

Greetings and best wishes from an unlikely supporter

To the Welling United Football club and its supporters I send greetings from Calgary, Canada. I too am a Wings' supporter. How I came to be one is a fairly simple story – although technically it runs from the 19th century to the 21st.

My grandfather, Sydney Turner, was a native of Bexleyheath. He was orphaned in 1890 at 10 years of age and was sent to Canada the following year. Recently, like many baby-boomers, I've taken an interest in my family history, starting with my grandfather's early life. A couple of years ago while researching the Bexleyheath area on the internet I discovered the Welling United Football Club website. I've followed the club ever since. The site's video highlights have let me have a look into Park View Road and have given me a glimpse of the passion of 'real' football supporters.

I was born and raised in Canada. From a very early age I was a football fan, but I can't explain why I was drawn to the game since no one else in my family had any interest. I'm pretty sure I was the only one in my household in front of the television in the summer of 1966 watching England defeat West Germany. Nowadays, the Premiership, the FA Cup, and the other European leagues are broadcast in Canada.

In late April of this year I was in London on a business trip that extended over the weekend of April 28-29. Before I arrived I had checked the fixture list to see that Welling was at home that Saturday to Hayes. I journeyed from central London to Bexleyheath to visit my grandfather's town and then in the afternoon walked down to Park View Road to watch the match. I would happily have laid a bet that I was the only North American in the ground that day and I must admit that I did feel a little out of place. That situation was eased considerably by a friendly steward who helped to show me the way.

With Hayes battling to escape relegation and Welling fighting to keep playoff hopes alive, I thoroughly enjoyed an exciting afternoon of football. The match was entertaining but the atmosphere was unbeatable. I was very pleased to be able to join you all on the last day of the season – to join in the tribute to Alan Ball at the beginning of the match and, at the finish, to wish Adrian Pennock good luck in his new responsibilities at Stoke.

I am very sorry I can't be there for the opening of the 2007-08 season. However, should business take me once again to London this season, I guarantee that Saturday afternoon you'll find me at Park View Road. I owe it to my grandfather, at the very least.

Good luck and best wishes.

D. Turner McGrath



My minder



Goodbye to Alan Ball



Congratulations and thanks to Keds



Not a prawn sandwich in sight!