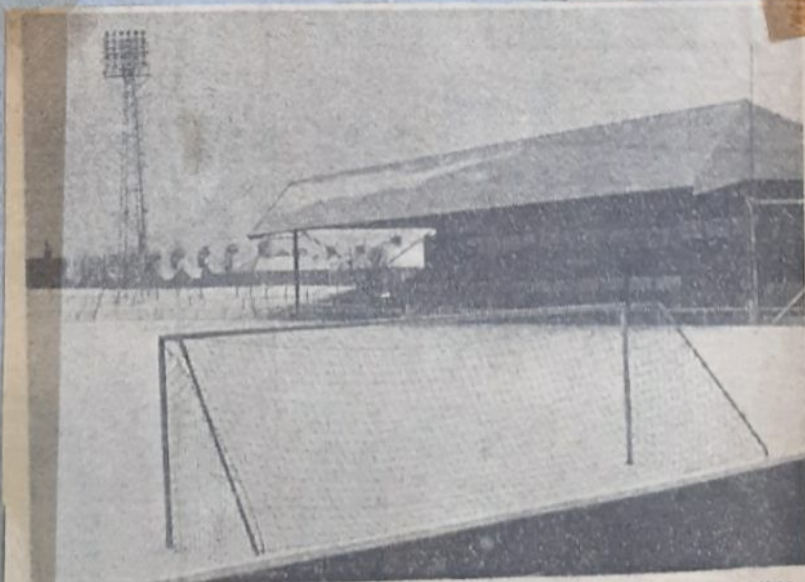
	P	W	D	L	P	A	P
Walsall	24	13	6	7	47	34	32
Torquay	23	13	6	6	37	32	32
Swindon	23	10	9	6	41	24	28
Stockport	23	12	5	6	34	32	28
Peterborough	20	12	4	10	43	40	28
Southend	23	10	6	7	38	36	26
Bury	23	10	7	8	32	41	37
Reading	24	11	5	10	36	32	22
Oxford	23	9	9	7	42	36	27
Sheff. Wed.	23	12	3	10	37	38	27
Grimsby	24	9	8	7	29	24	26
Gillingham	23	9	8	7	31	24	26
Walsley	26	10	5	11	43	29	20
Southport	23	10	3	10	41	40	28
Bournemouth	26	9	7	10	39	32	29
Oldham	26	11	2	13	37	33	24
Bristol R.	24	9	6	9	38	37	24
Colchester	25	8	8	9	33	43	24
Tranmere	25	9	5	11	41	44	24
Northampton	25	8	10	12	36	29	23
Orient	23	7	6	10	28	33	23
Mansfield	23	6	6	13	37	41	23
Scunthorpe	23	5	8	12	30	41	23
Grimsby	25	5	5	10	28	41	23

GILLS VISIT SCUNTHORPE

BECAUSE Orient defeated Boston United in their F.A. Cup—second round—replay on Monday evening Gillingham found themselves without a league match on Saturday, 27 January.

However, the Easter Tuesday match at Scunthorpe has been brought forward and Gillingham will now visit Scunthorpe next Friday evening, kick-off 7.15.

Manager Basil Hayward said yesterday (Thursday) "This does mean we will now avoid a three-matches-in-four-days programme over Easter."



THE scene at Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham, on Saturday morning, when another heavy snowstorm caused the postponement of Gillingham Reserves' home Football Combination game with Birmingham. The Gills' first team Third Division game at Grimsby was also snowed off.



DEREK WOODLEY . . .
"He is the type of player we have been looking for since Crickmore left," said Gills' manager Basil Hayward when the Southend winger signed last week.
(4/433 5/68)

GILLS' NURSERY FOR S.L. CLUBS

THE release of Gillingham full-back Bob Ryder, who recently joined Bedford, and the loan of reserves Bob Harrison and Bob Folds to Hastings is attacked by Mr. W. G. Bulley, of 37, St. John's Road, Gillingham, in a letter received this week.

Mr. Bulley comments: "I suppose we are a training ground to supply Southern League clubs with players."

The Gillingham supporter fears that Harrison and Folds will be the next to leave Priestfield Stadium. "I am sure the same will happen as in the case of Ryder."

Loyal minority

He adds: "It is about time Gillingham Football Club woke up and got down to business. No wonder the fans stay away when the forward line doesn't operate."

Mr. Bulley says he belongs to the minority of supporters who grumble, but still attends Gillingham games.

"I give up a lot of my spare time to sell weekly draw tickets—a total of 570 each week."

"It does not give me any heart to keep helping the club when all our efforts seem to be wasted."



CENTRE-FORWARD Bill Brown limbers up for tomorrow's game.
(8/432 3/68)

Attractive prizes for Simpson Testimonial

NEXT Tuesday is the big day for the John Simpson Testimonial Fund. For then the organizers hope for the first big break-through in their plans when they launch a number of schemes.

"Everything will depend on the number of people who are willing to help get our ideas off the ground," said Mr. Harold France, chairman of the go-ahead organizing committee, when he said a public meeting was to be held at the Beacon Court Hotel, Canterbury Street, that evening.

The committee intends launching two of the main schemes of the Testimonial season — competitions where the prizes will be a new car and a holiday abroad for two.

The car competition has been made possible by a gesture on the part of Swale Motors, of Sittingbourne, who have offered a car to the fund at "very reasonable terms," said the chairman.

The meeting will also be told of the holiday competition which has as its second prize a shorter vacation in Paris.

"Both these schemes will be run together and we hope that, if there is enough public support, we shall be bringing out a competition for a colour television set in the near future," said Mr. France.

HIGH HOPES

The autographed footballs scheme is now well under way and, within the next few weeks, the organizers have high hopes of dozens of public houses and clubs in the Towns being involved.

The next big date on the calendar is, however, Tuesday, 30 January, when the first of a series of dances will be held at the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham. The music will be provided by the Brian Jenner Band.

A big attraction at the dance will be the debut of the Gillingham goalkeeper's "Mini girls," who are now being fitted for their outfits and expect to be with John on the visits he makes to social functions in the Towns during the coming months.

The six girls have now been gathered together as Mr. France this week received offers from 17-year-old Ruth Gulvin of Kemsley Street, Bredhurst, and 18-year-old Veronica Shears of Yew Tree Cottages, Bredhurst, to join the squad.

Hayward charts blueprint for success



ABOVE: Gillingham manager Basil Hayward points the way to victory in a tactical get-together at Maidstone Road. LEFT: Winger Howard Moore in a tussle with full-back John Furie in a practice match at the Chatham F.C. ground.

(6/432/3/68) and (11/432 3/68)

Southend flier in exchange deal

SOUTHEND winger Derek Woodley yesterday signed for Gillingham and will be in the team for tonight's rearranged League game at Scunthorpe.

Earlier Gills manager Basil Hayward reported that he was negotiating an exchange deal involving Woodley and Priestfield winger Howard Moore.

Moore, who was signed on a free transfer from Coventry last summer, visited Southend with Mr. Hayward yesterday afternoon.

Woodley, described by the Gills' chief as "fast and direct", is in his early twenties and was on West Ham's books before joining the Fourth Division club.

Mr. Hayward said yesterday: "Woodley is the type of player we have been looking for since the departure of Charlie Crickmore to Rotherham."

The persistent goal famine — the Gills have scored only three goals in their last four games — is shacking the Stadium club's bid for a place among the Third Division leaders.

Mr. Hayward yesterday

admitted his concern about the meagre goal tally. "Our problem is putting the ball in the net — we are making the chances."

Brian Gibbs is certainly the chief culprit, but I cannot think of anyone else on the staff who would be prepared to take the knocks to get into position for goal chances.

The same applies to Bill Brown, who has to suffer a lot of punishment to lay on that vital pass."

Gills' winger John Meredith who is recovering from a back injury, had a fitness test yesterday and Mr. Hayward will not make his team choice for the Scunthorpe game until shortly before the kick-off.

Anglia car raffle

TESTIMONIAL proceeds from ground collections, donations and autographed football competitions have so far realised £264, said fund secretary Mr. Louis Marmara at a public meeting in Gillingham on Tuesday night.

The meeting was held to launch two major competitions — a car raffle with a 1968 Ford Anglia as the prize and a holidays abroad competition in which the prizes will be a holiday for two at Lloret on the Costa Brava in August and a weekend in Paris for two in July.

The car competition has been organised as a private lottery for members only and is restricted to 200 members. The membership fee is £3, payable in a lump sum or in weekly payments of 5s. It is hoped to invite a celebrity to make the draw at a social evening.

In the holiday competitions, tickets are priced at 1s, and the draw will take place on March 30.

Chairman Mr. Harold France said letters requesting autographed footballs had been sent to every Football League club and the encouraging response showed the esteem in which John Simpson was held by clubs throughout the country.

Everyone had said they hoped John would have a bumper testimonial and the most recent autographed football had been received from Hull City.

"We have never staged an event of this magnitude in this area before, but we felt we couldn't let 10 years go by without a proper recognition of John's services at Gillingham," he said.

A testimonial dance will be held at the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham, on Tuesday night and the fund committee are negotiating with Rochester Council for the use of the Corn Exchange for other functions.

The next collection will be taken at the game against Swindon on February 10 and other projects under discussion include talks to local schoolchildren and a darts competition.



BLUE and white glamour ... Gillingham 'keeper John Simpson tapes his approval of his leggy companions during a visit to the Royal Engineers Hotel, Twydale, on Monday night. The mini-skirted local girls — (left to right) Ruth Gulvin (17), Valerie Shears (18), Wendy Sanders (16), Kathy Simpson (16), Lynda Sales (16) and Pat Bradley (16) — will be accompanying John to a series of social events in connection with his testimonial fund in the coming months. (6-432/4/68)

Toiling Gills get sinking feeling in shambles

Gillingham 1, Torquay 1

BEDRAGGLED Gillingham inexcusably turned their backs on victory in a second half shambles at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

That they possessed the ammunition for success was abundantly evident in a broadside of attacks in the first half which came within an ace of demolishing Third Division pace-makers Torquay.

Vivid highlights of an incident-packed session included the long-range marksmanship of John Meredith and Ray Bailey — two 30-yard shots exploded like shells against the bar.

By a modest reckoning the Gills should have held a three-goal lead. As it was a harsh penalty award enabled them to cancel out an opportunist goal by Torquay striker Alan Welsh.

Handicap

Torquay, severely handicapped by an injury to former Spurs utility player John Smith — Bobby Baxter substituted after the interval — were no world beaters.

They were rarely in the game as an attacking force, but after the first half pounding they had little difficulty in maintaining an unbeaten record against the Gills in the last four seasons.

Sinking morale was the kindest interpretation of a second half display in which the Gills fumbled and fluttered against a Torquay defence ripe for the kill.

Certainly, Gillingham had reason to feel cheated after a roasting first-half, but there was no excuse for the desperate rangle-tangle which masqueraded as soccer after the interval.

Manager Basil Hayward did not hide his disgust and his anger was mainly directed at

haphazard and thoughtless punts upheld by his defenders.

"I expect you will blame the front runners again," said the Gills' chief. "But what could they do with such a service?"

Brian Gibbs, scolded and reviled by Priestfield critics this season, again had his chances in this game. But it should be emphasised that he was the only forward who looked remotely like scoring.

The tally of four goals since the beginning of December and 32 goals so far this season reveals an appalling lack of firing power. Gibbs has certainly been the chief cul-

Simpson and give Torquay a shock lead in the 16th minute.

Gillingham equalised nine minutes later when **Mel Machin** scored from the penalty spot after Bond had brought down Riddick, who had been superbly released by Bailey but would almost certainly have run the ball out of play.

Thrilled

Meredith burst into the area to crash a low shot past a post and Bailey thrilled the crowd with a thunderous drive which rocketed against the bar.

The rest was all toil and trouble for the Gills. The sickening spate of errors in the second half added up to wearisome farce which might have been expressly designed for the benefit of Torquay. The Devonians were more than happy to settle for a point.

Gillingham: Simpson; Purie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith. Sub: Yeo.

Torquay: Donnelly; Bond, Kitchener; Benson, A. Smith, Dunne; Scottie, Clarke, J. Smith, Welsh, Barnes. Sub: Baxter.

pruit, but in fairness to him it must be said that he carries too great a responsibility. He is expected to take every chance and Mr. Hayward's most urgent problem is to find another striker from within his own ranks or elsewhere to reduce the pressures on Gibbs.

Skipper Gordon Riddick, indeterminately deployed in a striker-cum-provider role, should be quickly restored to the half-back line where he can discipline the midfield play.

Commendable resolve by the Gills was a feature of the early play on Saturday. Donnelly saved brilliantly from Gibbs, but he should have been beaten when the inside-forward was catapulted into the clear by an immaculate through ball from Riddick.

Not for the first time Gibbs lacked the calm to apply the finishing touch and the 'keeper moved out to block the shot.

Meredith shook the bar with a 30-yard piledriver and Bill Brown left Alan Smith groping with a superb touch-line feint before hooking the ball into the area and inches away from Gibbs as he rushed on goal.

Welsh punished slack covering to fire a rising shot past

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Walsall	27	13	7	7	49	36	33
Torquay	26	13	7	6	38	33	31
Bury	27	13	7	7	41	26	29
Swindon	26	10	9	7	45	31	29
Oxford	26	10	9	7	39	37	29
Shrewsbury	26	10	9	7	39	37	29
Stockport	26	13	5	9	34	33	29
Peterborough	27	13	4	11	44	43	28
Reading	26	12	4	10	39	41	28
Walsford	27	11	5	11	41	41	27
Barrow	27	11	5	11	36	33	27
Brighton	27	9	9	9	31	30	27
Bournemouth	27	10	7	10	40	33	27
Gillingham	26	9	9	8	31	35	27
Oldham	27	12	2	13	39	39	26
Southport	26	10	5	11	41	47	25
Northampton	26	9	7	10	34	38	25
Tranmere	26	9	6	11	43	46	24
Bristol R.	25	9	6	10	33	39	24
Colchester	26	8	8	10	32	45	24
Orient	24	7	7	10	27	34	21
Mansfield	26	7	6	13	31	41	20
Scunthorpe	26	5	8	13	30	40	18
Grimsby	26	6	3	17	24	43	17

No. 30
47 1-1
Pend: 5,876

Weston back in training soon

GILLINGHAM full-back Tony Weston, who broke an ankle in the home game against Oxford United in October, will undergo remedial treatment in a fortnight's time.

Weston's injury ended a sequence of 150 games for the club. The former Maidstone amateur missed only one game during this period, owing to a family illness.

Manager Basil Hayward said on Monday that subject to satisfactory progress, Weston could be playing again before the end of the season.

John and Colin plan sporting merger

GILLINGHAM goalkeeper John Simpson and Kent County Cricket Club second eleven skipper Colin Page may team up in a series of joint testimonial events in the coming months.

Colin, who has spent 20 years with the county club, will be given a testimonial next season and a fund was recently launched to reward the services of the Gillingham keeper now in his 10th season at Priestfield Stadium.

The possibility of staging cricket and soccer matches between the two clubs was discussed by the players at a meeting before the game against Torquay on Saturday.

Subject to the approval of the clubs, the cricket match will be held next summer and the soccer fixture either at the end of this season or during the pre-season training session next August.

Formidable

Kent have several players on their staff with good soccer experience and hope additionally to call on the services of top League players.

Gillingham can boast a formidable array of cricketers, including Northamptonshire pace bowler Ray Bailey and John Arnott, Carl Gilbert and manager Basil Hayward, all accomplished cricketers, will ensure stern opposition for the county men.

The fund committee has negotiated a deal with England and West Ham captain Bobby Moore for a new batch of footballs, some of which will be autographed by the England World Cup squad and manager Sir Alf Ramsey.

Raffle

Leeds United manager Don Revie recently sent a football autographed by the Elland Road staff to Gillingham and this is now being raffled in a competition at the Palmerston Road Working Men's Club, Chatham.

Mini-skirted local girls, dressed in Gillingham's blue and white colours, will be accompanying the Priestfield goalkeeper to social functions in connection with the testimonial fund.

Bradd inquiry

GILLINGHAM were linked with Notts County's 21-year-old centre-forward Les Bradd at the weekend. Bradd joined County from Rotherham earlier this season.



TOP: Gillingham wing-half Mel Machin equalises from the penalty spot in the game against Torquay on Saturday. ABOVE: Gordon Riddick is brought down in the area by full-back John Bond. (7 426/4 68) and (6 426/4 68)

Gills equalize but then surrender control

Scunthorpe 2, Gillingham 1

GILLINGHAM have now gone six League matches without a victory and at Scunthorpe on Friday evening only looked good when they were behind—and that was why they lost to a United team that struggled throughout.

The Kent club made the mistake of settling for a point rather than an outright victory which at times looked there for the taking.

Gillingham introduced new-comer Derek Woodley at outside right, signed only 24 hours earlier from Southend United in a part exchange deal with Howard Moore, but were without John Meredith who sustained a back injury against Torquay United the previous Saturday. Tony Thear came into the side for Meredith.

Scunthorpe got off to a flying start with a goal in the sixth minute, when their eve-of-the-match signing Punton, the veteran left-winger from Sheffield United, outpaced Furie and

sent across a high, first-time centre.

It caught Gillingham's defence on the hop as right-winger Foley moved in menacingly. Simpson came out and blocked his shot but the ball spun out to BLYTH who crashed it into the net from five yards.

From then until half-time it was almost all Gillingham as with delightful football, inspired largely by Mel Machin and Brian Gibbs, they gave United a roasting.

Ray Bailey had a shot stopped on the line by left back Barker. Tony Thear shot narrowly over, and then bounced a glorious effort onto the bar. But Machin missed the easiest chance of all when, put clean through, he shot so tamely that Lavery, the United keeper, actually had to wait for the ball to come to him.

But it seemed a goal was inevitable despite the great defensive work by Burrows, the home centre half.

And sure enough it came when a superb switch by left half Bailey opened a gap down the middle that a regiment of tanks could have passed through. And GIBBS took the ball 30 yards before slipping it past Lavery.

RENEWED EFFORTS

Then for some unaccountable reason, Gillingham went back into their defensive shell. Perhaps it was United's renewed efforts—a point was no use to them in their desperate position—that drove Gillingham back. But it was difficult to understand why they surrendered control.

However, the Gills' defence dealt competently with everything United threw at them and it was beginning to look as if they would get the point they so obviously aimed for. Indeed, in their infrequent raids, both Brown and Gibbs headed narrowly over.

But 13 minutes from the end they paid the penalty and the circumstances were almost identical to the first goal.

This time it was United's right-winger, Foley, who sent across a hard centre which Simpson could only palm out as he was challenged by Punton. The ball ran loose to BLYTH once again and he promptly fired an unstoppable shot into the net.

Whether Gillingham's defence cover was upset by the absence of Bailey, who only 15 minutes before had been carried off with a twisted knee, is open to conjecture. Certainly Brian Gibbs, who substituted, appeared to be well enough.

Gillingham reverted to an attacking policy again and, looking much the better outfit, had United sweating before the relief of the final whistle.

Indeed Gibbs, easily Gillingham's best player went close twice within the last two minutes, once shooting narrowly over and the other time seeing his shot blocked.

Gillingham's new winger Derek Woodley, is obviously a player of immense talent. He repeatedly beat Barker, the young United back, and presented Scunthorpe with a lot of problems. But with tall men like Brown and Riddick in the middle it seemed he would have been better to have flung the ball into the middle instead of continually going it alone.

Bill Williams was a dominant figure at centre half, and Furie, won a hand from the crowd for the sporting way he played United's new man Punton, who at times ran him dizzy.

SCUNTHORPE: Lavery; Hemstead, Barker, Lindsey, Burrows, Burkinshaw; Foley, Sloan, Colquhoun, Blyth, Punton. Substitute: Welbourne.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey (Yeo); Woodley, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Thear.

Attendance: 3,359.

'Wonderful to watch'—Hayward

COMMENTING on Friday's 2-1 defeat at Scunthorpe, Gillingham manager—Basil Hayward—said yesterday (Monday): "We played exceptionally well until Ray Bailey sustained a twisted knee in the second half. Our football was wonderful to watch—up to the penalty area we were a great side. But we could not get the ball into the net."

Mr. Hayward was pleased with the debut of new signing Derek Woodley, who joined the club on Thursday afternoon in a part-exchange deal which saw Howard Moore go to Southend.

"We ran Scunthorpe for most of the match. Tony Thear hit the woodwork and Brian Gibbs was out of luck on several occasions."

Mr. Hayward confirmed yesterday that he had made an inquiry for Oldham forward Reg Biore, who previously assisted Southport and Blackburn Rovers.

Gillingham visit Reading on Saturday and this will be a tough outing for the Gills who defeated Reading 3-0 at the Stadium earlier in the season.

On Saturday Reading provided one of the F.A. Cup shocks by figuring in a goalless draw against Manchester City at Maine Road.

The Reserves will be on view at the Stadium when they meet Chelsea in a Football Combination fixture.



A dejected John Simpson watches team-mate Dennis Hunt gather the ball after inside-left Blyth had put Scunthorpe in front after only six minutes on Friday evening.



GILLS' inside-forward Brian Gibbs wins a tussle with Torquay 'keeper Andy Donnelly in a tense incident in the game at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

Gillingham falter on dangerous collision course

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM ELM PARK

ALL the tenacity of Gillingham's two Brians, Gibbs and Yeo, plus the cool resource of young David Quirke, who substituted for the injured Bill Williams, failed to turn the tide for luckless Gills in a drab, cheerless spectacle at Elm Park on Saturday.

Over the past months both teams have been billed as promotion hopes, but frankly no self-respecting soccer electorate would dare nominate them as title candidates on the evidence of this scrambling display.

The loyalty of the most starry-eyed devotee in the two camps must have been severely strained as this tedious affair yawned to a close.

Battered morale was embarrassingly evident as both teams timidly sought cohesion amid the snow flurries.

Injury-hit Gillingham, who made four changes, could and should have profited from hesitant defence by Reading in the opening quarter.

Reading, sternly cuffed by the Goliaths from Manchester in mid-week, meekly surrendered the initiative and then took the lead with a superb counter-punch in the 16th minute.

Roger Smee dribbled down the right, tricking Williams and Hunt, before rolling the ball into the goalmouth. George Harris raced on to the pass to bulge the net with an unstoppable cross-shot.

Reading 3 Gillingham 1

This was the Reading winger's 20th goal of the season.

Gillingham, unlucky to be in arrears, were presented with a gift equaliser two minutes later.

Mel Machin threaded a low pass through a maze of defenders, Meldrum incredibly allowed the ball to go through to the keeper, and the alert Gibbs darted through the gap to stab his shot past Dixon with the stealth of a midnight poacher.

This was a deserved break and Gibbs, the mainspring of the attack, next spoiled an enterprising foray with a hurried cross which ran clear of his waiting colleagues.

Arrogant

New signing Derek Woodley, who had a quiet game, next paved the way for a glancing header by Gibbs that flashed narrowly wide of an upright. Lethargy descended on the game and a spate of misplaced passes brought a derisive reaction from a home crowd still smarting at the memory of the Cup massacre.

