



DR. PHIL STEVENS
FOREWORD BY TONY COTTEE

SPORTING HEROES

OF ESSEX AND EAST LONDON 1960-2000
BOBBY MOORE AND GRAHAM GOOCH

Contents

Title Page	i
Publisher Information	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
Chapter 1	1
Chapter 2	35
Chapter 3	66
Chapter 4	100
Chapter 5	123
Chapter 6	196
Chapter 7	202
Chapter 8	254
Chapter 9	303
Last Word	382
Also Available	383

Sporting Heroes of Essex and East London 1960-2000

Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch

Dr. Phil Stevens

Foreword by Tony Cottee



APEX PUBLISHING LTD

First published in 2010 by
Apex Publishing Ltd
PO Box 7086
Clacton on Sea
Essex
CO15 5WN
England

www.apexpublishing.co.uk

Digital Edition converted and published by
Andrews UK Limited 2010

www.andrewsuk.com

Copyright © 2010 by Dr. Phil Stevens

The author has asserted his moral rights

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved. This book is sold subject to the condition, that no part of this book is to be reproduced, in any shape or form. Or by way of trade, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition, including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser, without prior permission of the copyright holder.

Production Manager: Chris Cowlin
Cover Design: Siobhan Smith

For Linda

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this book I have been encouraged by how generous people have been with their time and ideas. In particular I am indebted to Graham Gooch for his co-operation and support for the project, and Tony Cottee for writing the Foreword.

Writing a book of this kind is inevitably a collective enterprise, and I acknowledge the help of so many colleagues and sport lovers, among them Sinem Cakir at the City of London Corporation, Brentwood's Ken Hobbs, archivist Dave Pracy, sculptor Philip Jackson, David Playfair, Mick Geoghegan, Nigel Hilliard, Geoff Sherman, the Villiers Trust, the Bishopsgate Institute, Dorothy Lumley, Ken and Kath Emberson, Chris Evans at the Essex FA, Michael Grier at Tate & Lyle Ltd, and John Nevill at the Ford Motor Company. I wish to offer them all my sincere gratitude.

Very special thanks to Jonathan Vallerius for his detailed and thorough research, and I am sorry if the time he spent in the library at Lord's intruded into his cricket season. Thanks also to Chris Cowlin at Apex Publishing Ltd for his support and enabling the book to see the light of day. Mark Cripps, a cherished friend, read the manuscript and gave the right mixture of friendly criticism and critical friendship. Finally, thanks to my wife Linda for her support, love and patience.

Graham Gooch was kind enough to give his time in a busy mid-season to reflect on some of the main themes in the book and to express his ideas on coaching and developing young cricketers. As part of the research I have talked at length with local sports enthusiasts, some of whom have memories stretching back over 40 years. Many of their strong opinions and sporting recollections have found their way into the book and it was a delight to meet them all.

It was a pleasure to write this book. I hope you enjoy looking a little deeper into the careers of Moore and Gooch and the sporting culture that inspired and nourished them.

FOREWORD

This is a fantastic book which all football and cricket fans will enjoy reading. Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch are two of the genuinely great sporting figures of the post-war period and two of my own personal heroes. Moore's exquisitely-timed tackles and precision passing - Gooch's crunching on-drives and attacking style are clear images in the minds of all sports lovers and were a real inspiration to me and hundreds of other East End kids. Moore was the great iconic figure of the Sixties and Seventies and probably the last of the genuine local heroes, while Gooch's long career spanned the twenty years between 1970 and 2000.

I was born in Forest Gate Hospital, just around the corner from the new Olympic Village and a couple of miles from West Ham's Upton Park ground. When I was four years old, like many local families, we moved out to Romford, always the first stop out into Essex for aspiring East Enders. But despite our new suburban surroundings, like both Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch, we were always stayed close to our roots. The heroes of this engaging book both went to school in Leytonstone, a tough working class borough close to the East End. Like many of us from the East End, Moore and Gooch had the benefit of strong and supportive families, and were extremely proud of their working-class background. Both stayed close to their roots. Dr Stevens's book is the first to compare and contrast the careers of these two sporting greats within the context of a fast-changing post-war world.

