

APRIL 1971: FIRST VISIT TO WEMBLEY STADIUM

Dagenham 1-4 Skelmersdale United

DAGENHAM
1 Ian Huttley
2 John Ford
3 George Dudley
4 Barry Davidson
5 John Still
6 Dennis Moore
7 Peter Leakey
8 Philip Fry
9 Tony Bass
10 Derek Baker
11 John Dear
12 Martin Smith (used)

Venue	Empire Stadium, Wembley
Date	Saturday, 24th April 1971
Competition	FA Amateur Cup Final
Referee	Mr R Tinkler (Boston)
Attendance	45,000

Match Details			
05	0-1		Dickin (1)
57	0-2		Dickin (2)
62	1-2	Bass	
65?	1-3		Windsor
90?	1-4		Dickin (3)

SKELMERSDALE UNITED	
1	Peter Frankish
2	Stan Allan
3	Robin Poole
4	John Turner
5	Wally Bennett
6	Alan McDermott
7	Alan Swift
8	Andy Wolfe
9	Ted Dickin
10	Peter Hardcastle
11	Paul Clements
12	Andy Windsor (used)

I'M unsure of what made us decide to attend this match but I went with the folks by coach to Wembley to watch this prestigious final tie in the FA Amateur Cup. We decided to support Skelmersdale United as my mum was from the north and a rosette was purchased which I wore at the game and have still retained over fifty years later. Alas, it is very much the worse for wear though! Dagenham were beaten finalists a year ago whilst United were having a last attempt at winning this competition as they were turning professional in the summer.

I was absolutely amazed by Wembley Stadium. It was my first visit and we had brilliant seats, along the side of the stadium and it was a most superb view. I went back a few years later and it didn't seem to compare then, in fact it seemed a little disappointing. But to put things into perspective, I was eleven years old then, which would probably be a significant factor.

Skelmersdale won the game and Ted Dickin recorded the first ever hat-trick I'd seen and what a stage to watch it! I am not sure but I think he scored all three goals with his head. Dagenham's Dear was stretchered off with a head injury on 52 minutes with Skelmersdale 1-0 ahead at that point due to an early goal. Shortly after Dear had left the field it became 2-0. Soon after Bass had pulled a goal back for the Daggers, Windsor added United's third with Dickin completing his hat-trick near to the end of the game.

The referee Ray Tinkler was controversially involved in the Leeds United v West Bromwich Albion match a week before, allowing what appeared to be an offside goal to the visitors that seriously affected United's chances of winning the Division 1 title. Chaos ensued, including protests and a pitch invasion. Fortunately, no such incidents occurred at Wembley in this match!

So a good day out and home in plenty of time to watch Southampton lose rather miserably by 0-3 at home to Leeds on *Match of the Day* but that didn't sour what was a most enjoyable day. This match has provided my most memorable game due, not only to the occasion, but that very first visit to Wembley.

This proved to be the only time I'd watched a game in the FA Amateur Cup which ended three years later when there were no longer players defined as 'amateurs', the game having moved on and perhaps not always for the better thereafter. The competition was replaced by the FA Challenge Vase.

Obviously, this young boy didn't make any notes back then so I am grateful for the following publication for assistance: *History of the FA Amateur Cup—Bob Barton*.