Opportunist Smee tipped the scales against the battling Gills with a hook shot in a penalty area ruck. Simpson, inadequately covered, swivelled into a brave parry, but Collins smashed the ball home from the rebound to give his side the lead.

Quirke substituted for Williams on the resumption when

Reading quickly established a 3-1 lead. Machin handled on the edge of the area and Allen pierced the defensive wall with a low shot past the unshighted Simpson.

Momentarily there were fears of a goal avalanche, but Quirke came through his test with flying colours, displaying an arrogant coolness under pressure which is the hallmark of a fine player in the making.

Gillingham fought gallantly until the end and Yeo toiled gamely in a losing cause. He deserved better luck with a snap shot in a melee and Gibbs, bursting in on goal, was felled by a blatant rugby tackle by Bacuzzi.

Woodley drove against the angle and Yeo forced a diving save from Dixon in a desperate rally and Reading were flattered by their victory margin.

This latest defeat means that Gillingham are now without a win in eight games and a massive recovery is needed to steer clear of a dangerous collision course.

Reading: Dixon; Bacuzzi, Spiers; Meldrum, Chapman, Yard; Doherty, Allen, Collins, Smee, Harris. Sub.: Foster.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith. Sub.: Quirke.

Referee: Mr. D. H. Counsell (Bristol). Attendance 6,528.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Torquay	28	14	8	6	39	33	36
Bury	28	13	7	8	40	41	33
Walsall	28	13	7	8	40	39	33
Stockport	28	13	6	9	39	35	32
Swindon	27	11	9	7	44	26	31
Shrewsbury	27	11	9	7	41	37	31
Oxford	26	10	10	8	45	38	30
Reading	27	12	4	10	42	42	30
Watford	26	12	5	11	47	31	29
Brighton	26	9	11	8	32	31	29
Bournemouth	26	11	7	10	31	33	29
Peterboro	26	12	4	12	44	45	28
Barrow	23	11	5	12	35	35	27
Southport	27	11	5	11	47	43	27
Gillingham	28	9	9	10	34	40	27
Oldham	23	12	2	14	39	41	26
Northampton	27	9	7	11	34	40	25
Bristol R.	26	9	6	11	36	41	24
Tranmere	27	9	6	12	45	51	24
Colchester	27	8	11	13	46	24	24
Mansfield	27	8	6	13	33	41	22
Orient	25	7	8	10	28	25	22
Scunthorpe	24	7	8	13	24	31	24
Grimsby	27	6	5	16	25	44	19



Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson cuts out a right wing cross to foil Scunthorpe's Foley on Friday evening. [S2]



Injured Gillingham players, John Meredith, Bill Williams, Ray Bailey and Peter Hall, received treatment at the Stadium on Tuesday morning. [P664]



Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson throws himself at the feet of Reading's Ernie Yard to punch clear, watched by colleagues Bill Williams and Mel Machin. [S2]

No 31
H.T. 2-1
attend: 6,528

Gillingham's financial crisis may lead to . . . AXE FOR COMBINATION XI

Open soccer objective

GILLINGHAM'S financial plight was starkly underlined this week by club chairman Dr. Clifford Grossmark when he announced that a provisional decision had been taken to withdraw the club's reserve side from the Football Combination.

Dr. Grossmark told the annual meeting of the Gillingham Supporters' Association on Tuesday night that everyone connected with the club had to face the fact that economies were needed.

"How we get on between now and April will influence our decision on the reserve side," he said.

The annual report released this week revealed that the club had been forced to sell five club houses to offset the 1966-67 losses of £16,266 which are more than double those of the previous season.

Presenting the figures Dr. Grossmark commented: "There is a serious drop in our receipts from donations and we are seeking ways and means to get ancillary help in this sphere."

The figures show that the net loss for the year amounted to £16,266 compared with £7,676 in the 1965-66 season. The houses in Gillingham and Chatham were sold to enable the club to keep their bank borrowing within acceptable limits.

Expenditure rose to £86,528 from £72,317 the previous season. Players' transfer fees

went up to £7,500 (£2,750) and wages, players' bonuses and other salaries rose to £36,879 (£31,412). Small savings were made on programmes, players' requisites and legal and professional charges.

Dr. Grossmark stressed that they were keeping a watchful eye on the cost of the teams and, while not permitting any extravagances, they were anxious not to contract their activities unwisely.

The average attendance at Priestfield Stadium fell from 7,492 in the previous season to 6,547 in the season under review.

Mr. A. E. Weller and Mr. C. A. L. Cox, who retire from the Board by rotation, will offer themselves for re-election at the annual meeting at the Livingstone Arms Hotel, Gillingham, on Wednesday February 28.

Dr. Grossmark and manager Basil Hayward faced a barrage of questions from

Bad Press coverage

TALKING POINTS

supporters' association members at the meeting on Tuesday.

PUBLIC RELATIONS — Answering a proposal that the club might consider the appointment of a public relations officer, Dr. Grossmark said Mr. Hayward and himself and the directors were P.R.O.s in their contacts with the public.

"News items are in Mr. Hayward's hands. He does not feel he is adequately covered by the Press and the Press consider they are indifferently treated by him."

Mr. Hayward agreed that it was important to co-operate with the Press, but asked the meeting to consider the effects of bad publicity. "I was besieged with telephone calls on Monday morning following a Sunday news-

Social club request

paper report that a bid had been made for two of my players.

"This sort of publicity is unsettling my players," he said.

READING FIASCO — Mr. Hayward answered criticism of the team and said they had created three clear chances at Reading, one of which had produced a goal and two had been saved by the 'keeper.

The Gills' chief added that three mistakes in defence had given Reading three goals.

Mr. Hayward said that coupled with a desire to please the fans was an objective to play an open game. "Week after week we succeed in getting a particular player through, but unfortunately we are not putting the ball in the net."

He did not think that supporters would come along to watch the team unless they could command second or third place in the division.

"My aim is to get 11 players really fighting for the club and supporters can help me by their encouragement. I am perfectly willing to discuss supporters' complaints so long as they support the club."

SOCIAL CLUB—Dr. Gross-

Fans seek shares

mark said they could build a social club, but this was a lower priority.

SHARES — Acquisition of shares by supporters would not materially help the club said Dr. Grossmark after one member had said that a request for shares had been turned down by the Board.



BASIL HAYWARD



DR. GROSSMARK

Wedding bells

LEAP YEAR wedding bells will ring for Gillingham players Bill Brown and Ralph Miller in 1968. Ralph will marry in March and Bill plans a wedding in July.

Decision today on Williams

INJURIES to linchpin defenders Bill Williams and Ray Bailey — "two of the best players in their positions in the league" — pose a dilemma for Gillingham manager Basil Hayward in his bid to arrest the slump at Priestfield Stadium (writes ALAN HILL).

Bailey is definitely ruled out of the game against new promotion challengers Swindon at Gillingham tomorrow, and Mr. Hayward is awaiting the result of a fitness test before deciding whether or not to include Williams in his team.

Williams, together with Machin and Meredith, the two other Gillingham casualties, took part in a full-scale practice match at Chatham on Thursday. The Gillingham centre-half, who has been troubled by a leg injury sustained about a month ago, played only 45 minutes at Reading last Saturday and David Quirke substituted in the second half.

Mr. Hayward said that a specialist's report on Williams had dispelled fears of cartilage trouble.

Reports from some quarters that his team were less than 100 per cent fit at Reading were indignantly denied by the Gills' chief yesterday. "All my players are thoroughly fit. Understandably there is some mental fatigue — you

couldn't expect otherwise with the results going against us. "This has been one of the most difficult weeks in my career with the club and I appeal to the fans to give the boys every encouragement against Swindon."

Mr. Hayward added that a couple of wins would make all the difference to the morale of the club.

Gillingham are still only six points behind third club Walsall but the gap has narrowed between them and the relegation candidates, Mansfield, fourth from the bottom of the table, are only three points behind the Stadium club.



RAY BAILEY . . . Definitely non-starter.



Gillingham's right-back Ralph Miller has a worm's eye view of Reading's first goal scored by George Harris (not in picture). Mel Machin and Bill Williams are helpless, while Roger Smee, who set up the chance, raises his arms in salute.

Thear and Moffat share the glory in form-book upset

Skipper Riddick calms Gills with

'We will not sell' pledges Hayward

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward this week pledged that none of the club's key players would be allowed to leave Priestfield Road during the present crisis.

This was his reaction to Sunday newspaper reports that Bournemouth had made a new bid for John Meredith and Brian Gibbs from Norwich a double overture for Ray Bailey and Derek Bellotti.

Mr. Hayward said there was no truth in reports that negotiations would be opened with Bournemouth yesterday, but admitted that several clubs had expressed an interest in goalkeeper Bellotti this season.

"It's all hands on deck at present in our bid to find the revival path," said the Gills' chief after their latest defeat at Reading, which makes it eight games in a row without a win for the Priestfield club.

He added that changes would be made for this Saturday's home game against Swindon, but stressed that his choice was governed by the fitness of key players.

Inside-forward Bob Harrison, who is on loan to Hastings, scored both goals in their 2-2 draw at Nuneaton in the Premier Division of the Southern League.



CHARLIE CRICKMORE . . . Gillingham fans with memories of the former Priestfield winger's speed and thrust, hope that Woodley will boost a flagging attack.

SERENELY confident Gillingham regained their sanity after a demented first half-hour in which their aimless scurries resembled the frenzy of a beheaded chicken in its final dance of death (writes ALAN HILL).

Rarely can the odds have been so heavily stacked against the ill-starred Gills and the soccer sorcery of that beautifully poised striker Don Rogers teased and worried them into a spate of errors.

Happily for the Gills, Swindon's scintillating rhythms in midfield slowed to a leisurely andante in front of goal and Rogers himself was a culprit when in one devastating breakthrough he junked past Simpson and then pulled the ball wide of the post.

Former Gills' leader, Pat Terry, effectively shackled for most of the game by Arnott and Machin, was fractionally wide with an alert header before Riddick unexpectedly put his side on the revival path with a shock goal in the 35th minute.

Tonic goal

The Gillingham skipper's first shot was blocked, but he followed up to head over 'keeper Downsbrough and into the net via the underside of the bar.

Much-changed Gillingham, who without four regular first-teamers and had a new left

tonic goal

Gillingham 3, Swindon 1

Riddick (35), Machin (60), Thear (80)
Smart (85)

wing in Tony Thear and Bob Moffat, responded immediately to the tonic goal.

Moffat, making his first senior appearance for nearly two years, swept down the left to cross into the goalmouth and Thear shot hurriedly and weakly as Gibbs headed the ball down to him.

Machin next pounced on to a Woodley centre to send a fierce drive snaking inches over the bar. Astonishingly, the Gills were ahead at the interval, but Swindon had only themselves to blame.

The second half placed the seal on a long-awaited success story, and the Gills edged away from the relegation precipice with a sustained fight-back.

Incredible miss

They might have won even more convincingly as Swindon's hitherto arrogantly commanding defence floundered uncertainly before a barrage of attacks.

Yeo incredibly missed from almost under the bar before Gillingham increased their lead from the penalty spot in the 60th minute.

Mel Nurse jammed the brake on Gibbs as Moffat engineered a goal chance and the inside-forward measured his length in the area. Machin coolly stroked the ball home from the spot.

Swindon struck back and Simpson, left stranded by a Miller mistake, parried a Smart shot for Hunt to complete the clearance.

The increasingly confident Woodley forced a scrambled save from Downsbrough and Rogers shook his fists in self-reproach after another close-range blunder.

Simpson's save was masterly—a lightning rush out to

narrow the angle and smother the winger—but Rogers, who not for the first time had relentlessly exposed the weakness on the right flank, should have scored easily.

Gillingham, heartened by their good fortune, strode surely to victory in the final quarter. I swear that Nurse knew nothing about a desperate deflection as Thear chested the ball goalwards from a Gibbs' lob. The ball crossed an upright before curling behind for a corner.

Yeo had cruel luck in another penalty area melee before a Woodley-Gibbs duel paved the way for a classic goal in the 80th minute.

Gibbs lofted a precision cross to the far post and Thear rose above straining defence to hurdle the ball downwards into the net.

Smart reduced the arrears from a T.C. pass in the closing minutes, but the Gills might have had another penalty when Gibbs tumbled in the area in a clash with Nurse.

Gillingham's first win in eight games presents manager Basil Hayward with a selection headache.

Perhaps he will bear with me when I say that Saturday's forced changes should have been made a long time ago. Failing fortunes demand urgent remedies and Thear, notably, and Moffat played their part in a resolute revival.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Arnott, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Thear, Moffat. Sub: Brown.

Swindon: Downsbrough; Thomas, Trollope; Butler, Nurse, Harland; Heath, Penny, Smart, Rogers.

Referee: Mr. D. A. Corbett (Wolverhampton). Attendance: 5,116.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torquay	29	15	8	6	42	33	38
Bury	29	14	7	8	42	33	35
Walsall	29	13	7	9	36	41	33
Shrewsbury	28	12	9	7	43	38	32
Stockport	29	13	7	9	41	37	32
Oxford	29	11	10	8	46	38	32
Swindon	28	11	9	8	46	39	31
Reading	28	12	5	10	43	43	31
Brighton	29	5	12	8	34	53	28
Bournemouth	29	11	8	10	36	39	29
Watford	29	12	5	12	47	32	29
Barrow	29	12	5	12	41	28	29
Peterborough	29	12	6	11	47	38	29
Gillingham	29	10	9	10	37	41	29
Southport	28	11	5	12	46	46	27
Bristol R.	27	10	6	13	40	41	26
Oldham	29	12	2	15	29	42	26
Tranmere	28	10	6	12	47	52	26
Northampton	28	9	8	11	38	42	26
Colchester	28	9	9	10	34	48	24
Orient	26	7	9	10	30	37	23
Manfield	28	8	6	14	34	44	22
Scunthorpe	29	7	8	14	34	55	22
Grimsby	28	6	6	16	29	45	19

Leading goalscorers: Brown (20), Gibbs (10), Crickmore (now with Norwich) (8), Riddick (3), Machin (3), Meredith (2), Hall, Hunt, Yeo, Thear, League Cup: Crickmore (2), Gibbs, Riddick, Yeo.



GILLINGHAM newcomer Derek Woodley evades a sliding tackle by Swindon left-back Norman Trollope in his home debut at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. (8/431/7/88)

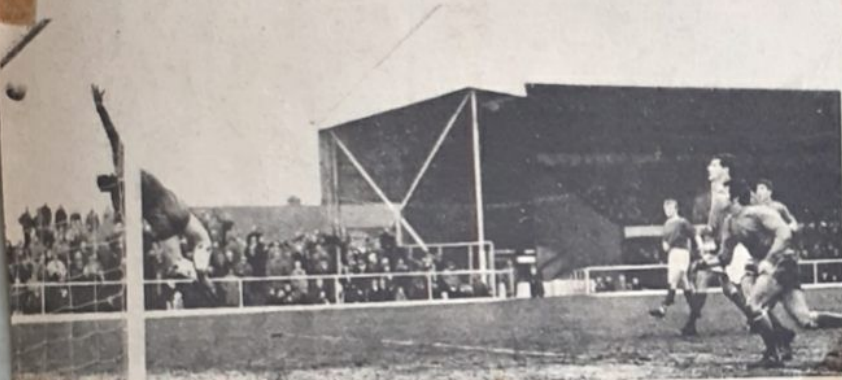


TONY THEAR . . . Classic goal from precision cross.

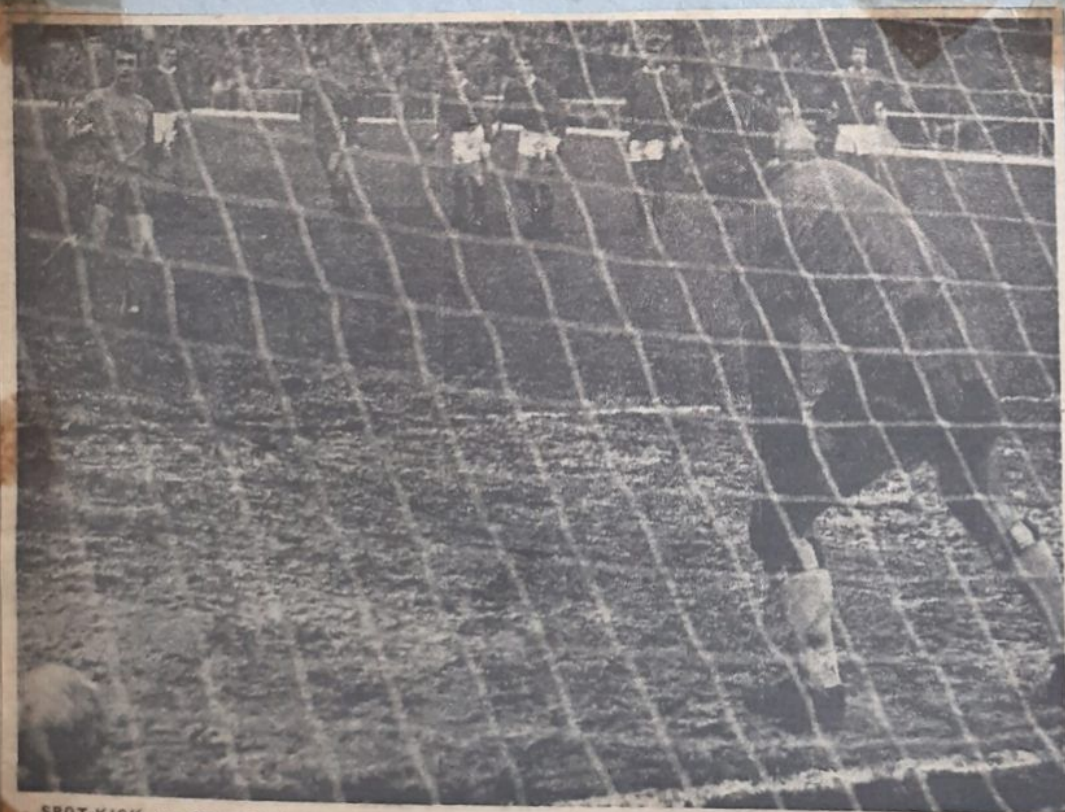
No. 33
H.T. 5-1-0
attend: 5,116



Mel Machin beats Swindon 'keeper, Downsborough, with a penalty kick to put Gillingham 2-0 ahead in the second half on Saturday. [P740]



Gordon Riddick, the Gills' skipper, beats the Swindon defence and goalkeeper Downsborough, to give Gillingham their first goal in the 3-1 victory at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. [P739]



SPOT-KICK ace Mel Machin wrong fools Swindon 'keeper Downsborough to score Gillingham's second goal on Saturday. (9/31/76)



Tony Thear shoots wide from in front of the Swindon goal during one of Gillingham's many attacks. Thear later made up for this mistake by scoring a brilliant goal to put the Stadium club 3-0 up. [P741]

Injury count soars again

A DOUBLE injury blow in training involving skipper Gordon Riddick and Mel Machin this week increased the Gillingham casualty list to its highest figure since the early days of the season (writes ALAN HILL).

Seven players are receiving treatment and manager Basil Hayward faces a teasing selection problem for the game against Shrewsbury Town at Gay Meadow tomorrow.

Mr. Hayward has high hopes that Machin will be fit to play and John Meredith, who missed last Saturday's game against Swindon, may also be available for selection.

The news concerning Bill Williams and Ray Bailey is less reassuring and the Gills' chief said that both these players—and Riddick—were doubtful for the trip to Shropshire.

"Fortunately the reserve side is without a game on Saturday and this will give me a larger group of players from which I can make my selection," said Mr. Hayward.

Light training

Normally Gillingham would have travelled to Shrewsbury today, but Mr. Hayward is delaying the departure time until tomorrow morning to improve the chances of match fitness of his injured players.

Gillingham full-back Tony Weston, who broke an ankle against Oxford last October, is back in light training. "Now he has the big job of building himself up again for first team duty," said Mr. Hayward.

Gillingham's youth side meet Tottenham in a South-East Counties' League fixture at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow (kick-off 3 p.m.).

Hayward says: 'We are back in the promotion hunt'

Substitute Brown plots first win at Gay Meadow

Shrewsbury 1, Gillingham 2

Clarke (4), Yeo (84) Gibbs (89)

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward's late decision to introduce soccer stylist Bill Brown as substitute paved the way for a shock win at Gay Meadow on Saturday.

Brown headed on Woodley's corner and Brian Gibbs matched the winner with an alert header in the 89th minute. Gibbs had a hand in the equaliser five minutes earlier when Yeo scored from the rebound after Boswell had failed to hold a fierce drive by the Gills' striker.

Much-improved Gillingham fully deserved their win and high-ranking Shrewsbury could never match the enthusiasm and never-say-die spirit of the visitors.

Delighted

Few people gave the Gills a chance of taking away even a point against the Shropshire side, who were undefeated in their last seven League games and had lost only one home game this season.

Manager Hayward was

delighted with his team's performance. "We have deserved a break away from home and at last we have got it."

"We found ourselves a goal behind early on, but we never gave up and had about 70 minutes of the play."

The Gills' manager enthused: "This was one of our best displays of the season and puts us back in the hunt for promotion."

Shrewsbury leader Frank Clarke headed his side into a fourth minute lead, but the home side fell back on defence and allowed the visitors to take the initiative.

Before one of their best crowds of the season Shrewsbury were always struggling to find the form of recent games. They played without drive and method and the Gills were not slow to capitalise on their failings.

Strikers Brian Gibbs and Tony Thear were always menacing and link man Brian Yeo worked hard to prompt his forwards who gave the home defence plenty to worry about.

Apart from the early lapse which led to the Shrewsbury goal, the Gillingham defence was calm under pressure and full-backs Ralph Miller and Dennis Hunt coolly played the home wingers out of the game.

Shrewsbury's leading scorer Frank Clarke, who is a magnet for a number of top clubs, gave John Arnott several anxious moments, but Mel Machin lent useful support to the centre-half.

Slack marking by the Gills' defence following a George Boardman free-kick gave Clarke all the time in the world to pick his spot and score in the fourth minute.

Goalkeeper John Simpson was slow in moving out and nearly handed Clarke a second goal when he dropped Boardman's low shot soon afterwards. Clarke pushed the ball just wide of a post.

Gillingham gradually got on top and the home side were indebted to the safe handling of keeper Alan Boswell. Shrewsbury had a narrow escape in the 74th minute when Geoff Fellows headed Bob Moffat's 20-yard drive off the line.

Substituted

Brown substituted for Tony Thear in the 70th minute and the move paid off when he headed on Woodley's flag kick for Gibbs to move in and score the match-winning goal. Five minutes earlier Gibbs

broke through on the right, with the Shrewsbury defence standing still waiting for the referee to blow for offside. He raced 25 yards before forcing a desperate parry from Boswell and Yeo followed up to slam the rebound into the net.

Shrewsbury: Boswell; Gregory, Fellows; Hemsley, Wood, Pountney; Boardman (Stobart), Brodie, Clarke, Dolby, McLaughlin.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Arnott, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Thear (Brown), Moffat. Referee: Mr. J. G. D. Lewis (Port Talbot). Attendance: 7,042.

