

## The History of Sport in Finningham.



What year? 1966?

4<sup>th</sup> Row, L to R: Skinny Muttitt, John (Dimples) Hayward, Peter Crichley, Tony (Whip) Wilson, David Foreman

3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Evan Boggis, Tommy Cook, George Rice, Eddie Palfrey, Geoff Pollard, Ivor Parkington

2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Ray Farrow, Dennis Rice, Terry Collins, Ronnie Ruffles? , Brian Gardiner

1<sup>st</sup> Row: Geoff Whatley, Nicky Collins, Maurice Seeley

I am compiling a collection of photos and cuttings and personal recollections about the history of sport in Finningham. The project is driven by the materials available and includes some information about cycle speedway, cricket, even rifle shooting but by far the biggest category is football. Between the 1950s and 1970s, Finningham had an unbroken record of successes in football, winning every competition and almost every game they took part in.

I have no previous knowledge or expertise in the subject but am happy to be putting the project together. All the materials and information so far have come from Finningham people and between them they have been able to put names, dates, places and events to most of the photos. Tom Barker is sorting out the later revival of football at the turn of this century. The plan is to present the project as a hard back book and Oliver Miller of Bishop and Miller Auctioneers, Steven Rooney of Gaia Climate Solutions Ltd and David Barker of E.J. Barker & Sons have provided generous sponsorship to reduce the price of the book to an affordable level. Any profits will go to the Friends of Finningham.

What is sadly lacking in the project so far is the personal touch. Photos, lists, match reports are important but they don't make for a good story and it is the stories that bring a project like this to life.

When Dennis Rice was barely into his teens he would get on his bike every week and set off after George, his older brother, to the football game. He'd have his football boots round his neck, tied together by the laces. He was hoping they would be one player short and eventually they were and he got to play. He was 14 years old and two decades later he was still playing.

The young Finningham supporters would stand behind the opposition's goal. There was one goalie who would roll a fag every time the ball went down the other end. Then when the ball came back, he would throw his fag end down and the lads would pounce on it and smoke it.

Once when a Finningham shot was off target, Herman Clarke ran onto the pitch and tapped it into the goal. He wrote a letter of apology after the game.

Do you know a story or have a personal memory of what it was like to be a player, a supporter, a wife or girlfriend, an opponent? Within the village I think most people with a tale to tell have probably already spoken up but I'm hoping that this letter will also reach those of you who have moved away. It would be a shame if someone who wanted to take part missed the boat because they didn't know about it. Once the book goes to print (which won't be for a while) it will be too late to add any extra content. Although the focus is on football, that is only because the biggest pile of material is about football. We don't have a single photo and very little information about cricket even though it was a fairly regular summer activity over many decades. Tennis was popular for a time but again, there is nothing much about it. We have one or two early football photos from the 1920s. Your grandfather or great grandfather might be one of the players. Do please get in touch.

If you have a photo or other object to include, do please get in touch and we can work out how to copy it safely.

Stay safe,  
Pete Overall

If you have a contribution to make, please send me an email to: [pete@pjeoverall.plus.com](mailto:pete@pjeoverall.plus.com)