If the book is a study of the sporting lives of Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch, it is also the story of thousands of football and cricket enthusiasts who helped to make the sporting culture of East London/Essex so rich and distinctive. The book includes hilarious anecdotes and stories from individuals and clubs, and explains how playing fields like Hackney Marshes, Wanstead Flats and West Ham Park, where many of us played as youngsters, had such a key role in shaping the sporting culture of the area. The book is a celebration of all that is good in local sport.

West Ham United, my old club, and Essex County Cricket Club share a common sporting heritage. Bobby Moore played cricket for Essex as a teenager, while Graham Gooch is a passionate West Ham fan and regularly trained with us at West Ham at the peak of his career. The area that stretches out between Upton Park in the East End and Essex's headquarters at Chelmsford is a hotbed of local sport, and a place which has produced an extra-ordinary number of international sports figures of the very highest calibre. In addition to Moore and Gooch, sporting giants from the area include David Beckham, Dean Macey, Teddy Sheringham, Lennox Lewis, Sol Campbell, Paul Ince, Ravi Bopara, Sir Alf Ramsey, Nasser Hussein, Christine Ohuruogu and Sir Trevor Brooking – the list is endless. Dr Stevens's book identifies what is special about the sporting culture of Essex and East London.

The playing days of Moore and Gooch were golden years when both reached the very heights of sporting glory – Moore captaining England to World Cup victory at Wembley in 1966, and Gooch scoring century after century against the West Indies, one of the most fearsome fast-bowling attacks in the history of cricket. But as we professionals know only too well, sporting lives are short-lived and like all other international greats, our two heroes had to face the challenge of retirement. The book offers a fascinating account of the different ways Moore and Gooch faced their non-playing careers.

This book is a warm tribute to Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch, and to a truly remarkable sporting culture. Through interviews, archives and personal stories, Dr Stevens has managed to capture the sporting essence of the place, and gives the reader a real insight into what drove our two heroes to such dazzling heights of achievement. Sports fans are in for a treat.

Best wishes

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Cottee', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Tony Cottee

INTRODUCTION

Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch are two of the genuinely great sporting figures of the post-war period. Moore's exquisitely timed tackles and precision passing and Gooch's crunching on-drives and attacking style are clear images in the minds of all sports lovers. Moore was the iconic figure of the 1960s and 1970s, while Gooch's long career spanned two decades from the 1970s to the 1990s. This book is the first to compare and contrast the careers of these two sporting greats within the context of a rapidly changing social context, and it includes amusing anecdotes and stories from individuals and clubs, tracing the history of football and cricket in East London and Essex during their heyday.

If this book is a study of the sporting lives of Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch, it is also the story of thousands of passionate football and cricket enthusiasts in the area who have helped to make the sporting culture of East London/Essex so rich and distinctive over two generations. For every Moore and Gooch there are hundreds of East Enders and Essex men and women for whom playing sport means as much to them as it does to their heroes. The area that stretches out between Upton Park in the East End and Essex's headquarters at Chelmsford is a hotbed of local sport and a place that has produced an extraordinary number of international sports figures of the very highest calibre. The book examines what is distinctive about the sporting culture of Essex/East London that enabled it to produce not only Moore and Gooch but also a host of world-class sports stars.

I have set the book very broadly between the years 1960 and 2000, a 40-year period during which sport, and society generally, changed beyond recognition. Our two heroes were born just a few miles and 12 years apart, Moore in Barking in 1941 and Gooch in Leytonstone in 1953, a tough working-class area where the East End of London meets metropolitan Essex. Both went to school in Leytonstone, and as emerging young players they had the benefit of strong and supportive East End

families, who had made the short trip out to the Essex border. Moore and Gooch were extremely proud of their working-class background and stayed close to their roots.