No. 33

H.T. 1-0

Attend: 7,042

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torquay Utd.	20	16	8	8	42	49	40
Bury	20	14	8	8	44	34	34
Stockport	20	14	7	9	45	37	33
Walsall	20	13	7	9	50	41	33
Shrewsbury	20	12	9	8	44	40	33
Oxford Utd.	20	11	10	9	46	39	32
Reading	20	12	6	11	44	45	32
Swindon	20	11	9	8	45	29	31
Barrow	20	13	5	12	45	36	31
Peterborough	20	13	5	12	30	49	31
Bournemouth	20	11	9	10	25	56	31
Gillingham	20	11	9	10	39	42	31
Watford	20	12	6	12	48	31	29
Brighton	20	9	12	8	34	33	29
Southport	20	12	5	12	45	46	29
Bristol Rovers	20	11	6	11	44	44	28
Northampton	20	9	9	12	26	46	27
Oldham Ath.	20	12	7	16	45	40	26
Tranmere	20	10	6	12	47	52	26
Colchester	20	8	8	13	35	51	24
Orient	20	7	9	10	29	37	23
Manfield	20	8	7	14	33	45	23
Souths	20	7	8	15	34	58	23
Grimsby	20	6	6	16	29	45	17

Gillingham ever-presents

BRIAN GIBBS and John Simpson are the only "ever-presents" for Gillingham so far this season.

They head the appearances' list with 30 games each and are followed by skipper Gordon Riddick and Bill Brown with 29 and 28 games respectively.

Gillingham had called on 21 players up to and including last Saturday's game at Shrewsbury.

WOODLEY STEPS INTO

BREACH TO SPUR

GILLINGHAM REVIVAL

Speed threat gives rival defences that sinking feeling

GILLINGHAM may still be searching for a team blend, but manager Basil Hayward emphatically declares that his side would prosper in the Second Division (writes ALAN HILL).

"Stop the Third Division programme now and we would do as well as any of the present title contenders," said the Gills' chief.

Training sessions

Gillingham as promotion candidates seems an optimistic viewpoint, but Mr. Hayward can justifiably claim that the continuing crop of injuries has snarled up his team's chances and he still regrets the departure of Charlie Crickmore.

He is full of praise for the way in which former South-end winger Derek Woodley has filled the breach. "Woodley has had a lot to do with our recent revival. Like all

West Ham products he is fast and direct and able to cause confusion in opposing defences."

The Gills' chief added: "Promotion would have been a near certainty with Woodley and Crickmore on opposite wings and Riddick and Meredith operating in midfield."

Bill Williams and John Meredith were in the Gillingham reserve side which lost 3-0 at Tottenham on Wednesday night. Both players were undergoing strenuous training sessions yesterday and today Ray Bailey and Peter Hall are definite non-starters for tomorrow's home game against Oldham.

Mr. Hayward did not anticipate many changes when I spoke to him yesterday, but Williams and Meredith will obviously come into the reckoning if they pass fitness tests.

Gillingham's reserve side are away to Peterborough in a Football Combination League game tomorrow.



BILL BROWN — Late substitution was winning move.



DEREK WOODLEY . . . Flag kick led to Gibbs' match-winner at Shrewsbury. (F433/5/89)

ACCENT ON YOUTH

HEAD - IN-THE-SANDS management and a blind disregard for tomorrow has capsized the once-proud soccer strongholds of Notts County, Charlton and Huddersfield, and left them clinging ruefully to the raft of a few lines in the record books.

Oblivion came to clubs like Derby, who once revelled in the artistry of internationals Raich Carter and Peter Doherty—fans used to queue up at the Baseball Ground at 11 a.m. to see them in action—because they squandered their riches and failed to provide for the future.

Time has driven home the lesson that the only insurance policy is to nurture the talents of youth. At Leeds, Don Revie coaxed into life a club floundering on the brink of the Third Division and deserted by the fans.

He gambled desperately on youth with the introduction

of teenagers like Gary Sprake, Paul Reaney and Norman Hunter, which today forms one of the most respected defences in the land.

Pompey revival

This is one of the success stories of modern soccer, but down at Portsmouth, manager George Smith is reviving memories of former greatness with a squad of only 16 full-time professionals.

His achievement in piloting Pompey to the fifth round of the F.A. Cup is all the more remarkable when one considers that he was forced to dispense with his reserve side to cut costs.

Smith argues that if he needs players he will buy them—the signing of Mike Trebilcock from Everton is a case in point—and it will be interesting to follow the club's progress if they succeed in regaining their rightful place in the First Division next season.

The decline of the game in the fanatical North-East is a baffling state of affairs. Here again one could accuse Sunderland and Newcastle of failing to tap the rich vein of talent in the area and relying instead on big-money signings.

Youth policies

Tragically, there has been no reward for the youth policies of South Yorkshire minnows, Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster, sandwiched between the big Sheffield clubs and with Matt Busby peering inquisitively over the Pennines, they have been forced to recoup their losses by selling players of the calibre of Tommy Taylor, Mark Jones and David Pegg.

Perhaps Tommy Doherty, newly-installed in the manager's seat at Millmoor, will rebel against the nursery tag and bring renown to happy little Rotherham.

ALAN HILL

Spotlight on John Meredith

THE spotlight falls on Doncaster-born John Meredith, self-described Sinatra fan and Volkswagen enthusiast, in the current issue of the Priestfield Press, published this week.

John, who started his soccer career with his home town club and later moved to Sheffield Wednesday and Chesterfield, was signed by manager Freddie Cox for a then club record fee of £25,000 in March 1964.

"It is a very open race for promotion this year and Gillingham have as good a chance as any of going up," says John, who was a member of the Gills' Fourth Division championship side.

Boys of the Temple School, Strood have collaborated to prepare a potted history of Gillingham, which is also featured in the magazine and the editorial refers to tributes paid by Mansfield and Orient to the sportsmanship of Priestfield fans.

The publication also gives advance news of a cabaret in connection with Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson's testimonial fund to be held at the Rainham Mark Social Club in the near future.

John has been overwhelmed by offers from his team mates to take part in the cabaret. Turns will include vocals from skipper Gordon Riddick, a guitar interlude by Bill Williams and former stalwart Mike Burgess will present his George Formby act.

Combination League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham R.	15	12	1	2	46	15	25
Birmingham R.	13	9	1	3	33	14	19
Southampton R.	16	8	3	5	30	23	19
Chelsea Res.	16	8	2	6	24	23	18
Plymouth Res.	12	7	3	2	24	14	17
Walsall Res.	16	7	3	7	26	24	16
Ipswich Res.	16	7	2	7	27	31	16
Arsenal Res.	14	6	3	5	14	11	15
Leicester Res.	13	5	5	3	26	22	15
Gillingham R.	18	5	4	9	23	30	14
Coventry Res.	14	5	3	6	27	24	13
West Ham Res.	15	5	3	7	29	31	13
Peterboro' R.	15	5	3	7	28	37	13
Swindon Res.	18	2	3	14	15	47	8
Northampton R.	13	1	3	9	19	42	5

Goal jinx as Gills scramble up the promotion ladder

Gillingham 1, Oldham 0 Machin (14)

The malady lingers on frustratingly amid a hat-trick of victories which has hoisted Gillingham into ninth place and three points behind third-placed Stockport.

Jimmy McIlroy's frail-looking combination from Oldham had a charmed life in a one-sided game, but after Mel Machin had lassoed the Latics with an opportunist goal in the 14th minute Gillingham failed to tighten the noose on their struggling rivals.

The aggression and incisive play of Derek Woodley deserved a better reward than the faint-hearted marksmanship which continues to shackle the Gills' promotion hopes.

Gibbs, Moffat and Yeo were guilty of appalling mistakes and Gillingham scrambled where they should have coasted to their first double of the season.

Timidity

Lethargy in midfield where an out-of-touch Riddick could not assert his authority and Hill Brown restored to the first team in place of Tony Thear, only fleetingly made an acquaintance with the game sadly hampered by the home side.

Here was a heaven-sent chance to boost the goal tally. Oldham must still be wondering why they were spared an humiliating defeat—the gaps in their paper-thin defence would have accommodated a battleship, but the Gills' assault force sailed in with the timidity of a fishing smack adrift in an uncharted minefield.

Nippy Oldham prospered briefly as Blore prompted a spurt of attacks and Simpson made a fumbled save at the foot of the post from Towers. Gillingham took the lead in

the 14th minute when Woodley, released by Brown, side-stepped two attempted tackles to tee up the goal chance.

Machin darted into the open space to score with a 30-yard shot which seemed to dip late in flight and deceive the unsuspecting Best.

Oldham, teased and tormented by Woodley, were near breaking point. The Gillingham winger tingled Best's fingers with a vicious cross-shot before tangling the visitors' defence with two devastating crosses.

The first sped across the goalmouth past groping forwards and the winger stood hands on his hips in amazement as Gibbs failed by inches to glide home the second centre.

Gibbs tried hard to make

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

amends from a more difficult position when he shuddered the crossbar with a shot from the edge of the area.

Heavy sleet showers greeted the teams on the resumption and the Gills continued to squander their chances.

Doyle cleared from the line when Gibbs finished weakly from point-blank range after Brown had headed on from a Woodley centre.

Best coolly saved two long-range efforts by Brown, but he was fortunate to escape when he failed to gather a Woodley free-kick. In a hectic scramble he made a brave recovery to save at the feet of Gibbs and Yeo.

Oldham, incredibly still only a goal in arrears, rode their luck to mount a late rally. They were near to an equaliser when a Sheffield shot rebounded from a defender to sneak past Simpson's dive and perilously close to the upright.



MEL MACHIN — Opportunist goal gave the Gills their first double of the season.

The unmarked Moffat crashed the ball high in the crowd in yet another ludicrous miss to set the seal on a baffling interlude.

Perhaps we should be thankful for the blessings of victory after weeks in the wilderness and it is no pleasure to cry "no finish" again. Nor did I relish the sight of one home supporter shaking his fists in anger at a Gillingham forward.

Sympathy mingled with praise goes to the Gillingham defence in which the sturdy Arnott was more than adequate deputy and Machin and Hunt easily quelled the Oldham attack. Ralph Miller seems fortunate to hold his place with the rapidly improving John Furlie making a strong claim for recognition.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Arnott, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat, Sub: Thear.

Oldham: Best; Doyle, Bowler; Wood, Frizzell, Blair; Magee, Towers, Sheffield, Blore, Chapman.

Referee: Mr. H. G. New (Portsmouth).



BRIAN GIBBS (right), the Gillingham inside-right, in a tussle with Oldham's centre-half Jimmy Frizzell. (S/424/9 68)

No. 57
H.T. 1-0
Attend: 4,184

Double victims Oldham enjoy a charmed life



GILLINGHAM inside-forward Bill Brown (right) heads on target and Brian Gibbs hampered by the attentions of Oldham full-back Alistair Doyle, is unable to apply the finishing touch in a tense skirmish at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

(10/424/9/88)

Woodley— new style promise

GILLINGHAM'S third win in a row over Oldham on Saturday brought glowing praise this week from manager Basil Hayward for right-winger Derek Woodley, whose menacing raids repeatedly tangled the 'Latics' defence.

"I am very happy with Woodley's play. Now we have to adapt our style to capitalise on his crosses," said the Gills' chief.

Mr. Hayward admitted that Gillingham had failed to show their mastery in the score line. "But we did what we set out to do—we beat them."

Gillingham's win put them firmly back in the promotion hunt, but they face a formidable hurdle at Bristol tomorrow. "A point would be very welcome to help us maintain our challenge," said Mr. Hayward.

Centre-half Bill Williams had another reserve team outing at Peterborough and came through the test in fine style. Bray and Folds scored for the Gills, who went down to a 4-2 defeat.

Chatham Town, with new signing Jim Bonnor making his debut, lost 1-0 in the Metropolitan League game at Hatfield.

Sayer (2) and Radford (penalty) scored for Eastcourt United in their 3-0 win over Gallenders Athletic in the Kent Amateur League (Premier Division) game at Maidstone Road on Saturday.

Former Kent Police full-back George Greaves had an impressive debut as Court boosted their hopes of a League and Cup double.

Yeo is influenza victim

DEREK Woodley and Brian Yeo were influenza victims this week as Gillingham prepared for their tough assignment against Bristol Rovers at Eastville tomorrow (writes ALAN HILL).

Manager Basil Hayward said yesterday that Woodley would be fit to play, but there was a doubt against Yeo, who had still not reported for training after being sent home ill earlier in the week.

Ray Bailey is still receiving treatment for a persistent knee injury, but centre-half Bill Williams, who has had two reserve team outings and took part in a practice match yesterday, may return in place of John Arnot.

Gillingham have three home games against Orient, Barrow and title contenders Bury in March and maximum points are essential if they are to maintain their championship challenge.

The Stadium reserve side meet West Ham at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow and the youth team are at home to Oxford in the morning.

Tibor Harcos, who sustained an eye injury at Hatfield last Saturday, is named in the CHATHAM team to meet Wimbledon at Maidstone Road tomorrow (kick-off 3 p.m.).

Team (from): Pullager; Ansley, Richardson, Deacon, Wyatt, Brown, Connor, Driver, Lambeth, Bonnor, Harcos.

Goal power would silence Gills' critics

RELEGATION - haunted Orient, desperately coveting survival points, will provide a fierce test for Gillingham at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow.

The Gills are still without the services of wing-half Ray Bailey but they will be reinforced by the presence of Bill Williams. They must quickly establish their mastery and a handsome goal tally against their struggling rivals would help to silence the army of critics in the Medway Towns (writes Alan Hill).

Link-man John Meredith, who has been suffering from a mysterious stomach complaint, is likely to return to the team and Bob Moffat could be the man to drop out.

Probable team: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith.

Manager Basil Hayward showed a healthy regard for Orient's fighting qualities when I spoke to him yesterday. "They are a tough side, but we want the points just as much as they do. For a different reason, of course."

There is a slight doubt against the fitness of skipper Gordon Riddick, who injured a leg in training this week, but Mr. Hayward is confident that he will be fit for the game.

Gillingham players and manager Basil Hayward were among the 200 people who attended a dance in aid of colleague John Simpson's testimonial fund at the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham, on Tuesday night.

At John's request the fund committee has agreed to organise a darts knock-out competition in the Towns and the original closing date for entries has now been extended to Wednesday March 27.

Chairman of committee Mr. Harold France said yesterday: "This is John's way of saying thank you for the magnificent response to the testimonial appeal by Medway Towns' sportsmen."

The entry fee is 2s. 6d. per player and trophies and cash prizes will be awarded in the competition. The finals will form the highlight of a social on a date to be arranged.

The recently-launched "200" club is making good progress, but there are still a few membership vacancies left. The draw for the holiday competition—15 days in Spain and a weekend in Paris—will be made at the game against Bury on Saturday March 30.

PLEA FOR SECOND TEAM

But axe would save Gillingham

£10,000 a year



BASIL HAYWARD ... Strong appeal for a retention of Gillingham's Combination side.

GILLINGHAM could effect a saving of £10,000 a year by disbanding their reserve side but manager Basil Hayward strongly urged the retention of the team at the annual meeting of the club in Gillingham on Wednesday night.

Mr. Hayward's plea came after shareholder Mr. E. W. Filley had called upon the club to be realistic and set up a first team squad of 16 players. Mr. Filley said that year after year shareholders were presented with an adverse balance sheet and the obvious measure was to cut the Combination side.

The Gills' chief said: "It is essential to have young

players coming through the club teams. If we scrap the reserve side and then suffer one or two injuries, we shall finish up like Orient.

"We hope to get into the Second Division and eventually the First Division and we must have a progressive plan."

Mr. Hayward said that if they reduced the club strength to 14 players the club might be forced in an emergency to pay up to £16,000 for players instead of around £8,000.

Serious consideration

Earlier the club chairman, Dr. Clifford Grossmark had commented that the position concerning the Combination side was under serious consideration.

"We have provisionally withdrawn from the Combination League and certainly we could save £10,000 a year if we scrapped the side."

Dr. Grossmark added: "The hypothetical point in whether the £10,000 is worth spending even though on the surface it looks an unnecessary luxury.

"We took the precautionary move of resigning from the Combination League in the 1965-6 season and it is bad for our public image if we keep doing this."

After Dr. Grossmark had remarked that it was a policy of a previous manager to have "eight bread and butter

players to fetch on the other three," director, Mr. Charles Cox commented that in Peach, Tyleman, Robbins and Bray the club had £100,000 worth of talent in five years' time.

Playing fortunes

Mr. Hayward said the club had only introduced younger players into the reserve side in the last two years. "The second team at one time was older than the first team," he said.

Reference was made to the lack of success of fund raising schemes and Dr. Grossmark said that many people argued that this was inter-related to the team's playing fortunes.

Commenting on low gates at Priestfield Stadium this season Mr. Hayward said Gillingham would not attract reasonable crowds unless they were among the top three or four clubs.

"It is the same with every club, with the exception of Swindon. You must get into the top four before you get the gates," he said.

Shareholders were also told a celebration to mark the 75th birthday of the club would be held later this year.

Directors Mr. Albert Weller and Mr. Charles Cox were re-elected to serve a further term of three years.

W. J. R. Jenkins and Co. have agreed to act as auditors following the death of Mr. W. J. R. Jenkins last year.

Minor Division

MEDWAY Area Sunday League, Minor Division placings:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rainham Yth	18	17	1	0	127	26	35
Upchurch U	19	16	2	1	181	25	34
Southfields	17	15	2	2	92	21	28
Rede Court	16	10	0	6	61	41	20
Boughton	13	8	3	3	46	38	18
Walinda Rgrs	17	8	3	6	68	67	19
Milton Nmds	16	8	1	7	61	60	17
Blue Bird W	16	6	2	8	60	52	14
Shippary Rgrs	15	6	1	8	36	58	13
Higham BC	16	5	1	10	69	93	11
Nelson Villa	18	4	1	12	26	98	9
St. Justus	20	3	2	15	35	101	8
Med. CBC	12	2	2	9	46	117	6
Gill Supp Co	19	1	0	18	25	138	2



Gillingham's new right wing combination Derek Woodley (above) and Brian Gibbs whose speed and thrust has been one of the highlights of the Stadium club's recent revival. The Gills have now gone four games without defeat and a seven-point tally has hoisted them among the promotion fringe clubs.



VIEW FROM THE PRESS BOX...



When Gills meet the Orient tomorrow our sports writers will have this view of the game—behind glass. Our photographers will be sitting out in the cold as usual...

DOMINANT GILLS TIE UP A POINT

Off-guard Simpson errs and grateful Bristol slam home penalty equaliser

Bristol Rovers 1, Gillingham 1

ONE simple error by goalkeeper John Simpson cost Gillingham a point in a drab game which they often looked like winning at Eastville on Saturday.

The mistake occurred in the 65th minute when Simpson, who otherwise gave an unblemished display, was caught too far out of his goal as he moved to intercept a corner kick by Rovers' right-winger Harold Jarman.

The mistake occurred in the 65th minute when Simpson, who otherwise gave an unblemished display, was caught too far out of his goal as he moved to intercept a corner kick by Rovers' right-winger Harold Jarman.

At the last moment the ball dipped in the wind and was about to curl inside the far post with Simpson hopelessly beaten.

Gillingham left-half Mel Machin, standing on the line had only one chance to save. He punched the ball out and referee Vic Batty pointed to the penalty spot.

Rovers' captain John Williams crashed the spot kick high into the roof of the Gillingham net.

Apart from this gift goal, Bristol rarely looked like scoring. They were held in a vice by the compact visitors'

defence, particularly in the first half when the Kent men completely controlled the game.

Bill Williams, back after injury, was a dominant figure in the Gillingham defence bottling up Bristol leader Alfie Biggs, who worked desperately hard to notch his 200th goal for the club.

Williams was well supported by full-back Ralph Miller, who twice kicked off the line in the first half.

These saves were typical of the covering of the Kent defence which surprised the Rovers' attack. The home side had scored four goals in their two previous games at Eastville.

The Gillingham attack moved with unexpected speed and slickness on a heavy pitch which brought criticism from the Kent players after the match.

Brilliant

Bill Brown was the brain behind most of the visitors' attacks, but it was the right-wing pair of Derek Woodley and Brian Gibbs who caused most of the panic in the home defence.

Their speed was often too much for the slow-moving Bristol backs. Brian Yeo went close to putting Gillingham ahead in the second minute, but the visitors had not long to wait for a reward for their pressure.

In the 10th minute Gibbs sent the ball across at waist height and Brown dived low to head in a perfect goal.

Gillingham might have gone further ahead 10 minutes later when Bob Moffat broke through, but his drive was saved by a brilliant one-handed stop from Larry Taylor, who tipped the ball over the bar.

Then Brown was through with a great chance, but he miskicked and Gibbs trying to lob the ball over Taylor into the empty net, sent it over the bar.

Gillingham found the Bristol defence much tighter after the interval, but even so they might have snatched a late winner through Gibbs. He went through on his own just before the final whistle and crashed his shot against a post.

The gate of 5,478 was Rovers' lowest for three years.

Bristol Rovers: Taylor (L); Hillard, Munro; Williams (J.), Taylor (S.), Stone; Jarman, Ronaldson, Biggs, Jones (W.), Jones (R.). Sub: Mabbutt.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat. Sub: Arnold.

Referee: Mr. V. J. Batty (Helsby).

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bury	33	17	8	8	73	47	42
Torquay	32	16	8	8	42	38	40
Shrewsbury	31	14	9	8	48	40	37
Walsall	32	14	8	10	53	42	36
Stockport	32	14	8	10	47	40	36
Barrow	32	15	5	12	49	38	35
Brighton	32	11	13	8	38	35	35
Oxford	32	12	13	8	49	40	35
Watford	32	14	6	12	52	35	34
Gillingham	32	12	10	10	41	33	34
Swindon	31	12	9	10	53	43	33
Bournemouth	32	12	9	11	37	38	33
Reading	32	13	7	12	45	48	33
Peterborough	32	13	6	13	54	54	32
Southport	31	12	7	12	48	47	31
Bristol R.	31	11	7	13	49	42	29
Northampton	32	9	11	12	38	48	29
Tranmere	30	10	7	13	50	56	27
Colchester	32	9	9	14	36	54	27
Oldham	32	12	2	18	42	50	26
Mansfield	31	9	8	14	37	45	26
Orient	28	7	10	11	30	38	24
Scunthorpe	33	7	10	16	37	61	24
Grimby	31	7	6	18	32	54	20

PASSENGERS IN ATTACK

SATURDAY'S fiasco against Orient has prompted a speedy criticism of team selection by Gillingham supporter Peter D. Broughton, of 36, Vidgeon Avenue, Hoo.

In a letter to manager Basil Hayward Mr. Broughton asks why Gibbs and Woodley are forced to carry three passengers in attack.

He adds: "And how on earth can Miller displace Furie at full-back?"

