

**How good was Wartime football?**

“Football in the War was played to a very high standard. RAF against the Army games had twenty-two full internationals. When they turned on the style it was tremendous.

All the Scotsmen and Welshmen were in the Army team, and the RAF team was just about the England side at one time. Stan Matthews, Tom Finney, Ted Drake, Neil Franklin, and Bert Williams was our ‘keeper.’”

**If you could choose, would you rather play now or when you did?**

“When I did.”

**Even though you earned a pittance?**

“Yes, it wasn’t so urgent. Although I never ever wanted to lose. I would do anything to win. Wilf wasn’t a winner mentally. He could lose and not worry. If I lost, my wife used to get out the back door and run. [Laughs] I was a bad loser. Certainly there were some great players before the War, and some great football played.

But it was a joy to play during the War, because the pressure wasn’t on so much. When we came out of the Forces when hostilities ended I carried this attitude and this style into the game, and it gained something. It’s a funny thing to say, but I wouldn’t have missed the War years, although it frightened the shit out of me at times. [Laughs] Every Christmas Day there are still three phone calls I get from my old mates.”

**What were the best and worst experiences of your time at Boro?**

“The worst was playing Burnley in the Sixth Round of the Cup. We were winning one-nil at Ayresome Park and Micky Fenton scored to make it two-nil with about fifteen minutes to go. But the linesman started waving his flag. The referee went to him and disallowed the goal. He gave Johnny Spuhler offside when he was stood next to the linesman.

How could he have been interfering with play? They scraped a draw and went to Burnley for the replay. The ground was frozen, I’ve never seen anything like it, before or since. They had people with crowbars chipping out the touchlines and filling them in with sawdust. It was never ever fit to play on.

But I could always manage pretty well under any conditions. We used to get touring parties in the War, as a bit of relaxation for the lads, jugglers and tightrope walkers - it was there I discovered my sense of balance was good enough for me to walk the tightrope.

But we played the game. Nobody looked like scoring, the ball was all over the place, everyone was slipping over. Their winger got past Dicky Robinson and crossed into our box, Dave Cumming came out and