West Ham United and Essex CCC share a common sporting heritage. Bobby Moore played cricket for Essex Youth as a boy, while Graham Gooch is a passionate West Ham fan and regularly trained with The Hammers at the peak of his career. In the opinion of former Hammers manager, John Lyall, he was good enough to have become a professional footballer.

The playing days of Moore and Gooch were golden years in which both reached the very heights of sporting glory – Moore captaining England to World Cup victory at Wembley in 1966, and Gooch scoring century after century against the West Indies, one of the most fearsome fast-bowling attacks in the history of cricket. But sporting lives are short-lived and, like all other international greats, both had to face the challenge of retirement.

The book provides a fascinating account of the different ways that Moore and Gooch faced their non-playing careers. Graham Gooch was generous enough to agree to be interviewed for the book. The interview took place at Fenner's in Cambridge in June 2009 during the match between Essex and Cambridge University. His reflections provide the book with some fascinating insights into the state of the modern game. Tony Cottee's perceptive foreword offers a genuinely local contribution to a book that is a tribute to Moore and Gooch and to a truly remarkable sporting culture.

Moore and Gooch, East London and Essex through and through, were both anti-establishment figures. The book will focus on the effect of a stubborn streak of independence, not just on their playing careers but also, particularly in the case of Moore, on retirement. Moore and Gooch, both great champions, were socially and psychologically very different characters. Both were intelligent and determined, and they also shared a good sense of humour. Moore was outgoing and confident, although somehow vulnerable, while Gooch was more introspective but very clear in what he wanted to achieve. They were family men who enjoyed a pint with their mates, and despite both being divorced they appeared to enjoy the hurly burly of family life.

These two great sporting stars both possessed a spirit of

optimism, believing that everything was possible. Gooch, for example, never became embittered after his South African experience, but emerged a stronger and better cricketer. Both showed immense courage and fortitude and were very serious professional sportsmen, but they essentially had cheerful natures, despite Gooch's rather dour image. My impression is that Moore was the more vulnerable of the two and seemed to need the emotional support of those closest to him, while Gooch is, perhaps, a more independent character. A feature of the book will be to compare and contrast the two different personalities of these local heroes.

Moore's very sad early death led to an unexpected emotional outpouring, both locally and nationally. There are now statues in memory of the former England captain at the new Wembley Stadium and the Bobby Moore Stand now sits proudly at the southern end of the Boleyn ground. Moore's place in English cultural history is secure, despite, as we shall see, the anticlimax of his non-playing days.

The retirement of Graham Gooch stands in marked contrast to his footballing idol. Since he retired from playing in 1997 Gooch has carefully mapped out his future: some BBC work, coaching at Essex, cricket administration and the establishment of his Academy at Chelmsford. The Academy and his Scholarship scheme have deservedly gained Gooch a reputation as an outstanding and successful coach. His retirement is proving almost as successful as his playing days, as Alistair Cook and Ravi Bopara both testified following their tremendous partnership for England in the Second Test against the West Indies at the Riverside in 2009. The contrast between how these two great sportsmen dealt with life after playing provides a major theme of the book.

West Ham and Essex – sporting soulmates

Both Moore and Gooch are inextricably linked to West Ham United FC and Essex County Cricket Club, the area's premier clubs. These two local sporting institutions have provided the leadership and emotional focus (if we forgive one or two lapses of grace) for tens of thousands of sports lovers in this corner of the UK for over a century. Both clubs have won reputations for playing their respective sports with style and panache, generously laced with a highly developed sense of humour, and

both have been hugely influential in the development of football and cricket in the county of Essex and in the East End of London. It is impossible to separate these two great clubs in terms of the affection they hold for sports lovers in the area – like the two places, each club is an extension of the other.

Two occasions in the space of less than one year provide an illustration of just how closely the histories of these two great sporting institutions are interwoven.