The Gillingham supporter congratulates Orient on a deserved win but asks: "But we need not have helped them quite so much surely?"

"Too many times this season we have seen ourselves pushed around by teams who want the ball and are willing to fight for it."

Mr. Broughton says that week after week loyal supporters are forced to laugh at their own team. "If we took them seriously we would have given up long ago."

"To get the rest you need to have 11 workers prepared to fight for success."

The army of critics are too full for words writes Cllr. Jim Buck in another indignant letter to "Sports Mailbox".

Cllr. Buck writes: "This was the most disgusting display I have ever witnessed at Priestfield Stadium. I left the ground with many other supporters just after half-time."

He asserts that the Gillingham Board do not want first-class football in the Medway Towns. "All the good that was done in the 1963-64 season is gradually being undone."

"Unless drastic changes are made at the top Gillingham F.C. will be just a memory."

No. 36

H.T. 0-1

Attend: 5,478

Crucial month for the Gills

GILLINGHAM'S six-match programme this month will be a crucial test for their promotion hopes. Manager Basil Hayward this week was delighted with a 1-1 draw at Bristol last Saturday, which launched their drive for the top. This gave Gillingham seven points from their last four games.

Mr. Hayward said: "This is always a difficult game. Bristol are formidable opponents at Eastville."

The Gills' chief agreed that March was the decisive month. "By the end of the month we shall know whether we are to finish in the top eight or the top two."

Tomorrow's visitors to Priestfield Stadium are struggling Orient, who are at present engaged in a desperate fight for existence. This will be followed by a rearranged game against bottom-of-the-table Grimsby Town at Blundell Park on Wednesday night.

Next Saturday, Barrow will provide the opposition at Priestfield Stadium and an away game at Oxford precedes the crowd-puller attraction against Third Division leaders Bury on the last Saturday in March.

This is Grand National Saturday and a 7.30 p.m. kick-off has been agreed to with Bury.

Threat

Gillingham centre-half Bill Williams, who resumed after injury against Bristol, was in fine form on Saturday and blotted out the threat of veteran Rovers' leader Alfie Biggs, who was seeking his 200th goal for the Eastville club.

Wing-half Ray Bailey, who has been troubled by a persistent knee injury, had an outing with the Combination side against West Ham at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

John Meredith and Peter Hall are still on the injured list and full-back Tony Weston, who broke an ankle against Oxford last Autumn, is at present undergoing remedial exercises at a Watford Rehabilitation Centre.



BILL BROWN, Gillingham header gave the Gills lead at Eastville on Saturday.

He advocates the return of Thear, Furie, Meredith and Bailey (the last two when they are fit again) and says these are the players to make Gillingham go places.

Mr. Broughton's suggested team is: Simpson; Furie, Williams, Bailey, Hunt; Machin, Riddick, Meredith; Woodley, Gibbs, Thear. Substitutes from Quirke, Peach and Gilbert.

In a postscript to his letter Mr. Broughton says: "We may have a large crowd potential in the Towns, but the faithful five or six thousand are the only guillible ones."

Riddick and Moffat combine in Gills counter



RIGHT: The ball soars out of the picture as Gillingham skipper Gordon Riddick sends his header rocketing against the underside of the bar. Left: Orient left-back Bert Howe is too late to prevent Gills' winger Bob Moffat scoring from the rebound. (12/4/25 11/68) and (11/4/28 11/68)

'We are as upset as fans'—Hayward

GILLINGHAM manager Basil Hayward yesterday admitted that his team had paid the price of under-estimating Orient in the shock defeat at the hands of the Londoners at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

"Arnott's own goals were two bad breaks, but you can not afford to be lethargic and drop your standards in any game," said Mr. Hayward.

The Gills' chief said they had allowed Orient to take the initiative and the result was that they were always struggling to get it back.

"The Board and myself are as disappointed and upset as the supporters at this unexpected defeat. Two points against Orient and another win at Grimsby on Wednesday night could have pushed us up into third place in the table."

Mr. Hayward said the falling off in standards was something which seemed to happen to his team from time to time. But he warned: "If our present staff are not prepared to fight for success, we shall have to find replacements."

Gillingham's youth side were beaten 5-1 in a South-East Counties League game at Millwall on Saturday.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bury	34	17	8	9	74	50	42
Torquay	33	17	8	8	45	38	42
Shrewsbury	33	14	10	9	49	42	38
Barrow	33	16	5	12	52	35	37
Watford	33	15	6	12	54	36	36
Walsall	33	14	8	11	57	45	36
Stockport	33	14	8	11	47	43	36
Swindon	32	13	9	10	54	34	35
Oxford	33	12	11	10	49	42	35
Brighton	33	11	13	9	38	35	35
Reading	33	14	7	12	46	43	35
Peterboro	33	14	6	13	53	34	34
Bournemouth	33	12	10	11	57	38	34
Gillingham	33	12	10	11	45	40	31
Bristol R.	33	12	7	14	53	55	31
Southport	33	12	7	14	46	48	31
Northampton	33	10	11	12	41	48	31
Tranmere	31	10	8	13	51	57	28
Oldham	33	12	3	18	42	50	27
Colchester	32	9	9	15	57	69	27
Orient	29	8	14	11	33	40	26
Manusfield	33	9	6	18	38	43	26
Scunthorpe	34	7	7	16	42	62	21
Grimsby	31	7	4	18	32	54	14

Arnott nightmare stuns Gillingham fainthearts

Gillingham 2, Orient 3

LAST-MINUTE substitute John Arnott unwittingly buried Gillingham's lingering dream of promotion with two own goals in a two-minute nightmare at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

Skipper Gordon Riddick spearheaded a dogged fight-back after the interval, but the Gills, bunching crudely and guilty of schoolboy errors in ball control and passing, could not deny a coolly methodical Orient their first away win in the league this season.

furiously Riddick calling for a colleague to take up his pass in midfield.

Gillingham belatedly put some fire into their efforts, and Moffat, released by Hunt and Machin, halted their best attack of the game by hooking the centre into the side-netting.

Failed

Right-winger Malcolm Slater swayed out of a tackle to break through, but his innocuous centre seemed to be safely covered by John Simpson. Arnott, however, attempted to head behind, and the ball sneaked inside the post as if attracted by a magnet.

Two minutes later came another sickening own-goal blow after Simpson had failed to gather a curling free-kick from far out on the left touch-line.

The ball ricocheted loose from a ruck of players and Allen's hopeful punt was given added impetus as it struck Arnott and flew at a tangent into the net.

Demoralized Gillingham strove in vain to find passing accuracy, and Massey netted again for Orient but the whistle had gone for an infringement.

Almost on the interval, Yeo had cruel luck with a first-time snap-shot from a Moffat cross. The ball fired away from goal like a crazy meteor.

Orient maintained a measured command on the resumption, and superbly disciplined by centre-half Terry Mancini, looked far removed from a team floundering in the relegation zone.

By contrast, Gillingham struggled desperately in a maze of haphazard tactics. Gibbs and Brown were repeatedly caught in possession and at one stage we

Faltering

Riddick reduced the arrears with a splendidly judged header from a Woodley corner in the 61st minute, and moments later Brown weakly headed into the keeper's arms from a good position.

Goddard saved at point-blank range from Moffat, but Orient came away to seal their win with a Massey goal in the 68th minute. The aggressive Orient leader stole behind faltering defence to score with a crisp header.

Riddick pressed the Gills into a late rally and headed against the underside of the bar from another precision flag-kick by Woodley. Moffat hooked the ball goalwards and over the line as an Orient defender vainly tried a clearing kick.

Gillingham were denied what seemed a valid equaliser when Gibbs bundled Goddard over the line in the closing seconds, but Orient were worth their win.

They had made the most of Arnott's misfortunes. Gillingham lacked heart and resilience in a game they will want to forget in a hurry.

Gillingham: Simpson; Millar, Hunt, Riddick, Arnott, Machin, Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat, Sub: Thear.

Orient: Goddard; Jones, Howe, Taylor, Mancini, Wood, Slater, Allen, Massey, Halom, Simpson.

Referee: C. Thomas (Croydon, Glamorgan). Attendance: 5,991.

Barrow boast proud record

AWAY specialists Barrow, currently lying fourth in the Third Division, are visitors to Priestfield Stadium tomorrow. Charlie Crickmore inspired a 1-0 win by the Gills at Barrow last October, but the Lancastrians boast a formidable away record of seven victories so far this season (writes ALAN HILL).

Gills' casualties John Meredith and Ray Bailey were reported to be "much improved" by chairman Dr. Clifford Grossmark and both players have trained this week.

Meredith and Carl Gilbert (substitute at Grimsby on Wednesday night) may step up for first team duty against Barrow. Full-back John Purie, who returned to the team at Blundell Park, should retain his place. Team rival Ralph Miller is getting married tomorrow afternoon.

Team (from): Simpson; Purie, Hunt, Riddick, W. Brown, Machin, Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat, Meredith, Gilbert.

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

ball as the Gills' inside-forward raced into the area.

Orient massed deep in defence, and were clearly content to rely on breakaway raids. Slater and Halom drove narrowly wide before the first of the morale-sapping own goals in the 16th minute.

No. 37

N.T. 0-2

attnd: 5,911

MARKSMAN RIDDICK STARS IN GILLS' REARGUARD ACTION

GILLINGHAM survived a furious last quarter when the ball hardly left their half to draw with bottom-of-the-table Grimsby Town at Blundell Park on Wednesday night.

This game never rose above the average despite

Grimsby 1, Gillingham 1

two goals in the first 10 minutes. Gillingham were the superior team in the first half and Derek Woodley made several clever runs.

Brian Yeo and Brian

Gibbs were menacing raiders and combined to give the Mariners' defence a worrying time in this period.

One effort by Yeo was hooked off the line by home right-back Dave Worthington with goalkeeper Harry Wainman beaten.

Gillingham shot into a fourth minute lead. Woodley took a corner on the right and Grimsby's Bobby Ross lunged at it, but could only deflect the ball straight to Gordon Riddick who drove through a group of defenders into the net.

Grimsby, seeking maximum points from this and two other home games this month, in a bid to avert relegation, were stunned by this shock goal.

Wilson equaliser

But they fought back gallantly and were rewarded with an equaliser after 10 minutes. A high centre floated into the goalmouth, centre-forward Cary Moore allowed the ball to run on and Dave Wilson headed home over the outstretched arms of John Simpson.

Simpson was one of the few players to emerge with credit from a disappointing game. A few minutes before the Grimsby goal he tipped a fierce 20-yard drive by Moore round the post.

Grimsby had no excuse for missing another chance just before this incident. Moore headed high over the bar with Simpson stranded by his defence.

In the second half Gillingham were content to defend for most of the time and there was a hint of desperation about the Grimsby attacks.

Skipper Riddick played a vital role in this spell of Grimsby pressure by blotting out lively home inside-forward Dave Wilson who was watched by several club representatives.

Boyle danger

Except for his goal Wilson was kept in tight check and had one of his quietest games of the season.

In the last 15 minutes Grimsby staged all-out attacks, but they lacked a striker to take advantage of the situation.

The only Grimsby player to worry the Gills was tiny inside-forward Dave Boyle, who raced 25 yards in one thrilling move only to shoot straight at Simpson.

Grimsby Town: Wainman; Worthington, Taylor; Smith, Rathbone, Ross; Collins, Wilson, Moore, Boyle, Martin. Sub: Jobling.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furler, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woddley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat. Sub: Gilbert. Referee Mr. H. Williams (Sheffield, Attendance: 3,319).

CALL THE POLICE TO THUGS-GILLS BOSS APPEALS

MISSILE throwing hooligans have joined the crowds at Priestfield Stadium. Two sharp-pointed darts were thrown during the Gillingham v Orient game on Saturday—one of them narrowly missing a Press photographer. The same person removed a bottle he found on the pitch area.

In recent weeks coins, lumps of coke, bottles and a hard-boiled egg have joined the fusillade of toilet rolls that usually fly around the goal areas.

When asked about the incidents on Saturday, Gillingham's manager, Mr. Basil Hayward, commented: "The people who come to watch football at Priestfield Stadium are far better behaved than most."

"Though naturally we cannot be certain, I can only assume it was not a Gillingham supporter who was involved," he added.

He commented: "We will not tolerate bad behaviour from the

players on the field and go naturally we would expect the supporters to behave well."

"If we come across it then, of course, we shall throw the people out of the ground."

TELL US

"But the answer surely lies with the supporters themselves. If they see anyone misbehaving themselves or using bad language they do not particularly like, there are plenty of policemen in the ground to deal with it and they only have to be approached."

There is nothing we as a club

can do unless we are told by the supporters," he added.

The Chatham News photographer who was nearly hit by the dart, Bernard Steel, commented: "As I made my way around the pitch to the main stand at half-time, a spectator pointed out a bottle which had been thrown on to the grass and I removed it."

"The players had just taken the field after half-time when the dart flew past me and landed

a few feet away. Later, when I picked it up, I saw another dart on the ground."

"During recent home games I have also seen coke and coins thrown on the pitch."

"A while back I was struck on the shoulder with a hard-boiled egg—it seems funny now but it certainly hurt at the time," he added.



One of the two darts hurled at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. (PM6)



Two of the main attractions for the John Simpson Testimonial Season have been the now well-known "mini girls" and the white 1968 Ford Anglia car which will soon be given to one of the Gillingham goalkeeper's fans in his "200 club." And this week-end the car, offered to John at a very low price by Swale Motors of Sittingbourne as a contribution to the fund, will be brought out of the wrappers and on show at the home match with Barrow tomorrow (Saturday). In the picture with John and the girls is Mr. Jimmy White, of Swale Motors.

No 38
H.T. 1-1
attend: 3319

Wembley record

SIGNED by Gillingham at the end of January from Southend—he figured in an exchange deal with Howard Moore—26-year-old right winger Derek Woodley is a former English schoolboy international.

Born at Isleworth (Middlesex), Woodley aroused the interest of West Ham with his English international schoolboy appearances. He hit a goal in 13 seconds against Wales at Wembley—the fastest goal ever scored in soccer's most famous arena, having scored a hat-trick the week before against the Eire Schoolboys.

At 16 he joined the ground staff at West Ham, signing on for the famous East London club on the same day as the Hammers' England centre forward Geoff Hurst.

After five seasons at Upton Park, he joined Southend where he spent nearly five seasons before signing for Charlton. But after six months at the Valley he returned to Southend from where Gillingham signed him.

A fast raider, who specialises in the hard low centre, Woodley numbers water-skiing and ten-pin bowling among his other sporting interests.



HOW TO BEAT THE DEADLINE

THE artificial scramble decreed by the Football League every March 16 in order to beat the transfer deadline produced just as much activity as ever even in these times of potential austerity—but I doubt if any club showed more activity than Mansfield Town, still haunted by the relegation fear.

The sale of their two excellent wing halves Peter Morris and Dick Edwards has netted between £60,000 and £70,000, Edwards went on Friday for £30,000 to Aston Villa.

In the meantime Mansfield were paying moderate sums for Nick Sharkey and Jim Goodfellow of Leicester, £6,000 to Coventry for Dudley Nourse and £8,000 to Derby County for Phil Waller. Phew! And of course, they should have left themselves with a bit over to pay off a bit of that overdraft or resume work on that new stand.

And of course, they must also make sure of avoiding relegation.

Among other late Third Division moves we note that Stan Jones, having left Walsall for West Brom in 1960, comes back home again to Fellows Park without a fee on his head.

Coventry also off-loaded Johnny Key on to the Orient.

who paid £1,000 which was about as much as they can afford at Brisbane Road these days.

As a matter of interest, the total transfer fees by League clubs up to midnight last Saturday was £4,071,000. The previous record was two and a half million last season.

This, of course, is either ridiculous or a good way of beating the tax man. But for those who blame the top few for keeping the prices high—don't forget that Manchester United are the only club not to have been involved in a major transfer deal since the previous March 16.

★ ★ ★

DIVISION III

	P	W	D	L	R	A	P
Torquay	34	18	8	8	48	38	44
Bury	33	17	8	10	74	53	42
Shrewsbury	33	14	12	9	50	43	40
Swindon	33	14	11	10	59	35	39
Walsall	34	15	8	11	53	48	38
Brighton	35	12	14	9	42	37	38
Stockport	36	15	8	13	63	51	38
Reading	35	15	8	12	49	49	29
Barrow	34	16	5	13	52	41	37
Oxford U	34	13	11	10	50	43	37
Gillingham	35	13	11	11	47	47	37
Wattford	35	15	6	14	55	40	36
Southport	34	14	7	13	52	51	35
Peterborough	34	14	7	13	56	55	35
Bournemouth	33	12	11	12	38	40	35
Norwich	35	11	11	13	46	51	33
Bristol R	34	12	7	15	53	38	31
Oldham	33	13	4	16	45	52	30
Mansfield	33	11	8	16	43	52	30
Tranmere	34	10	9	15	52	63	29
Orient	31	9	10	12	35	45	28
Colchester	34	9	10	15	36	60	28
Scthorpe	36	8	11	17	48	65	27
Grimsby	34	8	7	19	37	56	25

A PUSHOVER FOR JOHNNY SIMPSON



With a look of grim determination Gillingham footballer John Simpson pushed over an outsize pile of pennies at the Robin Hood, Upper Halling on Monday! The proceeds will go towards a party for the old folk of the village. [P1430]

GILLS LIMP TO HOLLOW

Brown goals in second double of the season

Gillingham 3, Barrow 0

WIN

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torquay	34	18	8	8	48	38	44
Bury	35	17	8	10	74	52	42
Shrewsbury	34	14	11	9	50	43	39
Swindon	34	14	10	10	59	55	38
Walsall	34	15	8	11	55	46	38
Stockport	34	15	8	11	49	45	38
Barrow	34	15	5	13	52	41	37
Oxford	34	13	11	10	50	43	37
Brighton	34	12	13	9	41	26	37
Gillingham	35	13	11	11	47	47	37
Reading	34	15	7	12	47	46	37
Watford	34	15	6	13	54	38	36
Peterborough	34	14	7	13	56	55	35
Bournemouth	35	12	11	12	38	40	35
Southport	33	13	7	13	48	48	33
Bristol R.	34	12	7	15	33	58	31
Northampton	34	10	11	13	42	50	31
Oldham	35	13	4	18	45	52	30
Tranmere	32	10	8	14	51	59	28
Manfield	34	10	8	16	41	51	28
Orient	31	9	10	12	23	45	28
Colchester	34	9	10	15	38	60	28
Scunthorpe	35	8	10	17	43	64	26
Grimsby	33	7	7	19	33	56	21

Goalscorers: League — Brown (13), Gibbs (11), Crickmore (5), Machin (4), Riddick (1), Yeo (3), Meredith (2), Hall, Hunt, Theav, Moffatt.
League Cup — Crickmore (2), Gibbs, Riddick, Yeo.

A YAWNING waste of a game. Tip-tap Gillingham stuttered to a hollow victory and injury-handicapped Barrow made them fight every inch of the way for their second double of the season (writes ALAN HILL).

This scrambling affair strengthened my conviction that the promised land of the Second Division will prove a Waterloo for the current crop of title aspirants.

As a monument to mediocrity this Third Division has few rivals and Gills' manager Basil Hayward may well be right when he says that his team is as good as any in the division.

I cannot dispute this verdict, but I can say that Saturday's pedestrian display ought to hasten changes in attack.

The flattering scoreline masks another tale of missed opportunities. Gillingham should be burdened by a heavy guilt complex after failing to master a Barrow side who lost the services of goalkeeper Fred Else, carried off suffering from concussion in the 37th minute.

Substitute forward Jim Mulvaney deputised in goal for the whole of the second half. He was beaten twice, but otherwise rarely troubled in his unaccustomed vigil.

A brace of goals by Bill Brown put him at the top of the Priestfield scoring chart, but there was never any suggestion of the holocaust that might have been expected in the circumstances.

Indeed, Barrow immeasurably sharper in midfield, were deprived of equality by their own shortcomings near goal.

Bill Williams, short of match practice after his recent injury, had a testing first-half against the slightly-built Mulholland and his lack of assurance produced uncertainty among his defensive colleagues.

A gusty wind swirled across the ground to tax ball control and Barrow looked the better equipped with fluent bouts of passing.

Alert header

Simpson punched out a low cross by the dangerous Storf in an early raid by the visitors, but Woodley was close to scoring direct from a corner when his inswinging flag-kick thudded against the upright.

Storf shot over after a misunderstanding between Williams and Riddick and an alert header by Yeo was saved under the bar by Else.

Gibbs, splendidly released by Brown, allowed himself to be robbed by Harrison in the box and then headed over the bar from a Woodley cross.

Gillingham forced a stream of corners and from one of these Else collapsed in a melee of players. Riddick hobbled out of the ruck, but Else cradling his head in pain was carried to the touchline after a lengthy hold-up for treatment.

Full-back Jim Mallon took over in goal and Gillingham struggled into the lead in the 48th minute of an extended half. The persistent Gibbs cleverly backheeled in the goalmouth and Yeo raced in to force the ball into the net.

During the interval ambulance men revealed that Else was suffering from double vision, but was recovering and would travel back home with the Barrow team.

Indecisive Riddick

Mulvaney was in goal on the resumption and Gillingham increased their lead in the third minute of the half. Another Woodley corner eluded Gibbs, but the unmarked Brown rocketed the ball into the net from close range.

Barrow hit back and Simpson saved at the foot of the post from Hartland after an indecisive Riddick had made a hash of his clearance.

Fortunately for Gillingham's peace of mind the visitors could not ally goalmouth thrust to their midfield power and Storf blazed hurriedly wide with the Gills' defence in a desperate tangle.

Gillingham limped almost apologetically to victory and added a third goal following a pre-arranged practice move in the 87th minute.

Yeo dummied the Barrow defence by racing away from a free-kick awarded on the edge of the box. Woodley slipped the ball into the area and Brown darted past the wall of defenders to turn the ball into the net.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furlie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat. Sub: Arnott.

Barrow: Else (Mulvaney); Mallon, Bebbington; Harrison, Arrowsmith, McCarthy; Ellison, Appleton, Mulholland, Hartland, Storf.

Referee: Mr. J. H. Yates (Redditch, Worcestershire). Attendance: 4,987.



BARROW 'keeper Fred Else cradles his head in pain as ambulance men prepare to carry him to the dressing room.

H.T. 1-0
attend: 4987
No. 39



SUBSTITUTE goalkeeper Jim Mulvaney palms the ball over the bar under pressure from Brian Gibbs in a Gills' attack on Saturday. (13/428/12/68)



BILL BROWN... Top of the Priestfield scoring chart.



GILLS' attackers Brian Gibbs and Gordon Riddick tangle with Barrow goalkeeper Fred Else in a penalty area incident which had an unfortunate sequel at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. Else collapsed after the collision and was carried off suffering from concussion. (6/428/12/68)

HAYWARD REPLIES:

All-out attacks would have aided Barrow

TIGHT defence at the back padlocked the gate against the Barrow attack and laid the foundations of victory, replied Gillingham manager Basil Hayward in response to criticism following Saturday's game at Priestfield Stadium.

