

FAREWELL TO THE GOLDSTONE

A four-page souvenir pull-out marking the end of an era

The story I didn't have to write



by Andy Naylor
Southern Sports Reporter of the Year

EVEN the sky had a cry for the Goldstone.

The tears shed at the finish though were, to the huge relief of this correspondent, ones of joy instead of despair.

I have my memories... of the robust Fred Binney, the sublime Peter Ward, the statesmanlike Mark Lawrenson.

Nostalgia threatened to turn into a nightmare. Mine was having to start Saturday's match report something like this: "Albion are relegated after a shattering defeat in their last-ever game at the Goldstone."

Punches
Thanks to Stuart Storer and Barry Hearn's Orient, bless 'em, those dreaded words were never required.

Chris Eubank's former manager might be keen to sign up Ian Baird and Darren Moore after the punches they threw at each other.

Then came the jubilation and the realisation that here lies one of football's sleeping giants, ready to be awakened by a knight in shining armour.

Job done, on the pitch and in the Press box, I at last had a moment to reflect. The old place was virtually empty, apart from the odd colleague.

It was then that I contemplated claiming my own piece of history: The back of the front row No. 4 seat occupied for so many years by my illustrious Argus predecessors, John Vintcombe and Jack Arledge, and by me for the last three.

But I scuttled off into the damp night. Victory on this momentous day was enough.

TEARS BUT THE TURF LIVES ON

ALBION fans fought back tears as they clutched chunks of hallowed turf and other mementos in an emotion-charged farewell to the Goldstone.

Hundreds of supporters swept on to the pitch at the end of the historic last match to collect pieces of turf, signs and advertising hoardings.

Others stood on the terraces and paid a silent tribute as they watched players leave the pitch for the last time.

Despite some national newspaper reports yesterday, there was no riot. Thousands of fans behaved with dignity. A tiny handful who had been unable to get into the ground were arrested when emotions outside ran high at half-time.

Secretary Leanne Wilshire, 28, of Pound Hill, Crawley, said: "I had to get a bit of turf as a memento. I have been coming here since I was ten. The best memory was getting to the FA Cup Final against Manchester United."

Reminder

"I will put the turf in our garden and keep an eye on it. It will remind me of what has been a very sad day for me. It is terrible. I have made so many good friends here. It's like losing part of your family."

"But I'm glad they won and they will stay up. Here's to the future."

Leonard Barron, 72, of Worthing, said: "This is an awful time for me, but I'm glad we won and we can escape the drop now, I think. I've got my bit of the ground and I'm now going home to have a little weep. I have been a regular here for 40 years."

Derek Hawkes, 61, a former BT engineer, of Hove, said: "I have been coming here since 1968 and worked on the gate for 19 years. It's so disappointing. I hope they will survive and play across the road from here."

TURN TO PAGE 2



WAKE IN THE RAIN: Hardly a dry eye in the house as these fans gather on the centre spot



MINE: Young fan's handful of history



Lost but found: It's the game he nearly missed

IT was the game Chris Parkin nearly did not see.

The Seagulls supporter saved up to buy a treasured ticket but did not realise it had fallen out of his wallet.

He only discovered it was missing when he went to leave his house in Medway Close, Durrington, Worthing, three hours before Saturday's kick-off.

Luckily it was found by fellow fan John Knight, from Wenching Cottages, Lancing, who was determined it

should reach its rightful owner.

He contacted the Argus and we featured the lost ticket in Friday's paper. Chris's mum read the article and put two and two together.

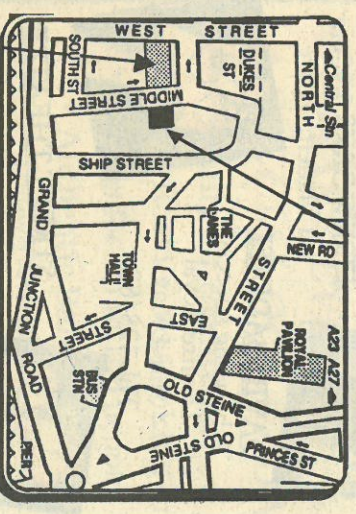
With just hours to spare Chris, 19, was able to identify the ticket by its number.

He said: "I'm unemployed so I had saved up to buy my ticket on the day they went on sale. I'd like to really, really thank the man who handed it in."



REUNITED: Just the ticket for Chris

£30,000 WON BY OUR MEMBERS EVERY WEEK!



CAR PARK AVAILABLE FROM 5.30PM

THE BEAUTIFUL BINGO CLUB
(built 1897)

Entertaining the Brighton public for 100 years!!

