

## **BOB LILLIMAN**



In the words of the man himself ...

“I had no interest in football for my first 14 years due to attending the rucker-playing Bedford Modern School. Then on Monday 6 December 1965 I saw Bedford Town beat Brighton & Hove Albion 2-1 in an FA Cup 2nd Round Replay.

My watching activities involved “Eagles” home games; the odd away game; Torquay United and Southampton when on holiday; then gradually other local teams. From 1969-72 my football education continued with frequent visits to Filbert Street (Leicester City); and other Football League and Non League clubs within a 50 mile radius of Leicester.

I also took a degree in Classics at Leicester University. Not knowing what to do with this rarefied qualification I worked for Bedfordshire Libraries for a year, then took a one-year qualification in Librarianship at Ealing Tech, opening up to me the grounds of London and the Home Counties. Being employed by Surrey Libraries from 1974-79 enabled me, when not working or playing for Burymead FC in the Surrey Intermediate, and Guildford & District Leagues, to delve into the Isthmian, Athenian, Sussex, Hellenic, and Hampshire Leagues.

From December 1979 I worked for Wandsworth Libraries and continued with my football-watching obsession, clocking up my 2,000th new ground at Thoresby Colliery Welfare in August 2003. Meeting up with Alex White - we both played Sunday football for Putney Manresa in the Octopus League - destined me to become a part-time Fulham supporter.

My interest in photography started in the summer of 1966 with a Kodak Brownie 127 Camera Flash Outfit, which first accompanied me on a football trip to the Abbey Stadium on 5 April 1969, when Cambridge United beat Cheltenham Town 1-0 in the Southern League Cup Final 1st Leg, evidenced by two fuzzy black & white photos. By the time of my visit to St. Neots Town in August 1970, B&W had been replaced by colour photos, only to be superseded by slides, and then ultimately back to photos again.

In 1971 I bought a Zenith E camera and suddenly taking ground photos developed from a casual interest into a consuming passion. Football trips and holidays all over Britain enabled me to photograph grounds. In the mid-eighties I gave up taking slides in favour of colour photos (I have yet to go digital). As a result I have at least 8,000 slides, and too many photos to count. These have been used in the Yore ‘Gone But Not Forgotten’ series; ‘Football Grounds of Staffordshire & Shropshire’; ‘Football Grounds Fact Book’; and regularly in ‘Groundtastic’ magazine.”

**Bob Lilliman**