"Too much emphasis on attack would have played into Barrow's hands. They like teams who come at them," said Mr. Hayward.

He added: "We broke through three times to score and I am well satisfied with this win."

Mr. Hayward considers that his team still has an outside chance of promotion. "We have been in the running all season and now we must keep on winning our remaining games."

Gillingham visit Oxford tomorrow and their programme also includes home games against lowly Colchester and Scunthorpe over the Easter Holiday.

Wing-half Ray Bailey played for the Reserves in their 2-0 win at Leicester. There are fears that he may have to undergo a cartilage operation.

Carl Gilbert and Booby Folds scored for Gillingham at Filbert Street and the Stadium's Youth side shared the points in a 3-3 draw against West Ham in a South Eastern Counties League game at Chadwell Heath.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	P	A	Pts
Bury	41	21	8	12	81	57	50
Torquay	41	20	10	11	65	45	50
Shrewsbury	41	18	13	10	59	46	49
Oxford	41	18	12	11	60	48	48
Stockport	41	18	10	13	64	58	45
Reading	41	18	9	14	60	55	45
Peterborough	41	17	10	14	64	60	44
Swindon	40	14	13	11	64	42	43
Barrow	41	18	7	16	56	51	43
Brighton	41	14	13	12	50	48	43
Gillingham	40	16	11	13	53	53	43
Watford	40	18	6	16	67	46	42
Walsall	40	16	10	14	62	53	42
Bohemian	41	14	14	13	50	48	42
Southport	39	16	9	14	59	56	41
Bristol R.	40	15	8	17	62	64	38
Oldham	40	16	5	19	55	56	37
Mansfield	40	12	11	17	48	55	35
Tranmere	40	12	11	17	58	65	35
Northampton	41	12	11	18	50	64	35
Orient	38	10	14	14	41	54	34
Colchester	42	9	11	21	43	76	29
Grimsby	39	10	8	21	42	62	28
Scunthorpe	40	8	11	21	47	79	27

WILLIAMS' SLIP HERALDS GILLS' DOWNFALL

Oxford United 3, Gillingham 0
Harrington (63), Atkinson (G.) (77)
Bullock (88)

ANY hopes Gills must have conjured up of promotion disappeared on Saturday when they were soundly beaten at Headington.

They were very much in the hunt until the interval despite having some amazing escapes, but collapsed afterwards when they had the driving wind and rain behind them.

Oxford surprisingly played much better with the elements against them and a bad mistake by Bill Williams set them on the road to success and boosted their own lingering hopes of promotion.

How Gills must have wished that Graham Atkinson's transfer to Shrewsbury had gone through the previous week. He was the chief wrecker with a devastating display at inside-left.

Gillingham were unable to match his intelligent positioning, ball play and distribution, but they had good wingers in Woodley and Moffat.

Offside

Unfortunately for the visitors Woodley missed two chances in the opening minutes before Oxford settled down. A goal at this stage and the result might well have been different.

Gibbs headed a right-wing cross past Barron, but the referee ruled that the Gills' inside-forward was offside.

Oxford did not allow Gillingham any more chances and Ron Atkinson and Shuker began to dominate in midfield. The Gillingham defence was hard pressed to contain the home attack and their own forwards never functioned again as an effective force.

Skipper Gordon Riddick stood out during this period and he once broke through to combine with Woodley in an interchange of passes which ended with Woodley testing Barron with a fine shot.

Gillingham's star was the over-worked Simpson, who made many fine saves and deserved more than his share of luck.

Sloan headed a Harrington cross against the underside of the bar in the 17th minute and five minutes later centre-forward Bullock sent in a gentle header from a right-wing cross and again the ball rebounded off the woodwork.

Later an Evanson corner bounced along the top of the cross bar, with Simpson in

desperate trouble.

Gillingham brought on substitute John Arnott for Yeo who had slight concussion and used him as a double centre-half with the intention of playing for a point.

They kept Oxford out for another 18 minutes when Williams made his only mistake of the match. He completely mis-kicked a bouncing ball and Skeen, who replaced Evanson at the interval, slipped the ball to Harrington who gave Simpson no chance.

Gillingham hit back and Woodley produced a superb run which was wasted with Moffat failing to control the ball.

Simpson made another capital save from Harrington, but slackness in the defence led to Oxford's second goal.

Sloan misheaded a long clearance from Kyle but still had time to chase the ball and pass to Graham Atkinson who scored easily from 10 yards.

Gillingham continued to defend well and looked like preventing further goals until Bullock gathered a loose ball 30 yards out and left Simpson stranded with a great shot.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo (Arnott), Brown, Moffat.

Referee: Mr. R. A. Paine (Hounslow).

Attendance: 5,516.



Another flying Simpson save but this time from Oxford's Graham Atkinson. In close attendance is Gills' pivot, Bill Williams. (S18)



Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson goes full length to save a power drive from Oxford's Bullock, watched by Mel Machin and substitute John Arnott.

Mike [S17]

No 1
H.T. 0-0
attend: 5,516

COLLINS LEADS TITLE BID

POCKET general Bobby Collins, the former Leeds and Scottish international inside-forward, currently leading the Bury promotion challenge, should be in action in the crowd-puller attraction at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow night (kick-off 7.30), writes **ALAN HILL**.

Collins was signed by Bury from Leeds in a £50,000 bid to avert relegation from the Second Division last season. The Lancastrians also signed burly centre-forward Alex Dawson from Preston and stylish Cardiff winger Greg Farrell.

'Better than Friday'

With 76 goals the Gigg Laners are among the top scorers in the league, but they are suspect in defence and have shown uncertain form in recent weeks. They are second in the table one point behind Torquay and have played one game more than the Devonians.

Gillingham right-winger Derek Woodley, who pulled a muscle at Oxford last Saturday, is doubtful for the game but Bill Williams, des-

pite a badly cut shin should be able to play.

The rearranged kick-off time to avoid a clash with the televised Grand National in the afternoon has prompted many supporters to suggest that a Friday night match might have attracted a better gate.

Manager Basil Hayward said yesterday that clubs had to give the league prior notice before the season that they intended to play games on Friday night.

"In my view Saturday night games are better than Friday. I would be in favour of evening kick-offs on Saturdays at the beginning and end of the season," said the Gills' chief.

Gillingham surrendered a 2-0 lead and were beaten 3-2 by Bury at Gigg Lane last November.

The Stadium reserve team are again without a game tomorrow, but the youth side are away to Fulham.

GIBBS 'GOAL' WAS VALID—HAYWARD

AN unfortunate lapse by Gillingham centre-half Bill Williams, who miskicked to present Oxford with their opening goal, was the turning point in the windswept game at Headington on Saturday.

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward said yesterday: "Until then we had never looked in danger of losing a point. The high wind probably had something to do with Williams' mistake and the defence came apart after Harrington's goal."

Mr. Hayward said they seemed to have been robbed of a valid goal when Brian Gibbs netted, but was ruled offside in the first half.

Brian Yeo, who suffered concussion at Oxford, was much better after the game and should be fit for the crowd-puller attraction of Third Division pace-setters Bury tomorrow (7.30 p.m.).

Ray Bailey and Peter Hall

both suffering from knee injuries, visited a specialist on Monday.

Anyone for promotion?

FLUCTUATING fortunes in a seesaw division have given Gillingham several bites at the cherry this season and the startling evidence signposts the way for any one of a dozen teams to swagger into the Second Division (writes **ALAN HILL**).

Pace-makers Bury (Gillingham's opponents a week on Saturday), and Torquay, have been distinctly uneasy in recent weeks and Gills' manager Basil Hayward still clings optimistically and not without justification, to his promotion hopes.

Gillingham will probably be unchanged for the game against Oxford United at Headington tomorrow. Oxford (37), have the same number of points as the Gills but are above them in the table because of a better goal average. Oxford were beaten 2-1 at Priestfield Stadium last October.

Goalkeeper Derek Bellotti, who injured an ankle in training this week, is the latest Gills' casualty. Ray Bailey and Peter Hall, both suffering from knee injuries, are to see a specialist on Monday.

Tomorrow's probable team: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat.

Gillingham Reserves without a game tomorrow.



DEREK WOODLEY . . . Doubtful starter for tomorrow's game against Bury at Priestfield Stadium.



RAY BAILEY . . . Visit to specialist on Monday to check on persistent knee injury which has kept him out of action in recent weeks.

Champagne victory in Grand National spectacular

Gillingham 2, Bury 0

Brown (21), Gibbs (63)

UNQUALIFIED hurrahs for non-stop Gillingham, who hurtled over their own personal Becher's and reduced title-chasing Bury to peevish tantrums at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday night (writes ALAN HILL).

Star ratings were shared by reoman defenders Mel Machin, Dennis Hunt and John Furie, whose immaculate covering and tight marking muffled the goal threat of the Football League's leading scorers.

Indeed, 76-goal Bury were restricted to three clear-cut chances, one of which was woefully squandered by George Jones in the opening minutes, and were finally forced to rely on speculative long-range marksmanship.

CONTRAST

Gillingham's teamwork in contrast to their recent ineptitude bubbled over with enthusiasm and the champagne corks of victory were popping long before the end.

The Priestfield supporters, who braved the untimely downpour, were rewarded by

a vastly entertaining game and the result was never in doubt after **Bill Brown's** 21st minute goal—an adroit flick through a crowd of defenders which wrong-footed Bury keeper Neil Ramsbottom.

Bury's chief claim for remembrance lay in the poise of young **Jimmy Kerr**, a First Division player in the making, but this was artistry in a vacuum and the Lancastrians now hotly pursued by Shrewsbury and Oxford lost vital ground in the championship race.

GIFT CHANCE

Collins and Parry stage-managed an alert opening by Bury, and **Bill Williams** slipped on the rain-soaked turf to present Jones with a gift chance.

The long-striding leader burst through to strike the ball against Simpson's leg as the Gills' keeper came out to narrow the angle.

Simpson next saved from **Farrell**, but **Lindsay** missed a clearing header when the ball dipped sharply from a **Moffatt** cross.

Furie showed early signs that he had the measure of the dangerous **Farrell** and he brought the accuracy of a rugby place-kicker to a series of teasing free-kicks from out on the touch-line.

Ramsbottom had to step back smartly to tip over as one kick almost sneaked under the bar.

Bury showed their teeth and bristling power in break-outs from defence and **Machin** had to put an arm lock on Jones to save a dangerous situation. **Kerr's** stinging free-kick was brilliantly saved by **Simpson**.

Parnell cleared from near the line when **Gibbs** hooked an angled shot past the 'keeper' and the Gills stormed back to take the lead with a goal of impudent cheek in the 21st minute.

Another testing free-kick by **Furie** was punched out by **Ramsbottom**. **Machin** crashed the ball back into a ruck of players and **Brown**, whirling like a spinning top, scored the all-important goal with the impertinence of a choirboy with a catapult in his surplice.

Tony Thear, who deputised for the injured **Woodley** on the right wing, next dived heroically to head wide of the up-right and **Yeo** drove on target from 30 yards as the Gills sizzled in an attacking purple patch.

Jones ought to have equalised from an inch-perfect cross by **Kerr** to the far post—his too-casual header floated outside a post to the relief of the Gills.

Gills dominated the closing quarter of the half and **Yeo** unleashed a fierce snap shot which made **Ramsbottom** blink and save with a fumbled parry.

Gills survived a nervous opening on the resumption and **Hunt** made a valuable clearance to relieve the pressure.

Gibbs, looking sharper than we have seen him for weeks, volleyed over after crisp approach work by **Hunt** and **Brown**.

ALARM

Ragged Bury showed their alarm with petulant histrionics and **Thear** and **Hunt** were bowled over with uncereemonious and bruising tackles.

Brian Gibbs sealed a memorable victory with a 63rd minute goal and in a late spurt by the visitors, **Simpson** dived to save at the foot of the post from **Farrell**. **Lindsay** netted for Bury but the whistle had gone for offside.

The Lancastrians could have no grumbles about the result and this was a frustrating night for their much-vaunted attack against a superbly disciplined Gills defence.

Bury sourly conceded victory and **Farrell** was lucky to escape with a booking after a retaliatory kick on **Furie**.

Teams:
Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Thear, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffatt. Sub: Arnott.

Bury: Ramsbottom; Parnell, Tinney; Parry, Turner, Lindsay; Farrell, Kerr, Jones, Collins, Owen. Sub: Hughes.

Referee: Mr. K. Lynn (Wolverhampton). Attendance: 6,201.

Saturday night out for all the family

THE GRAND NATIONAL spectacular at Priestfield Stadium emphasised Gillingham manager **Basil Hayward's** pre-match comment that Saturday night football would pull in the crowds.

Mr. Hayward, who has high hopes of continuing the experiment next season, yesterday praised the 6,201 fans who roared the Gills to victory over Bury in the rainstorm on Saturday night.

The Gills' chief said: "Small clubs like ourselves have got to consider the changing way of life. At one time the husband went to the match on Saturday afternoons and the wife and daughters did the shopping."

"Now Saturday afternoons are given over to family affairs and we at Gillingham must take careful note of this if we are to prosper as a club."

Mr. Hayward said there were many more women than usual at the game against Bury and he had no doubt that local footballers also took the advantage of the evening kick-off after their own games in the afternoon.

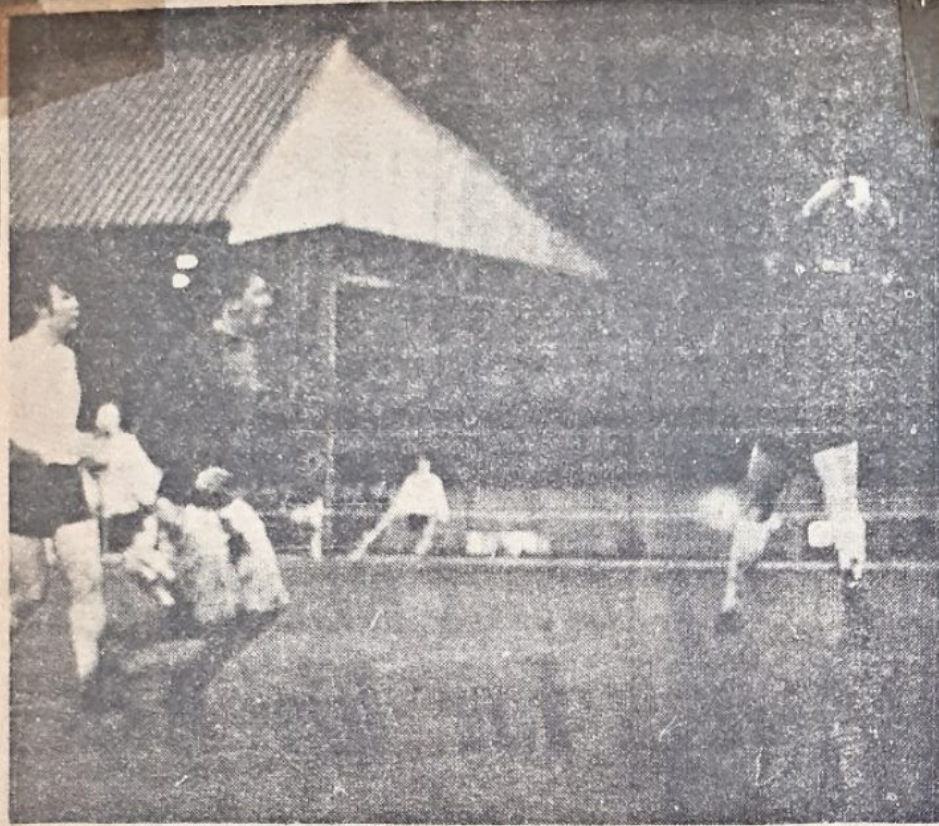
"The important thing," he added, "is that there are people in the Medway Towns who will watch Gillingham given the opportunity."

Gillingham right-winger **Derek Woodley**, who missed the game against Bury, is still under treatment for a pulled muscle and wing-half **Ray** will shortly enter hospital for an operation on his knee.



DENNIS HUNT . . . Star rating in superb Gills' defence.

No 40
H.T. 1-0
attend: 6,201



BURY goalkeeper Neil Ramsbottom foils the Gills in one of the many home attacks at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday night. Brian Gibbs (left of the picture) races up to challenge. (20/439/14/68)

Woodley may return

GILLINGHAM right-winger Derek Woodley, came through a strenuous training session yesterday without any ill-effects, but manager Basil Hayward was awaiting a fitness report before announcing his team to meet Bournemouth at Dean Court tomorrow (writes Alan Hill).

The substitution of Woodley for Tony Thear will be the only change and manager Hayward rightly gives a vote of confidence to his team after their sparkling display against Third Division pacemakers Bury on Grand National night.

Team: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley or Thear, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffatt.

GILLS' EXCURSION

Gillingham have arranged a special excursion train for tomorrow's game at Bournemouth. The train will leave Gillingham at 10.40 a.m., stopping at Chatham (10.43) and Rochester (10.46), and arriving at Boscombe Pokesdown at 1.43 p.m.

The return train leaves Pokesdown at 5.36 p.m., and arrives back in Gillingham at 8.21 p.m. Stops will also be made at Rochester and Chatham on the return journey.

Restaurant and buffet facilities will be available on the excursion train and return tickets priced 26s., can be obtained from the front office at Priestfield Stadium between 6 and 8 p.m. tonight.

★ ★ ★
Eastcourt, currently lying third in the Kent Amateur League (Premier Division) table, meet new league opponents, Harland Social, at New Eltham tomorrow.

Roger Radford continues on the right-wing in place of Sayer, who is out for the rest of the season with torn ligaments, and Norman Dolby takes over at inside-right with David Jones switching to right-half.

Gills in five-a-side soccer tournament

GILLINGHAM are among the 80 Football League clubs who will be taking part in a new Daily Express promotion—a national five-a-side championship—

They will line up against Second Division promotion contenders, Ipswich and Portsmouth and other Southern clubs in the south Regional Round to be played at the Bracknell Sports Centre on Monday May 6.

Other clubs in this section are Aldershot, Bournemouth, Luton, Reading, Brighton, Norwich, Southend, Oxford and Torquay.

The competition will begin with knock-out matches in eight regional centres. Up to 12 local teams will go into each regional tournament.

Regional winners will go on to the national final at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Wednesday May 15.

The games will be played according to the five-a-side rules devised by the Central Council of Physical Recreation, and each half will last six minutes.

Proceeds of the tournament will go to the National Sports Development Fund, the Paraplegic Sports Endowment Fund and the Police Dependents' Trust.

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

DIVISION III

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torquay United	35	18	9	8	49	39	45
Bury	36	18	8	10	76	53	44
Shrewsbury	36	15	12	9	51	43	42
Oxford United	36	15	11	10	55	44	41
Swindon	36	14	12	10	60	36	40
Reading	36	16	8	12	53	51	40
Walsall	35	15	9	11	56	47	39
Watford	36	16	6	14	59	40	38
Barrow	35	16	6	13	53	42	38
Stockport	36	15	8	13	53	47	38
Brighton	36	12	14	10	42	41	38
GILLINGHAM	36	13	11	12	47	50	37
Peterborough	35	14	8	13	57	56	36
Bournemouth	36	12	12	12	39	41	36
Southport	34	14	7	13	52	51	35
Bristol Rovers	35	13	7	15	55	58	33
Northampton	36	11	11	14	46	53	33
Oldham Athletic	36	13	5	18	47	54	31
Tranmere	35	11	9	15	55	63	31
Mansfield	36	11	8	17	43	53	30
Orient	33	9	11	12	37	51	29
Colchester	36	9	10	17	41	67	28
Scunthorpe	36	8	11	17	44	65	27
Grimsby	35	8	7	20	36	58	23

FOOTBALL COMBINATION (DIVISION ONE)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Birmingham Res.	20	15	2	3	47	18	32
Tottenham Res.	19	14	2	3	53	19	30
Plymouth Res.	19	12	3	4	39	21	27
Chelsea Res.	22	11	3	8	33	32	25
Ipswich Res.	21	10	2	9	37	36	22
Southampton Res.	19	9	3	7	34	30	21
Leicester Res.	19	7	6	6	35	39	20
Coventry Res.	20	7	5	8	35	34	19
Arsenal Res.	19	7	4	8	19	20	18
Walsall Res.	18	7	4	7	30	28	18
GILLINGHAM RES.	20	6	4	10	26	32	16
West Ham Res.	19	6	4	9	32	41	16
Peterborough Res.	20	5	3	12	31	46	13
Swindon Res.	22	5	2	15	20	41	12
Northampton Res.	19	2	3	14	26	58	7

Gills ignore flag request

A REQUEST to hoist the Fourth Division championship and club flags at Priestfield Stadium on match days has been ignored by the Gillingham Football Club.

Supporters might argue that there is little excuse for flag-waving at present, but correspondent Mr. W. G. Bulley, of 37, St. John's Road, Gillingham, complains of the lack of interest by the club in ignoring his request.

Mr. Bulley says that subscribers who contributed to the purchase of the two flags are indignant that the banners are not paraded at the Stadium.

"How can one help a club that will not help itself?" asks Mr. Bulley.



With Bury defenders stranded near the far upright Gillingham's Bob Moffat raises his arms in salute as Brian Gibbs' (not in the picture) shot from an acute angle enters the net for the Stadium club's second goal. [P1613]



Action in the Bury penalty area as Brian Yeo and Tony Thear, watched by Bill Brown and Brian Gibbs, challenge Bury defenders for a right wing cross. [P1610]



Bournemouth outside-right Kevin White receives the congratulations of a team-mate after scoring the fourth goal against Gillingham. Inside-right East follows the ball into the net, watched by Gills' Bill Williams and a grounded John Simpson. [S12]

GILLS SLUMP TO WORST DEFEAT

Bournemouth 4, Gillingham 0

GILLINGHAM floundered to their worst defeat of the season at Dean Court on Saturday and the player who sent them reeling in a disastrous return with the "Cherries" was Bournemouth's teenage leader, John Hold, who grabbed a sensational first half hat-trick.

It was in the last 27 minutes of the first half that Hold virtually settled Gillingham's fate for former Gills' boss, Fred Cox, who made five changes after a run that had not produced a solitary win in his club's last six outings.

Gillingham brought in Derek Woodley for Tony Thear. This was the only change in a line-up that defeated Bury the previous week — but there was no repeat of the fighting and determined performance that shook the title challengers.

Stormtroopers would be an apt word for the Boscombe strikers — so immeasurably stronger and faster than their meek and mild counterparts. Here was the greatest gap that separated the two sides. Moreover, Gillingham's hard pressed defence had to answer for more errors than in most games this season and the team slump reached alarming dimensions.

Bournemouth could afford to be kind in their second half consolidation. The stormtroopers weren't really needed any more.

One might say that 'keeper John Simpson was not entirely blameless for two of the goals but who would deny his brilliance and stubbornness in preventing a far worse defeat? No other Gillingham player could have gained as good a marking. Needless to add Simpson was the busiest man on the field and John Furie also earned commendation for more success than failure.

Most of the remainder will want to forget this debacle for not having done enough.

The "Cherries" forced corners galore in the first half and miraculously Gillingham held out for 17 minutes. The Reds were frequently able to attack en masse, so token were the Gills' counters and challenging ability. As we have seen so often, the ball usually came back with interest and dire threat.

UNDER FIRE

Simpson was quickly tested by Naylor, and a grounded Hunt somehow contrived to foil a dangerous East. Simpson made magnificent full length saves from Hold and East, then denied Gulliver, Stocks and Bolton in turn and cleared several well placed flag kicks before the rot started. The goals just had to come.

Another corner saw Simpson come out and punch away from East, but HOLD was on the ball in a trice and a 25 yard left foot drive just inside the post was a manager's dream of a shot.

No sooner had Bournemouth tasted blood than Simpson had to fust out a Stocks' effort and then Furie kicked off the line from Hold.

Stocks, the former Gillingham defender, made yet another attack bid with a dashing run and cross that should have been cleared. But the Gills' rear-guard got into a hopeless tangle and HOLD struck again for goal number two in the 23rd minute.

Soon afterwards Stocks drove in powerfully during a melee and Machin happened to be in the way.

Too tentative, weak Gills managed their first shot of the match after nearly half an hour! Woodley shot strongly from long range and Jones tipped the ball over the bar. The Boscombe 'keeper had had something to do at long last. He was not to be seriously tested again.

Twice more in quick time Simpson had to give away corners, harried Gillingham defenders made more mistakes, but Simpson saved the situation yet again with an acrobatic dive to turn by the post a swift Adams' header when Gulliver came through and centred.

The Bournemouth blows were many. They all chased and worried like demons and the Gillingham defence that had held high-scoring Bury just crumpled in confusion. There was so little to help them up front.

For the second time Furie cleared on the line, this time to foil Kevin White, and right on the interval Bournemouth were three up when White and Gulliver paved the way for Hold's treble. The ball seemed to be deflected en route and on-the-spot HOLD calmly steered his shot home.

Those rare Gillingham replies in the meantime amounted to nothing. When Furie dashed through Riddick headed —

top and a Woodley-made opening

— Gills best ball of the match — saw Brown robbed by ex-Gillingham Jimmy White. The Boscombe skipper and his colleagues had so little to worry them.

Gillingham manager, Basil Hayward, thought that Hold was offside for the third goal but our impression was that the teenage leader who played on and the referee did not hesitate about his decision.

By courtesy of a relaxed Bournemouth, Gillingham showed up a bit better after the break but the goal treat was just not there following mid-field flattery.

Thankfully, there was something to write about from the Gills' angle in the 52nd minute when Hunt and Yeo initiated a Gibbs' getaway. The former Bournemouth player beat 'keeper Jones but his low cross went unaccepted.

Both Gibbs and Riddick were well off target in other pitiful Gillingham raids and in the 68th minute Boscombe notched their fourth goal. Once more Stocks was the instigator and Hold's long centre was headed into the corner of the net by KEVIN WHITE at nearly 15 yards range.

CAUGHT FLAT

But this should have been a defender's ball. Hunt, however, was finally caught flat-footed and Simpson scampered across too late to prevent the worst as the ball rolled in near the post. The home crowd had not clamoured in vain for more.

Two more of the better Gillingham attempts were also fruitless. Woodley, in the fastest piece of Gillingham raiding, outran the home defence but Brown was beaten to the centre and when Riddick got his head to a Meredith corner kick, Gibbs was unable to make contact near goal.

John Meredith took over from Bob Moffat for the last 20 minutes and the former needed more time to get into his first team stride again.

Full back Gulliver caused more alarm in the Gillingham camp when he raced through and hit the top of the crossbar and Simpson brought off another full length save from Adams.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Furie, Hunt, Riddick, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Moffat (Meredith).

BOURNEMOUTH: Jones; Gulliver, White (J.); Naylor, Stocks, Bumstead; White (K.), East, Hold, Adams, Bolton.

Attendance: 5,115.

No. 67

H.T. 2-3-0

attend: 5,115

'We hope to take 4 points from Easter fixtures'—Hayward

GILLINGHAM, with few injuries from the Bournemouth match—described this week by Gills' manager Basil Hayward as a "disaster" — look set for a successful holiday week-end which could see them climbing towards the leaders again.

"The only serious injury was to full back John Furie," said Mr. Hayward, "but he will probably be fit for Saturday."

Gillingham's opposition on Saturday comes from Colchester, with a 3 p.m. kick-off at Priestfield Stadium.

On Monday, again at Priestfield, Gillingham meet bottom-of-the-league Scunthorpe. There should have been a third fixture, against Scunthorpe away, but this was played in January and resulted in a 2-1 defeat for the Gills.

"Though both sides will be fighting hard to avoid relegation, we hope to take four points from the holiday fixtures," said Mr. Hayward.

Gillingham have already met Colchester once this season—at Colchester in November when the teams shared two goals.

Gills meet Torquay in five-a-side event

GILLINGHAM have been drawn against Torquay United in the first round of the Southern Region group in the Daily Express five-a-side soccer tournament at the Bracknell Sports Centre on Monday May 6. On the following day Gillingham meet Orient in a arranged league fixture at Brisbane Road.



Gillingham defenders Bill Williams and Dennis Hunt, with Bournemouth forwards East and Hold, watch as John Simpson makes a goal-line save. [S26]



Gillingham's John Simpson safely holds the ball during a Bournemouth raid, with Bill Williams and Gordon Riddick in close attendance. [S10]

ENDURANCE TEST FOR GILLS' FANS

Gillingham 1, Colchester 0

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Torquay	35	18	9	8	49	39	45
Bury	36	18	8	10	76	63	44
Shrewsbury	36	15	12	9	51	43	42
Swindon	36	14	12	10	60	36	40
Reading	36	16	8	12	53	51	40
Oxford	35	14	11	10	53	43	39
Walsall	35	16	9	11	56	47	29
Watford	36	16	6	14	59	40	38
Barrow	35	16	6	13	63	42	38
Stockport	36	15	8	13	53	51	38
Brighton	36	12	14	10	42	41	38
Gillingham	36	13	11	12	47	50	37
Peterboro'	35	14	8	13	57	56	36
Bournemouth	36	12	12	12	39	41	36
Southport	34	14	7	13	62	51	35
Bristol R.	35	13	7	15	55	58	33
Northampton	36	11	11	15	46	53	33
Oldham	36	13	5	18	47	54	31
Mansfield	36	11	8	17	43	53	30
Tranmere	34	10	9	15	52	63	29
Orient	32	9	11	12	37	47	28
Colchester	35	9	10	16	40	65	28
Scunthorpe	36	8	11	17	44	65	27
Grimsby	35	8	7	20	36	58	25

OUT-OF-STEP Gillingham stumbled to victory in a drab Easter soccer parade at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

For two-thirds of the game they faltered against relegation strugglers Colchester, who were seeking their first away win since November 11.

This was another endurance test for the Medway Towns' fans and industrious Colchester, who fielded a completely reshuffled attack, had their

chances to clinch victory in the first half.

Full-back Dennis Hunt cleared from the line from Colchester leader Jim Oliver and the unmarked Alan Shires headed over the bar from a precision cross by Joslyn.

Gillingham had to thank Mel Machin for his salvage work in defence and Brian Gibbs' 75th minute winner after Derek Woodley had volleyed against the bar ensured that the cash registers would ring again on Monday.

Hesitancy in making the final telling pass repeatedly halted attacks by both sides but the visitors belied their lowly position in the table with some crisp approach work.

Yeo tested Adams with a 25-yard snap shot and over-elaboration by Woodley cost him a chance after he had

worked out a shooting position on the edge of the box.

Bobby Blackwood substituted for the injured Martin in the 55th minute and the increasingly dangerous Woodley initiated Gills' best attack of the game.

The right-winger jinked his way across field and then released a flighted reverse pass for the diving Riddick to head low into Adams' arms.

The Colchester keeper fumbled a Meredith cross to enable Gillingham to take the lead in the 75th minute.

Woodley pounced to slam a shot against the underside of the bar and Gibbs roared in to score from the rebound.

Colchester were reduced to 10 men when Shires left the field with a shoulder injury in the 80th minute.

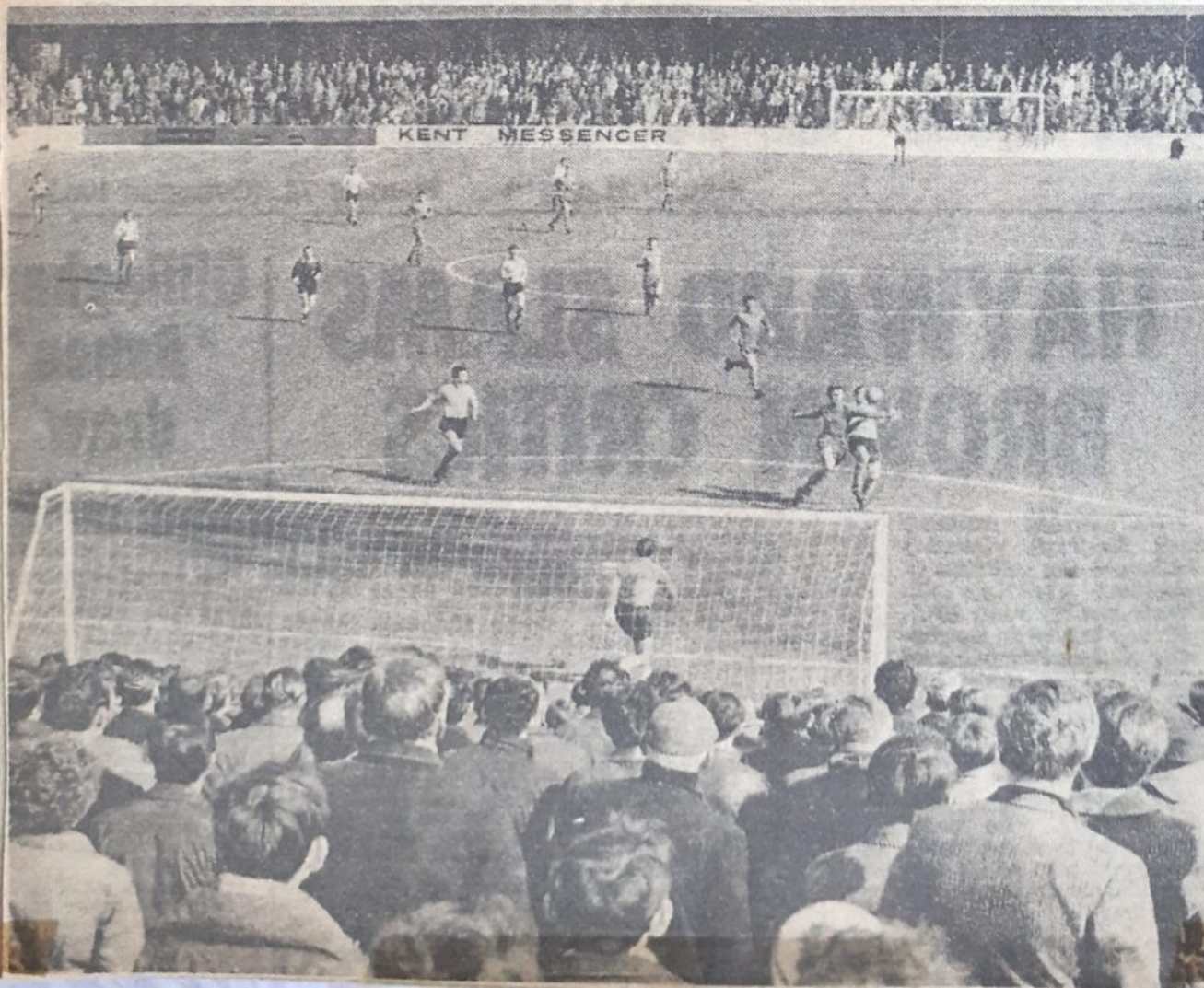
Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith (Moffat).

Colchester: Adams; Mochan, Hall; Trevis, Forbes, Loughton; Joslyn, MacKechnie, Oliver, Martin, (Blackwood), Shires.

Attendance: 5,734.

A VIEW from the terraces during the game between Gillingham and Colchester at Priestfield Stadium on Easter Saturday. Observer cameraman David Curling spots striker Bill Brown in a Gills' attack. (5 424/16/68)

Overlooking the action at Priestfield



No. 43

H.T. 0-0

attend: 5,734

Relegation victims deeper in the red

No. 44
H.T. 2-1
attend: 5031

Gillingham 3, Scunthorpe 1

EYES down for relegation numbers — Scunthorpe (79) and Colchester (76). The count-down towards the Fourth Division shows these goal debits in their accounts and vastly-improved Gillingham put the Lincolnshire club further in the red as they galloped to an Easter double, at Priestfield Stadium on Monday afternoon (writes **ALAN HILL**).

A 31-second goal by Brian Gibbs — probably the quickest goal in the club's history — paved the way for a convincing victory by the Gills which was marred only by heart-in-the-mouth defensive blunders by Ralph Miller and Bill Williams.

Williams, nervously hesitant in the air, and Miller were misfits in the home defence which fortunately had the poised Mel Machin always on hand to sweep up the pieces at the back.

Casual

The Gillingham centre-half presented Scunthorpe with a 34th-minute equaliser with a too-casual pass back to keeper John Simpson.

Simpson had little chance of stopping scorer Kerr, but Miller might have cleared as the Scunthorpe inside-forward's hurried shot rolled gently inside the post.

Relieved Gillingham were able to regain the initiative with a Machin penalty in the 44th minute. Full-back Foxton clearly handled the ball from an innocuous free-kick by Miller, but it seemed a harsh award in the circumstances.

Scunthorpe were close to a second equaliser almost on the interval when Simpson blocked a Kerr shot after Williams' kick and Miller dilled and dallied before the ball was finally cleared.

John Meredith restored to the middle line after an injury to Bill Brown—brutal cheers greeted the departure

of the Gills' striker in the 55th minute — showed the value of persistence in a link-up with Riddick which led to a third goal in the 60th minute.

The Yorkshireman bored his way out of a couple of tackles to split the visitors' defence with a slanting crossfield pass, and Brian Yeo calmly stroked a well-placed shot out of the reach of Drake.

Gillingham took the lead straight from the kick-off, when Woodley beat four men in a 20-yard dribble and Gibbs stabbed the ball past Drake from close-range.

Kerr, splendidly released by former Hull inside-forward Gerry Heath, allowed the ball to spin away from his shooting boot to waste a gift chance.

Unceremonious tackling by Scunthorpe produced a spate of free-kicks and Kerr's goal had the Gills gasping with disbelief — they had been arrogantly in control for most of the half.

Spot-kick ace Machin restored the lead before the interval and Gillingham cruised to victory in the second half.

Riddick netted but the goal was disallowed because of offside. On the resumption Brown, limping heavily after a midfield collision, was replaced by Bob Moffat and the Gills generously spared Scunthorpe after Yeo's 60th minute score had seemed likely to prelude a goal rush.

Gibbs drove straight at Drake after slack marking and Riddick volleyed over the bar when Drake palmed out a Yeo centre.

BRIAN GIBBS.—Thirty-one second goal paved the way to victory over Scunthorpe. (2/424/16 68)



Brian Gibbs, shadowed by Scunthorpe right-back Graham Foxton, puts Gillingham ahead after only 31 seconds at Priestfield Stadium on Monday. [P1852]



Scunthorpe goalkeeper Stephen Drake safely gathers a Bill Brown header during Monday's clash which the Gills won 3-1 to complete a winning Easter programme. [P1853]

SIMPSON READY FOR 450th APPEARANCE

JOHN Simpson, Gillingham's veteran goalkeeper who is currently celebrating 10 years with the Priestfield Stadium Club, is almost certain to chalk up another milestone in his career next week.

If he is chosen for the club's home match with Watford on Wednesday it will be his 450th league appearance since joining the Gills from Lincoln.

Simpson, who has been first-choice goalkeeper for Gillingham under four successive managers,



JOHN SIMPSON [C3861

also had another honour bestowed on him this week when, together with skipper Gordon Riddick and Dennis Hunt, he became a life vice-president of Palmerston Road Working Men's Club, Chatham.

INJURY PROBLEM

"We have asked all three to accept this offer as we consider they have done a tremendous amount while with Gillingham Football Club towards providing our members and the Medway Towns as a whole with entertainment," said

committee member Mr. Lew Marmara.

Gillingham manager Basil Hayward will not decide until this morning (Friday) after a training session at the Stadium what his line-up will be for the visit to Peterborough tomorrow.

After four points from the Easter "double" with Colchester and Scunthorpe, the Gills' boss had an injury problem yesterday with no fewer than four first team players receiving treatment.

Bill Brown, who left the pitch during the second half of Monday's match with Scunthorpe, has an ankle injury and bad grazing after taking a tumble in the first half.

Ankle injuries are also troubling Mel Machin and John Furie, while skipper Gordon Riddick has an injured knee. All four players trained on Thursday morning and had a further session in the afternoon.

Gillingham, situated midway in the league table with 43 points, need only five points from their remaining six matches to equal last season's total.

Visitors to the Stadium tomorrow for a Football Combination fixture will be Peterborough Reserves and it is expected that Tony Weston, now recovered from a broken ankle sustained in October, will make an appearance.

Wing-half Ray Bailey left a local hospital yesterday after a cartilage operation.

The Youths will meet Millwall at the Garrison Sports Ground in a South East Counties League fixture.

WHERE THE GILLS ARE

DIVISION III

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bury	41	21	8	13	81	57	59
Torquay United	41	20	10	11	55	49	59
Oxford United	41	18	13	11	61	47	49
Shrewsbury	41	18	13	10	59	46	49
Reading	41	18	9	14	60	55	45
Stockport	41	18	9	14	63	58	45
Swindon	41	14	16	11	65	43	44
Peterborough	41	17	10	14	64	60	44
Watford	41	18	7	16	68	47	43
Walsall	41	16	11	14	63	54	43
Barrow	41	18	7	16	56	51	43
Brighton	41	14	15	12	50	48	43
GILLINGHAM	41	16	11	13	53	55	43
Southport	40	16	10	14	60	57	42
Bournemouth	41	14	14	13	50	48	42
Oldham Athletic	41	17	5	19	55	57	39
Bristol Rovers	40	15	8	17	62	66	38
Mansfield	41	12	12	17	48	56	36
Northampton	42	12	12	18	51	65	36
Tranmere	40	12	11	17	58	68	35
Orient	39	10	15	14	41	54	35
Colchester	41	9	11	21	43	76	29
Grimsby	40	10	8	22	43	64	28
Scunthorpe	40	8	11	21	47	79	27

FOOTBALL COMBINATION (DIVISION ONE)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham Res.	23	17	3	3	61	20	37
Birmingham Res.	22	16	2	4	51	23	34
Plymouth Res.	23	12	5	6	39	25	29
Southampton Res.	22	12	3	7	39	33	27
Chelsea Res.	25	12	3	10	37	38	27
Ipswich Res.	24	11	3	10	42	38	25
Leicester Res.	22	9	6	7	40	37	24
Coventry Res.	23	9	6	8	39	36	24
Walsall Res.	23	9	4	10	37	37	22
Arsenal Res.	23	8	5	10	39	39	21
West Ham Res.	23	9	4	10	39	43	20
Peterborough Res.	24	7	3	14	37	52	17
GILLINGHAM RES.	22	6	4	12	27	37	16
Swindon Res.	24	5	2	17	20	54	12
Northampton Res.	23	3	3	17	30	67	9

RESERVES FUTURE IN BALANCE

CONSIDERABLE speculation has been aroused in recent weeks concerning the future of Gillingham's reserve squad. No definite decision has yet been reached by the board whether to have a second string or not but it is almost certain that the Football Combination will want to know the club's plans in the very near future.

Should the Stadium have a reserve team and it competes in the Football Combination next term then supporters are likely to see a new set up.

It is highly possible that the Combination's two divisions will be amalgamated for season 1968-69 with 26 clubs forming one league. Clubs will play each other only once but they will also have a cup competition.

The Football League has suggested zones for reserve squads, something that would suit Gillingham who spend £10,000 a year on their second team, but this has run into opposition from clubs who are situated in fringe areas — particularly the West Country clubs.

PLAYERS' WAGES

While the Combination proposal to have one division and clubs playing each other once—the programme will be reversed the following season — will obviously provide a saving to clubs, it is not the travel bill that is a headache to boards but players' wages.

The cash problem at Priestfield Stadium is acute and it is understood that the question of maintaining a reserve team or not is still being discussed by the board.

Unless ancillary money-raising schemes can be improved then the club is faced with a growing problem.

Another alternative the club has is to withdraw from the Football Combination and enter the London Midweek League. But here supporters will not see top clubs, Tottenham, Arsenal, Chelsea and West Ham, although the league does allow a club to run on a smaller staff.

Will Gillingham do a Portsmouth and just run next season on a small squad? This is the question supporters are asking themselves of late.

It is also understood that both Peterborough and Brighton are contemplating this idea as well.

£20 for Simpson testimonial

GILLINGHAM goalkeeper John Simpson received a cheque for £20, the proceeds of an autographed football competition, at a testimonial dinner dance at the Sportsman Public House, Gillingham.

Team-mate Dennis Hunt and testimonial committee chairman Harold France accompanied John to the Sportsman event.



Gillingham's Brian Gibbs climbs high above Colchester defender Duncan Forbes and Derek Travis for a left wing cross on Saturday.

GILLS SINK IN EARLY GOAL BLITZ

Peterborough 3, Gillingham 0

PUNCHLESS Gillingham went under to a three-goal first half blitz by Peterborough after making the running in the opening minutes.

It took Posh just 13 minutes to open their account. Man-of-the-match Ollie Conmy took the ball from his own half and ran 40 yards before sliding the ball to Jim Hall, who slammed it home from 15 yards.

Living up to manager Basil Hayward's pre-match promise to play open football, Gillingham seized the initiative in the opening exchanges, presenting the Peterborough defence with any amount of trouble.

Bob Moffat was desperately unlucky when a fine shot ricocheted off goalkeeper Lincoln's legs, but Brian Gibbs squandered two excellent opportunities.

John Meredith was one of the outstanding players on the field, but all his prompting and grafting was wasted on a punchless attack. Mel Machin too, saw much good work by him wasted.

Gillingham had no one to match the dash and determination of Hall and Peter Thompson in the home forward line.

Conmy netted Peterborough's second goal when he fastened on to a Hall pass, slipped through the defence and drew keeper John Simpson out of his goal before scoring.

And it was a peak-form Hall who snatched the home side's third seconds before half-time when he scored from a cross from full-back Frank Noble.



BRIAN GIBBS . . . The Gills' striker, was on target in the shock defeat at Scunthorpe last Friday night.

No. 45
H.T. 3-0
attend: 5,429

Two points hope against Mansfield

GILLINGHAM should manage to pick up both points tomorrow when the visitors to Priestfield Stadium are lowly placed Mansfield.

Manager Basil Hayward has named 14 players from whom he will choose the side. They are: Simpson, Miller, Hunt, Riddick, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith, Gilbert, Thear and Arnot.

Full-back Tony Weston, who broke an ankle in the Oxford United game way back in October, made his return appearance for the reserves against Peterborough on Saturday and reported no ill-effects.

SPOILED

Ray Bailey came out of hospital last week after a cartilage operation. He is making good progress.

Commenting on Wednesday

night's game against Watford manager Basil Hayward said it was a disappointing match. "I don't think we played too badly but the lack of goals spoiled it for the spectators," he said.

Minor Division										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Rainham Youth	23	22	1	0	163	32	45			
Upchurch United	24	21	2	1	210	27	44			
Southfields C.Y.C.	25	17	2	6	114	40	36			
Woodlands Rang.	25	13	4	8	79	70	30			
Rede Court	25	15	1	8	87	55	31			
Blue Bird Wand.	25	13	2	10	103	67	28			
Boughton	24	13	2	9	62	61	28			
Milton Nomads	23	10	1	12	81	82	21			
Higham B.C.	24	8	1	15	83	118	17			
Medway C.B.C.	24	7	3	14	53	137	17			
Shapley Rang.	22	7	2	13	44	82	16			
St. Justus	26	4	3	19	45	127	11			
Nelson Villa	25	5	1	19	40	123	11			
Gill. Supp. Club	24	1	1	22	29	166	3			

Points shared

Gillingham Supporters' Club shared two goals with new club —Medway Barbarians—when the teams played a friendly match on Sunday.

GILLINGHAM S.C. 1. MEDWAY BARBARIANS 1

Medway showed their inexperience by allowing Gillingham to settle down quickly and take control of midfield play. But Brown, McCandless and Vulgar failed to take advantage of good chances created by McHugh.

Barbarians shocked the home side by snatching the lead goal through FITZGERALD a minute before the interval.

Traffic was one-way towards the Barbarians' goal in the second half and the equalizer came when a Benham-Brown move saw McCANDLESS net with a 25-yard drive.

GILLINGHAM S.C.: Jackson; Boyes, Brister; Mungham, Brinkman, Holloway; McCandless, McHugh, Vulgar, Brown, Benham.

Soccer news

The April/May edition of Gillingham Supporters Association's magazine, Priestfield Press, is now on sale. It is packed with all sorts of interesting news and includes a close-up on club skipper, Gordon Riddick.

No. 46

H.T. 0-0

attend: 4,890

But they still remain loyal!

NEITHER the breakdown of their coach, the prospect of paying out an extra guinea in fares, nor the threat of being stranded penniless in Peterborough, were sufficient to stop ten loyal Gills' fans from seeing Saturdays game.

One of the 10, Mr. A. C. Tyrer, of Tilbury Road, Rainham, wrote to us telling of the incident.

"Twenty-two of us set out at 8 o'clock on Saturday morning, after paying 15s. fare.

"The coach broke down outside Gravesend an hour later, and it was gone noon before we set out again. We got to London at 1.30 and by then it was clear we could not get to Peterborough by five—let alone for the kick-off.

LIFT OFFERED

"It seemed as though we were going to have to settle for a London game until someone suggested catching a train.

"We found out there was a train which would get us there by about 3.10 and that a single ticket was 21s.

"Even though that was as much as any of us had, and regardless of how we were going to get home, 10 of us caught the train.

"After the match we met Basil Hayward outside the ground, and when he heard of our plight he offered us a lift home in the coach with the players—a trip which took just over three hours, compared with the seven-and-a-quarter-hour journey up.

"A happy ending," he concludes, "to an otherwise rather miserable day."

NO CHEER FOR GILLS' FANS

Gillingham 0, Watford 0

TWO Third Division promotion pretenders played out a sad soccer parody at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday night.

Both Gillingham and Watford needed to take maximum points from this encounter to maintain a mathematical interest in the promotion race.

AGONY

But to label either of these teams as Second Division potential after this agony game would be to grossly misrepresent the facts.

For the most part this was a king-size bore.

Slipshod football, careless passing, ill-tempered tackling... they were all there to pile on the torture that was Wednesday night.

But, if nothing else, the match did see the passing of three notable landmarks by Gillingham players.

It was goalkeeper John Simpson's 450th League appearance, Brian Gibbs' 250th, and Brian Yeo's 100th—but they had nothing to celebrate.

Simpson had a fairly uneventful night—in fact, the most testing save he was forced to make was a flashing dive across goal to cut out a header from his own skipper, Gordon Riddick, during a period of Watford pressure.

It was that sort of game.

PUNCHLESS

Gibbs was also chasing his 100th League goal—but, like the other forwards in the Gills' punchless attack, he squandered a couple of good chances.

Heavy rain before the start kept the attendance down to just under 5,000—but those who stayed away were thefortunates.

In the opening minutes of the first half Gills' winger John Meredith wasted a good scoring chance and Yeo had a shot parried by the Watford keeper, Bert Slater.

Watford began to dominate the midfield play and some crisp interchanges by Barry Dyson, Roy Low and Tom Walley had the Gills' defence in some trouble.

After the interval Watford seemed to fall more and more on defence—which did not make for entertainment.

Temper became a little frayed and Gills' centre-half, Bill Williams, was booked for a robust tackle on Watford's winger Bernard Lewis.

Gillingham's efforts to score became more and more exasperating and one wonders why young Carl Gilbert, sitting on the trainer's bench as substitute, was not given a chance to inject much-needed enthusiasm into the side.

Only men in the Gills' side to come through with any credit besides Simpson were half-back Mel Machin and full-back Dennis Hunt.

Gillingham: Simpson; Miller, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith.

Watford: Slater; Welbourne, Williams; Hale, Garvey, Walley; Scullion, Dyson, Low, Eddy, Lewis.

Attendance: 4,890.

BRIAN GIBBS... he made his 250th league appearance for Gillingham against Watford on Wednesday but in a drab game could not manage to score the goal that would see his century for the club.



GILLINGHAM goalkeeper John Simpson, who played in his 450th League match for the club on Wednesday night.



A word of praise for 'Posh' fans

AS A Gillingham F.C. supporter seeing my team maintain a place in the top half of the Third Division for three seasons, yet experiencing a lack of genuine enthusiasm in appreciation, I would like to say a word about fans of another Third Division club who long before relegation and promotion were decided were doomed to the Fourth Division — Peterborough United.

When the two teams met on Saturday—a day when football was hard to play attractively, even by professionals — the Peterborough crowd urged their team on to victory with support only the top teams aren't lacking.

They applauded generously good moves and weathered happily bad football by both sides.

Gillingham must have received more appreciation from this crowd than in corresponding home matches.

I feel a team with support like his cannot fail to make a re-entry into the Third Division in the near future and their loyal team should certainly back this up.

J. W. McCANDLESS.

47 Lancelot Avenue.
Strood.

SPAIN TRIP

TWO of Gillingham's strongest supporters, Mr. Les Clark and Mr. Harold France, will be flying to Spain next month to support England in the second leg of their European Nations' Cup-tie.

GILLS AT A TESTIMONIAL SOCIAL

GILLINGHAM footballers will be taking time off tomorrow (Saturday) evening to give some of their fans a glimpse of other talents in a social evening at Rainham Mark Social Club.

They will join 'keeper John Simpson who, as part of his celebrations for his Testimonial Season, will be host at the club to supporters who feel like a night out.

Fund Committee chairman Mr. Harold France said this week that details had not yet been finalized but a number of players had promised to help out with the entertainment.

"One or two are extremely good singers and musicians and there should be some rare treats in store for anyone who wants to enjoy themselves," he commented.



A high flying Brian Gibbs is beaten to this centre by Watford goalkeeper, Bert Slater, on Wednesday evening. [P2000]



Watford centre-half Brian Garvey climbs high above Gillingham's Bill Brown, with Brian Gibbs in close attendance, to head a left wing cross away. [P2001]



Watford 'keeper Bert Slater, watched by Keith Eddy and Duncan Welbourne, punches the ball away from the head of Brian Gibbs. [P2002]

£50 to Gills

GILLINGHAM F.C.'s supporting organization, the Blue and Whites, this week handed over £50 to the club for ground improvements.

GILBERT—JUST WHAT THEY WANTED

CARL GILBERT certainly impressed the Priestfield fans with his display on Saturday and none more than Mrs. F. N. Williams, of Devonshire Road, Gillingham.

Mrs. Williams certainly prefers Gilbert to Bill Brown in the forward line.

She writes:

"As a regular supporter of Gillingham, I read with disgust Mr. Hayward's comments in a recent issue of your paper, how the spectators were using Bill Brown as a 'whipping boy'. I wish he could have heard the remarks made during last Saturday's game, when Carl Gilbert played.

"At least we got 90 min-

utes of combined effort from the whole team. They played an inspiring game which was enjoyed by all who watched. Such a pity there were so few spectators to witness this fine game.

"Had the Gills played like this all through the season I feel sure they would have had a chance of promotion and no doubt the fans would not have stayed away as they have done.

"The majority of old supporters of Gillingham have stated that they will not watch another game while Bill Brown is playing.

"No doubt he is a good player, but he is lethargic on the field, too tired it seems for extra effort, and all he seems to do is stand in mid-field waving his arms about at the other players when it is he who is at fault.

"I do hope Mr. Hayward gives us a chance to witness more games like this, then perhaps the Gills can regain some of their prestige and entice back some of their old supporters.

Fans find a new hero

GILLINGHAM 2, MANSFIELD 1

GILLINGHAM were snapped out of their recent lethargy at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday by the infectious enthusiasm of a young, blonde dynamo making his Third Division debut.

His name — Carl Gilbert, a 19-year-old centre-forward of gutsy promise who did more than score on his debut; he brought back some pride in the Gillingham team.

In Gilbert the Gills' fans found a hero. Here was a man giving his all—90 minutes of sustained effort — always alert, on the look-out for a half-chance, and eager to pounce on defensive errors. It was this kind of opportunism earned Gilbert his goal.

Gilbert's mood spread to the whole team although it would be foolish to suggest their problems have disappeared overnight, which they certainly have not, it was encouraging to see the team in such determined mood.

Manager Basil Hayward also brought in Bob Moffat on the left-wing and John Furie at full back. Moffat had a fairly quiet game, and looked a trifle hesitant on a couple of occasions, but Furie's play was very tidy and confirmed his earlier promise.

Dangerous

Centre-half Bill Williams, who has been out of touch lately, had another unhappy game, putting through an own-goal when no danger threatened.

Gillingham looked dangerous from the kick-off.

After three minutes Gilbert drew applause from the crowd for a splendid shot from just outside the area that was only just wide.

Soon after, the eager Gil-

bert hit the post with a header and skipper Gordon Riddick had a shot charged down.

A speedy dash down the wing by Derek Woodley, a flashing cross and John Meredith had a goalbound shot blocked by a desperate Mansfield defender.

Another Woodley cross saw Gilbert rising high above the Mansfield defence only to see a well-placed header just go wide.

By ALAN COOPER

There was more excitement in the opening exchanges of this game than the whole of the previous Wednesday's yawn with Watford.

Gillingham opened the scoring after 20 minutes. Woodley gratefully accepted a pass from Mansfield's inside man Terry Melling, slipped the ball to Riddick, who shrugged off one tackle before planting the ball firmly in the far corner of the net from just outside the penalty area.

This was Gillingham's first goal scored in 200 minutes of frustrating endeavour.

Three minutes later the Gills' fans went wild with excitement when the persistent Gilbert took advantage of a mix-up between Mansfield defenders Sandy Pate and Stuart Boam to score a typically opportunist centre-forward's goal.

Two goals in three minutes! All a little too much for the Gillingham supporters.

They hurled streamers and toilet rolls into the Gillingham goalmouth to celebrate and play was held up for some three minutes while referee Mr. T. W. Dawes (Norwich) asked a club official to broadcast an appeal for calm.

Gillingham were now riding high — but their bubble was burst two minutes before the interval when Mansfield luckily reduced the arrears.

Mansfield inside-right Melling floated over a harmless looking cross which John Simpson in the Gillingham goal had well covered. But centre-half Bill Williams went up for the ball and headed it into his own net.

The second-half saw Mansfield on top and with better finishing they must have equalised.

Creating

Gillingham too were still creating the chances and there were near-misses from Gilbert and Woodley.

The nearest Mansfield came to equalising was in the last ten minutes when Melling put in a powerful 25 yard shot which forced a brilliant diving save from Simpson.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Gilbert, Meredith, Moffat.

Mansfield: Hollins; Pate, Stanton; Waller, Boam, Roberts; Jones, Melling, Ledger, Sharkey, Goodfellow. Attendance: 4,009.

No: 47

H.T: 2-1

attend: 3,928



THIS is the moment the Gills' fans have been waiting for as skipper Gordon Riddick (out of picture) makes the Mansfield net bulge with a rasping 25 yard shot. Looking on are Gillingham centre-forward Carl Gilbert and inside-left John Meredith. (19/424 18/68)



A golden debut for 19-year-old Carl Gilbert on Saturday as he bursts past two Mansfield defenders to net Gillingham's second goal. [P2064]



JOHN SIMPSON can only watch in dismay as colleague Bill Williams sends a header flashing into his own net.

TOUGH FINALE FOR GILLS

GILLINGHAM face a tough finale to their 1967-68 Third Division campaign with three matches, two of them away, in a seven-day spell.

Tomorrow they travel to Watford, Tuesday evening kick-off to avoid a clash with the county to Leyton to play the Orient, and at Priestfield Stadium the following Saturday entertain promotion contenders Shrewsbury Town—this may be an

evening kick-off to avoid a clash with the county cricket at Gravesend.

The Supporters' Association, in conjunction with British Rail, have made special travel arrangements to Watford tomorrow. Times and prices are:

Adult fare (party rate) 18s. 9d. return (including Underground), juveniles (under 18) 9s. 6d. return (including Underground). Times: Gillingham depart 11.26. Charing Cross arrive 12.42. Euston depart 13.05 (1.05 p.m.), Watford Junction arrive 13.25 (1.25 p.m.). Watford Junction depart 5.46 p.m., Euston arrive 6.08 p.m., Charing Cross depart 7.02 p.m., Gillingham arrive 8.19 p.m.

Supporters intending to travel should meet in the station lobby between 11 and 11.15. Party organisers are Mark Agate and John Leeds. These arrangements apply to and from Gillingham station only.

UNCHANGED

Manager Basil Hayward is likely to announce an unchanged team from that which beat Mansfield 2-1 at home on Saturday. This means that centre-forward Carl Gilbert will get his second League outing.

Team: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Gilbert, Meredith, Moffat.

The Reserves, who gained a good away win at West Ham last Saturday, are at home to Leicester in the Combination League.

★ ★ ★
Gillingham winger Peter Hall, who has been out with a knee injury for some weeks, started training this week but has unfortunately had a recurrence of the trouble. He saw a specialist yesterday.

★ ★ ★
Ray Bailey, recently out of hospital following a cartilage operation, resumes light training in about a fortnight.

★ ★ ★
Saturday's gate at Priestfield Stadium—3,928—was one of the lowest at the ground since Gillingham joined the Football League.

★ ★ ★
On Sunday the Gillingham footballers will be turning their attention to cricket when they play a combined hospital staff at the Medway Hospital, Windmill Road, Gillingham. The match starts at 2.30 p.m., and has been arranged by the League of Friends of Medway Hospitals.



Another high-flying header by Gillingham's Carl Gilbert when challenged by Mansfield's Roberts. (P2066)



MINUTES after he had given Gillingham the lead, skipper Gordon Riddick (4) heads for goal. John Meredith (10) runs in to support him

Gills' final match may have evening kick-off

GILLINGHAM'S final match of the season against promotion hunters Shrewsbury Town next Saturday, is likely to be played in the evening with a 7.30 kick-off.

This was disclosed yesterday (Thursday) by Gills' manager, Basil Hayward when he said that Shrewsbury had agreed with his suggestion and the matter now rested with the Football League.

Reason given for the switch was a possible clash with a Kent county cricket match that day and Mr. Hayward feels evening matches are much more popular with the Gillingham fans. Support for his views comes from the gate for the Bury match recently when, even though it was raining, it still attracted a bigger-than-usual crowd.

The match, too, could prove to be one of the most interesting seen at the stadium in months. Division Two candidates Shrewsbury are bound to put up a good fight and Gillingham have had a habit of upsetting them in front of the Stadium crowd.

The immediate tasks facing Gillingham, however, are two league matches and a five-a-side tournament during the next five days.

Tomorrow (Saturday), they go to Watford with a team that will probably remain unchanged from that which beat Mansfield at the week-end, except for the possible inclusion of Bill Brown and Brian Yeo who are both recovering from injuries that kept them out of Saturday's team.

Yeo, in fact, had an outing on Wednesday evening when a team was sent down to Dover for a match which raised money for the widow of Dover's former manager, Jack Clover.

Gillingham won 5-2 but Mr. Hayward said Dover put up a tough fight and gave his players a rigorous testing.

He was particularly pleased with Tony Weston who played only his second full game since he broke his ankle against Oxford last October.

"He still has a lot of hard work to get through but he is a grand lad and should be fighting fit within a short while," said Mr. Hayward.

Full-back Weston is not, how-

ever, likely to be turning out for the first team in the league this season.

"We have missed him a lot since his injury as he has the kind of dedication we need. But I am not going to push him too hard this season, so this should give him plenty of time to get really fit for next year," said the manager.

Mr. Hayward was also well-pleased with the way other young players worked at Dover. Derek Bellotti was in goal and David Quirke took over the wing half berth from Mel Machine.

Carl Gilbert again came in as striker with Bobby Harrison stepping in for Brian Gibbs.

"They all did very well indeed against a very good Southern League club," said Mr. Hayward.

Goalscorers were **JOHN MEREDITH (2), BRIAN YEO (2) and GILBERT.**

The team was: Bellotti; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Quirke; Moffat, Harrison, Yeo, Gilbert and Meredith. "With that line-up we used a slightly different formation but I am pleased with the way they played," said the manager.

Gillingham are hoping to pick up two points at Watford, having held them to a draw only 10 days ago. Interest will be centred on Bracknell where five of the team will play in the Southern Final of the five-a-side national tournament. The Gills meet Torquay in the first round.

On Tuesday, the Gills are away to Orient.

The Supporters' Association announce a cheap rate booking to Watford, 18s. 9d. for adults and 9s. 6d. for juveniles. The train leaves Gillingham at 11.26 a.m., arriving at Watford Junction at 1.25 p.m. It will leave Watford at 5.46 p.m.



Gillingham compete in the National Five-A-Side Trophy (Southern Region) at Bracknell on Monday and will field: John Simpson, Mel Machin, David Quirke, John Meredith and Brian Yeo. The Gills are grouped with Ipswich, Luton, Southend, Norwich, Aldershot, Bournemouth, Brighton, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading and Torquay, and play Torquay in the first round. The group winners go forward to the National final at Wembley.



CHAOS in the Mansfield goalmouth as Gillingham's Bob Moffat gets ready to pounce on a flashing cross from Derek Woodley. A goal looked certain but Moffat failed to make contact.



Officials of the Palm Cottage Social Club with Gillingham goalkeeper, John Simpson, at the club's "John Simpson Night" on Wednesday. [P2096]

'No magic wand for success'—Hayward

GILLS' manager, Mr. Basil Hayward, reaffirmed his belief this week that Gillingham are as good as any of the sides fighting it out for promotion to Division Two.

"The sides seeking promotion this year are no better than we are but I think possibly they get more encouragement from different quarters than we do. And this always rubs off on the players," said Mr. Hayward.

BLAME

"The thing we lack is proper organisation within ourselves and enthusiastic backing from the supporters.

"This is not getting at the supporters. I don't think we do enough to encourage them in one sense and I don't

think they realise that if they would play their part then the club is going to be so much better.

CHANCES

"I blame myself for certain things; I blame the lads for others and I also blame the support the club receives as a whole," he added.

Mr. Hayward said he always tried to satisfy the supporters but admitted "it has not always come off."

Added Mr. Hayward: "One thing that cannot be denied is that we have been making the chances—either we have to start slotting them in or get someone who can. You pick a player up if you are lucky or you buy one—but nobody wants to let a goal-scoring forward go cheaply."

He was pleased with Saturday's debut performance of centre-forward Carl Gilbert. "I hope things go right for Carl. But he wants a lot of encouragement plus a lot of hard work before he becomes a complete first team player."

Mr. Hayward will be studying the retained lists when they are announced in his quest for three players he wants to strengthen the defence and attack ready for next season.

He is confident that Gillingham can become a top club.

"But you must remember managers have not got magic wands..."



Mansfield pivot Stuart Boam dives over Brian Gibbs, Carl Gilbert and Bob Moffat leap high for a Derek Woodley cross on Saturday. [P2065]

A column to keep you informed of all the latest news and views of the Medway sporting scene

Wake up Gills! Soccer is a big business

THE somewhat alarming disclosure this week that Gillingham's home match with Mansfield attracted only 3,928 people has brought to a head the fear that has been in the minds of many for some weeks—that Gillingham Football Club is in the throes of one of its biggest crises for years.

It might be argued that end of season games rarely bring in big gates and that interest has waned lately as there is nothing at stake in the league. But this would be little more than an excuse for the real reason behind the drastic drop.

The recent slump could, be put down to the inconsistency of the players and the frustrating way matches have fluctuated. But the downward trend has been with the club for some time and this, to me, is where the root of the whole problem lies.

It's easy enough to criticize the management when things are going wrong and in some respects Basil Hayward is to blame. But the club as a whole has done little or nothing to check the apathy that has crept into people's minds over the months. It has still not awakened to the fact that football is big business and can only survive with ambition.

It was one of the last clubs in the league to install flood-lighting some years ago and since then only half-hearted efforts have been made to encourage the man-in-the-street to look upon Priestfield Stadium as his main source of entertainment.

The long-overdue and much-heralded new stand was started some time ago and is still not completed. A reflection of how regular supporters feel about this can be gauged from the number of season ticket holders on the club's books. These have dropped remarkably since last season.

No firm hand has been taken with the supporting organizations, the Blue and Whites and the Supporters' Association, even though it was obvious several seasons ago that they would have to join forces and expand to form "branches" throughout the major towns in the county where a lot of people have travelled from to watch Gillingham play.

This, incidentally, has been an idea of Mr. Hayward's almost since he first came here but it

seems apparent he has gained little support for it.

Apart from this, no attempt has been made to instil a social atmosphere into Gillingham's activities.

And, if any of the club's mentors have any doubts about this, they need only look at the amazing successes over the weeks for the current John Simpson Testimonial Season.

While the player's own popularity has gone a long way towards making the various func-

tioned over £25 worth of tickets being sold.

And in the past few days alone, Palmerston Road Workingmen's club made three of the players life-vice presidents, some 700 people packed into Rainham Mark Social Club last Saturday when the players went there and on Wednesday the Palm Cottage Social Club in Canterbury Street laid on a special dance and social evening for Simpson and his colleagues.

"Everywhere we have been, from the Hoo peninsula to the new estates at Rainham and Walderslade, the people we have met have been keenly interested in doing something for the club," said Mr. Harold France, chairman of the Fund Committee.

This is just one of the many things the club has let slip through its fingers over the years as a result, it seems, of a somewhat complacent view that people must come to Gillingham rather than the club go to the people.

All right, so the immediate problem is finding new players capable of winning matches and drawing the crowds. But they have to be bought and so far Gillingham Football Club has failed to explore the means of gaining revenue to achieve this. Unless it does, one fears next season will be even worse! M.H.

SPORTS DIARY

tions go well, the interest in the club as a whole must still be there if two dances at the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham, can make big profits, a beat dance at the Town Hall can attract between 500 and 600 youngsters and more than 70 autographed footballs can be used for competitions where some have

National
Five-a-side
Championship
Final



John Quirke scores the second goal for Gillingham in final

SPOT KICK THRILLER

By NORMAN GILLER

THIRD DIVISION Gillingham astonished even themselves last night when they earned a trip to Wembley by winning the Southern section of the Daily Express National Five-a-Side Football Championships.

They entered only a scratch side and yet came out top in a tournament that featured Football League promotion teams Ipswich, Oxford and Luton.

GILLINGHAM beat PORTSMOUTH in a dramatic final that was decided on a sudden-death system of penalty kicks.

The score was 2-2 at the final whistle, after a fierce 20-minute match.

Then the excited fans at the modern, superbly equipped Bracknell Sports Centre, in Berkshire, suddenly hushed as Pompey's George Ley and Gillingham's Mel Machin prepared to take alternative penalty kicks.

The sudden-death idea is that they keep taking spot-kicks until one of them misses.

You could almost reach out and feel the tension as first Machin scored and then Ley netted for Pompey.

Machin scored a second time. So, too, did Ley.

Then Machin, dragging his feet with exhaustion, shot for a third time and hugged Pompey goalkeeper John Milkins in relief as the ball skidded into the net.

Bouncer

Now it was Ley's turn again. This time Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson threw himself across goal and the ball bounced off his shoulder and over the bar.

Gillingham, thanks to spot-oh Machin, were 5-4 winners and so on to the National Finals at Wembley Pool on May 15.

Machin said after receiving a well-earned medal from Daily Express Sports Editor John Morgan: "I have never been so nervous in my life as when I was taking those penalties. I am still shaking like a leaf."

Gillingham, with John Meredith their outstanding marksman, reached the final by efficiently removing TORQUAY, Third Division leaders OXFORD, and BOURNEMOUTH.

Pompey powered through to the final by beating NORWICH and READING after receiving a first-round bye.

LUTON, Fourth Division champions, knocked out Second Division leaders IPSWICH in a fast and exciting first-round clash.

But Luton did not live long after this success, losing to a sudden-death penalty kick in the second round from BOURNEMOUTH'S Jimmy White.

FIRST ROUND.—Luton 2 Ipswich 0—Bournemouth 4 Aldershot 3—Oxford 3 Brighton 1—Gillingham 2 Torquay 1.

SECOND ROUND.—Southend 1 Reading 2—Pompey 3 Norwich 2—Luton 0 Bournemouth 1—Oxford 2 Gillingham 3.

SEMI-FINALS.—Reading 1 Portsmouth 3—Gillingham 2 Bournemouth 0.

FINAL.—Gillingham 5 Portsmouth 4.



Gillingham and Posh storm to Wembley

Gillingham and Peterborough last night joined Scottish club Morton in the Daily Express National Five-a-Side championship finals, to be played at Wembley on May 15. Gillingham won the Southern section, Peterborough the Midland; Morton had already qualified. There are five more sections to play.

CHANGES ARE LIKELY

MANAGER Basil Hayward announced yesterday (Monday) that he was likely to make one or two changes from the team that crashed at Watford for the visit to Orient tonight.

Visitors to the Stadium tomorrow (Wednesday) evening for a Football Combination fixture will be Northampton Reserves. Kick-off will be at 7.30 p.m.

Title-challengers Shrewsbury Town meet Gillingham at the Stadium on Saturday, kick-off 3 p.m. Application was made to the Football League by the club for an evening kick-off, which was not forthcoming.

Inconsistent Gills are run off their feet

WATFORD 3 GILLINGHAM 0

ONCE AGAIN Gillingham showed how inconsistent they can be when on Saturday they allowed a fast, but basically none-too-strong, Watford to run them off their feet.

Apparently unable to settle down to the hard-baked mud that covered virtually everything but the corner areas, they spent the opening minutes racing around blindly as Watford set up attack after attack with their short passing tactics.

BARRY DYSON, who almost from the start played havoc with the Gillingham rearguard, gave Watford the lead in the eighth minute when Bill Williams and Dennis Hunt went for a high cross together and failed to head it clear. The inside forward merely had to slam the ball into the net from a few yards.

From then on Watford mounted raid after raid and fullback John Furie, in particular, found himself in the middle of a losing battle with the constantly switching wingers, Stewart Scullion and Roy Low.

In the first real threat mounted by the Gillingham forwards, Brian Gibbs ran well to get around a cross by Gordon Riddick but his first-time hook shot from the edge of the box was well held by 'keeper Slater. This was, however, quickly replied to by danger-man Dyson who sent in a 35-yard scorcher that went just wide.

DEFENSIVE SLIP-UP

Then in the 22nd minute another defensive slip-up gave Watford their second goal.

Unhindered, SCULLION moved up from the half-way line and, while Riddick and the rest of the defence hurriedly funnelled back, he sent in a near 30-yard cracker that crashed into the back of the net.

Carl Gilbert, who had been taking second place in his running fight with centre-half Garvey, came within an ace of pulling back the arrears when he picked up a ball out of a melee between him and two defenders and crashed his way into the box.

Even an attempted trip by Garvey failed to stop him but, as he shook himself free of the grappling, Gilbert found Slater had raced out and confronted him. Gilbert tried a shot but the 'keeper cut it out brilliantly from close range.

Well supported by Derek Woodley and John Meredith the Gillingham front runners showed just how weak the Watford defence was and, in almost the first move of the second half, had them scrambling away one of the best efforts of the afternoon.

Brian Gibbs teed it up with perfect diagonal pass to Woodley who raced along the wing and cut in before putting a low cross to Gilbert. The young striker connected but almost immediately Garvey deflected it to safety.

The long high ball down the middle was obviously worrying the Watford rearguard but it was the such move that resulted in Gilbert being "booked."

He and Garvey went for a high ball and the centre-half tumbled to the ground after apparently trying to climb on Gilbert's shoulders. The Gillingham player amazingly, however, turned on his opponent and seemed to clip Garvey on the jaw as he lay on the ground.

I thought the referee (Mr. P. R. Walters of Bridgwater), who did not have an impressive afternoon, should have awarded Gillingham a penalty late in the game when Woodley was tripped by a Watford player. But as he

lay on the ground inside the box play was waved on.

Gillingham's superiority was short-lived in the second half as in the 61st minute, yet another defensive blunder gave Watford their third goal.

They broke away from a Gillingham corner and Dyson found himself unmarked on the half-way line. Williams was up with the forwards and so Hunt and Machin raced in to blot out the threat Dyson was obviously presenting.

by

M. Hitchings

But, as they moved in, Garbett ran out to the wing and picked up the perfect-timed pass from Dyson. Hunt raced back to check him but by then it was too late and, rounding the Gillingham full back, GARBETT had no difficulty in pushing the ball home.

Watford: Slater, Welbourne, Williams, Hale, Garvey, Walley, Scullion, Dyson, Garbett, Eddy Low.

Gillingham: Simpson, Furie, Hunt, Riddick, Williams, Machin, Woodley, Gibbs, Gilbert, Yeo Meredith.

Gills spring surprise and go to Wembley

GILLINGHAM entered only a scratch side for the National Five-A-Side Football Championships at Bracknell on Monday, but surprised almost everyone by winning the Southern Area Final trophy. They also earned themselves a place in the finals at Wembley on Wednesday.

Skipped by John Arnott, Gillingham disposed of Torquay in the first round 2-1, with two goals from MEL MACHIN — the second just before the final whistle.

At the end of their second round match with Oxford the teams were level at 2-2. Gillingham's goals coming from MEREDITH and MACHIN. This resulted in a sudden-death play-off with penalties and MEREDITH scored to put the Gills through.

ONE-SIDED AFFAIR

Gillingham's semi-final with Bournemouth was rather a one-sided affair. Two goals from JOHN MEREDITH in the first three minutes were enough to give his side a final place.

In a tension-packed final against Portsmouth, Gillingham quickly trailed through an unlucky deflection but MEREDITH put them level just on half-time. DAVID QUIRKE put Gills in front in the second half, but Portsmouth equalized to leave this game also in the hands of the spot-kick experts.

Twice MEL MACHIN scored, only for GEORGE LEY to beat Simpson as well. Then a perspiring Machin, dragging his feet with exhaustion, shot for the third time to give Gillingham the lead, and this time Simpson dived the right way to deflect Ley's shot over the bar and give Gillingham the championship.

136 - that was Gills' score

A CERTAIN amount of controversy over last year's match — in which male members of the staff dressed up as women — and a general feeling that comic cricket matches had lost most of their humour...

These were the main reasons why the League of Friends of the Medway Hospitals' annual cricket match on Sunday between the hospital staff and Gillingham Football Club was a strictly orthodox affair — in fact, a typical Sunday afternoon "friendly."

The only unconventional note was when several Gillingham players failed to bow to tradition by taking their position on the field...wearing dark trousers!

The match itself was devoid of high scores but entertaining, with Gills winning by 79 runs. The full score? Gillingham F.C. 136—9 declared, Hospital staff 57.

The attendance was disappointingly low, but this was probably due to the weather — bitterly cold winds, and the threat of rain, which fortunately did not arrive.

Proceeds were towards the League of Friends' target of £1,000 and a blanket collection raised £5 17s. 3d.

No 48

HT. 2-0

attend:

SPECTACULAR SECOND HALF GOALS ROCK ORIENT

Orient 0, Gillingham 4

GILLINGHAM'S finishing Brisbane Road on Tuesday evening could not have been better. Orient, unbeaten home since 24 February, were rocked back on their heels in the second half as fighting Gillingham crashed home four spectacular goals — their first away League goals since early March . . . writes **TERRY OWEN**.

The thoughts of the few Gills' fans who made the trip and saw their team's outstanding display were summed up by manager Basil Hayward after the game who said, "I was delighted with the performance. We were tighter at the back and we took the chances that came our way up front."

Mr. Hayward was particularly pleased with the debut of right half David Quirke — he had made one substitute appearance — and the return of Tony Weston at right back after being out of the game with a broken ankle since October.

Quirke had a brilliant game with Mel Machin to break up Orient attacks. The teenage wing-half was always in the thick of things and on this form positively marked himself as a fine club prospect.

Weston, after a rather hesitant start against Orient's outside-left Slater, quickly found his feet. Forceful tackling and first time distribution saw him bring the ball quickly out of defence to set up raids for his own forwards.

Retained list

GILLINGHAM manager, Mr. Basil Hayward, said on Wednesday that he would be announcing his retained list "some time next week."

as many minutes just before the final whistle really put the skids under Orient.

After 87 minutes Woodley cut into the area and saw his power drive cannon off a defender. Gilbert pulled the ball back to **BRIAN GIBBS** whose shot on the turn gave the Gills' inside-forward his 100th League goal for the club.

Two minutes later it was Gilbert again who set-up the fourth goal. The tall centre-forward squared the ball back from the line for **RIDDICK** to find the net from close range.

There was no end of season flavour about this game. Spectators were treated to an exciting and hard-fought encounter that was packed with incident and a superb first half goalkeeping display by Orient's former England schoolboy international, **Steve Bowtell**, who was making his debut.

The early minutes saw Taylor clear a Woodley shot off the line but Orient's biggest escape of the first half came in the 29th minute when Gilbert broke through. The leader's power drive was brilliantly parried by Bowtell but as the ball bounced over his head towards the empty net the 'keeper raced back to scoop it off his line.

A minute before the interval a Woodley drive crashed off the upright and rebounded back into Bowtell's arms.

Orient were not without their moments. Most of their danger stemmed from the heads of centre-forward Roy Massey and pivot Terry Mancini.

Dennis Hunt and Tony Weston both made goal-line clearances and 'keeper John Simpson did well with diving saves to foil goal-bound efforts by Slater and Massey in the first half and from Massey (twice), Simpson and Halom in the early stages of the second period.

ORIENT: Bowtell; Jones, Rofe; Harper, Mancini, Taylor; Slater, Bloomfield, Massey, Halom, Simpson. (O.)

GILLINGHAM: Simpson (J.); Weston, Hunt; Quirke, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Riddick, Gilbert, Meredith.

STADIUM DRAW

Gillingham Reserves completely dominated their Football Combination fixture against Northampton at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday, but although the visitors were kept on the defensive for the whole 90 minutes, they managed to hold out for a goalless draw.

GILLINGHAM'S line-up was: Bellotti; Miller, Chapman; Furie, Ribbins, Arnott; Osborn, Harrison, Folds, Moffat, Peach. Substitute: Tydeman.

PULLED MUSCLE

Outside-right Derek Woodley is a doubtful starter for Gillingham's last game of the season against Shrewsbury tomorrow. He pulled a muscle during Tuesday's Orient match but manager Basil Hayward said yesterday (Thursday) that there are not likely to be any more changes in the side that did so well against the London club.

Though promotion-challengers Shrewsbury and Gillingham had hoped for an evening kick-off, the Football League turned down the joint application and so kick-off will be 3 p.m.

Even so it should be one of the most exciting games of the season as Shrewsbury only need one point to be back in the race and Gillingham have brought one or two upsets to the Salop club at Priestfield Stadium over the years.

No. 49

H.T. 0-0

attend:



ALAN BOSWELL dives full-length to save this effort from Gillingham striker **Carl Gilbert**.

INJURY-TIME AGONY GOAL

GILLINGHAM 0, SHREWSBURY 1

By Alan Cooper

This was end-of-season agony for Gillingham at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday, as they wound up their 1967-68 Third Division campaign.

The game was well into injury time when Shrewsbury stole the points with a last-gasp goal — a goal that could have put them into the Second Division, but they found afterwards that Bury has clinched the second-place spot with a 2-0 home win against Watford.

But tense Shrewsbury never looked a promotion side. Gillingham, for the most part, had the edge. Only poor finishing — yes, that again — denied them a win.

Action

So Gillingham end the season much as last term with a respectable mid-table position. They gained 48 points — two more than 1966-67 — only eight points behind Bury. But what they could have done with a goalscorer!

Shrewsbury goalkeeper, Alan Boswell, was in immediate action diving full-length in the first minute to save from John Meredith following a neat four-man move.

Shrewsbury soon forced a corner and Dave Pountney was dangerously close with a well-placed header.

The Gills young striker Carl Gilbert turned fast on a ball bouncing awkwardly in the penalty area and was very close with a first-time shot.

There was an alarm in the Gillingham goalmouth when a cross from Ted Henstley beat both Pountney and keeper John Simpson before going out of play.

Gillingham's best opportunity came eight minutes before the interval when David Quirke broke up a Shrewsbury attack and made ground before sliding a precision pass through the middle for Gilbert.

The big inside-left, however, was too slow to move to the ball and was robbed by Peter Dolby just as he was about to shoot.

Brilliant

In the 52nd minute right-winger Derek Woodley evaded Shrewsbury's off-side trap but his powerful shot was a foot wide.

At the other end Shrewsbury had a near miss when Deloy headed inches over the bar. And Simpson was at his brilliant best when he dived to save a cracking shot from Dave Roberts.

Another first-time effort from Gilbert sped past a post and skipper Gordon Riddick, leading the attack, had a goal-bound shot blocked by Dolby.

Then Brian Gibbs was clear in the penalty area, but he wasted a glorious chance when he blazed the ball high over the bar.

It is this poor marksmanship that has cost the Gills a place among the promotion candidates this season.

Floated

Then with over two minutes' injury time played Shrewsbury launched a last-gasp attack.

Tony Gregory floated over a centre; the Gillingham defence stood transfixed to the ground and Simpson could only watch as centre-forward Jimmy McLaughlin jumped high to nod the ball in the net.

A rather unhappy end to Gillingham's 1967-68 campaign.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Quirke, Williams, Machin; Woodley, Gibbs, Riddick, Gilbert, Meredith.

Shrewsbury: Boswell; Gregory, Fellows; Hemsley, Wood, Dolby; Meredith, Boardman, McLaughlin, Pountney, Roberts.

Attendance: 5,027.

No. 50

H.T. 0-0

attend: 5,027.

Gills reach five-a-side final GALLANT ONLY GOAL DEFEAT

SALUTE the Gillingham gallants — John Simpson, John Arnott, Mel Machin, David Quirke and John Meredith — who so very nearly gained glory in the final of the Daily Express National Five-a-Side championships at the Empire Pool, Wembley, on Wednesday evening.

Against all expectations Gillingham reached the final with wins over Second Division sides Preston North End and Cardiff City.

And in a tense final they went down 1-0 to London champions, Charlton Athletic.

The winning Charlton goal

came two minutes from the end when Simpson had no chance with a lethal drive from Keith Peacock.

Only a minute earlier Mel Machin scraped the Charlton post with a fine shot.

Millions saw the final on television — and the cheers of the Gills' fans came over quite audibly.

"The lads did very well to reach the final. I was very

pleased with them," said manager Basil Hayward afterwards.

Gillingham made a dramatic entry into the semi-finals with a 1-0 last-kick victory over Preston.

The game seemed set for a draw when John Meredith sped through on his own and lashed the ball low into the Preston net.

It was Meredith again who put Gillingham through to the final when he scored midway through the second period against Cardiff City to end the Welsh champions to a 1-0 defeat.

Gillingham qualified for the Wembley finals last week when they upset the form book by winning the Southern Region championship.

Gillingham Reserves ended their Football Combination programme at Priestfield Stadium yesterday evening when they entertained highly placed Birmingham City Reserves. On Monday evening at High-bury the Gillingham second team lost 2-0 to Arsenal.



THE Band of the Royal Marines Cadets played before the match and during the interval at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday when Gillingham F.C. was at home to Shrobsbury. (314 20 68)



Gillingham's Mel Machin prepares to clear a Charlton Athletic attack during the National Five-A-Side final when the Gills lost 1-0 at Wembley on Wednesday evening. Other Gills' players in the picture are John Meredith, scorer of the goals that k-o'd Preston and Cardiff City the same evening, John Simpson, David Quirke and John Arnett (extreme right). S.32

GILLINGHAM SPRING SURPRISE AND LIST SIX

GILLINGHAM Manager Basil Hayward disclosed yesterday (Monday) morning that he had told six of his players they were not being retained by the club... writes **MARTIN HITCHINGS**.

They are three full backs, Dennis Hunt, John Furie and Ralph Miller, Reserve half-back and skipper John Arnott, wing-half-cum-forward Bob Moffat and, most surprising of all, striker Bill Brown.

The shock announcement comes after weeks of speculation and, although Mr. Hayward would not comment, one suspects after a great deal of behind-the-scenes discussions, particularly over the future of Bill Brown.

"I would rather not say anything more about it. The decision has been reached and that's it," he told me.

But the whole composition of the list is bound to be a big talking point among supporters.

LOT OF FAITH

The decision to sack Bill Brown, for instance, must have been taken by Mr. Hayward with a great many reservations as he has consistently shown a lot of faith in the tall creator of so many of Gillingham's goals this season.

Even when criticism has mounted, the manager has insisted he is one of the finest ball players the club has had in recent years.

Bought for only about £2,000 from Bedford shortly after Mr. Hayward took over the management of Gillingham, Brown has been the main architect of the team's forward tactics. Other clubs have shown an interest in him this season and it's my guess that it won't be long before he finds himself another club — probably in a higher class of football.

Brown, who was the club's second highest scorer with 14 league goals this season, is incidentally, due to marry Gillingham girl, Christine Peters in July.

The other controversial aspect of the list is the fact that the manager has got rid of three full-backs — leaving himself at the moment with only one experienced player for this berth, Tony Weston.

But he has said he is looking for a full-back — along with a centre and inside forward — if the money can be found by the Board. And, apart from this, the vacancy could be filled by wing halves Mel Machin or Ray Bailey, or someone else.

Bob Moffat too has been showing up well on the wing for the first team in recent months and John Furie, brought to Priestfield Stadium on free-transfer from Watford last summer, has done enough to make the first team on several occasions.

The departure of John Arnott and Dennis Hunt is also another surprise.

STEADYING INFLUENCE

The veteran wing-half has not been in the regular first squad for some time but he had a vast amount of experience behind him and was a great steadying influence on the younger players. And, I understand, he turned down a post with a Southern League club, which would have meant a promotion, only a few months ago.

Dennis Hunt, who recently bought his own home in Lower Halstow, is considered by many to be one of the stalwarts of the club. A strong, bustling tackler, he has been with Gillingham F.C. almost as long as 'keeper John Simpson and was, in fact, due to celebrate his 10 years with the club with his own Testimonial Season next term.

Though he would not comment on his decision, Mr. Hayward said yesterday that he would do his best to arrange something for the club to show "its recognition" of Hunt and Arnott.

"They have both been good servants and, if it is at all possible, I shall try to arrange a match for them," he said. "Regardless of the fact they are on the list, they have both earned it."

Footnote: It is understood that Second Division club — Portsmouth — are showing an interest in Bill Brown.



JOHN ARNOTT



DENNIS HUNT



RALPH MILLER



BOB MOFFAT



BILL BROWN



JOHN FURIE

Soccer — cricket opening



Gillingham wing half Ray Bailey, a Northamptonshire cricketer, and Kent bowler John Dye open the Colin Page XI innings in a Testimonial match for the Kent 2nd XI skipper against B.P. Kent at Hoo on Saturday.

COLIN PAGE KENT XI

J. Dye, b Chase	2
R. Bailey, b Chase	25
P. Burke, c Cooper, b Chase	31
R. Wilson, not out	65
M. Machin, not out	31

Extras 5

Total (for 3 wks.) 150

Bowling: G. Wilkins 12-2-71-0; B. Chase 14-6-18-3; P. King 3-0-31-0; V. Henty 3-0-13-0; S. Cook 3-0-21-0.

Did not bat: C. Page, D. Quirke, C. Bush, Standen, Cullingham and Stooks.

B.P. KENT

P. Cooper, b Bush	11
C. Storey, b Bush	7
S. Cook, not out	36
N. Weeden, b Page	7
J. Emery, run out	12
B. Chase, c Quirke, b Burke	8
D. Crichton, b Burke	4
P. King, b Dye	1
V. Henty, b Dye	0
R. Bowring, c Quirke, b Machin	0
G. Wilkins, b Machin	0

Extras 3

Total 89

Bowling: Standen 3-0-15-0; Bush 4-2-11-2; Page 2-1-1-1; Quirke 4-1-13-0; Stooks 4-1-12-0; Burke 3-0-14-2; Bailey 2-1-13-0; Dye 3-1-2-2; Machin 3-1-6-2.



Gillingham's close season signing from Carlisle, Mike Green, watches a duel between Bill Williams and Tony Thearin a practice match at Maldstone Road Ground on Wednesday. P.3245