At Lord's Cricket Ground in July 1979 Essex CCC won the first trophy in their 85-year history – the Benson & Hedges Cup, with Graham Gooch scoring the first century in a one-day final. On that memorable Saturday in July Lord's resounded to the West Ham anthem, 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles', and a definite tinge of claret and blue coloured the parts of the ground occupied by the Essex supporters. Graham Gooch said at the time that he had never heard a welcome as loud as the Essex players received on that sunny July morning in 1979.

Across London on another sunny Saturday the following May, West Ham United beat Arsenal 1-0 in the FA Cup final, with the winning goal scored by Trevor Brooking from an unlikely diving header. This time it was Wembley that was awash with the claret and blue of The Hammers as 'Bubbles' echoed across North London; it was as if the Arsenal supporters had stayed at home.

These two glorious Saturdays were sporting triumphs for East London and Essex. On both occasions observers witnessed the passion and desire of local people for their two clubs, West Ham United FC and Essex CCC.

Londoners over the border

In the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens described people from East and West Ham as "Londoners over the border". East Ham and West Ham were Essex County boroughs until local government reorganisation in 1965, when they became the London Borough of Newham. Both were essential parts of the East End, even though they had been important boroughs of Essex since 1888, unlike their East London neighbours Poplar, Bow and Stepney, which have always been London boroughs and very much part of the capital city.

In football, West Ham United was essentially the club for what is now Newham, although, of course, The Hammers have

always enjoyed strong support from Poplar, Bow and Stepney, and, further east, Whitechapel, Shoreditch, Shadwell and Aldgate, all now incorporated into Tower Hamlets. The Hammers have always been dear to the hearts of Essex people from Southend down on the estuary to Colchester, out on the east coast. In the same way, Hammers supporters have turned out in their thousands to support their county cricket team.

The book will explore this close sporting link between Essex and East London, and show how two young sports-mad boys from the same 'manor' went on to conquer the world.

Essex sporting boys and girls

Trevor Bailey, as Essex as it is possible to be, came closest to catching the essence of the area and its people when he wrote:

Essex is a large flat, sprawling county, heavily populated, energetic and diverse in its political, economic and social life. In addition to the metropolitan area, comprising London's East End, it has a number of thriving towns, some of them new, as well as many delightful old commuter villages and, of course, popular seaside resorts.

- W.A. Powell (2002), *Essex County Cricket Club, The History Press.p.5*

One of the aims of the book is to counter the often spiteful image of East London/Essex people as boorish and obsessed with money, 4x4s and tasteless material possessions. Contrary to the stereotype of popular imagination, the true spirit of this special place, as Bailey notes, is derived from its energy and diversity. It is true that this spirit was bent out of shape a little in the 1980s, when Essex, perhaps with more relish than the rest of England, fell for the Thatcher dream.

Energy and diversity are a powerful combination when applied to sport, and we can see this in the strength of the area's sporting culture. East London/Essex is distinctive for the high level of sporting participation woven into its social and cultural fabric. Sport is everywhere. For at least half a century football pitches, cricket grounds, athletic tracks, waterways, golf clubs and sports halls have provided facilities for local people of all ages and, importantly, of all cultural backgrounds to participate at every level in their sport of choice. However, it is notable that

this impressive sporting tradition is today, in some areas, in decline. In the research for the book I spent time in schools and clubs, visited local football and cricket grounds, and met volunteer enthusiasts and people responsible for sport and leisure provision across East London and Essex. The research reveals an interesting picture of the state of football and cricket in the area, the place that produced two world champions in Moore and Gooch.

To paraphrase the philosopher Isaiah Berlin, East London and Essex people are like everybody else, only more so; there is an intensity about them. They have always possessed virtues such as hard work and determination, which are important in sport. However, these attributes are not sufficient in themselves, otherwise most sports addicts would be playing at a much higher level than their talent allows. Moore and Gooch inherited the work ethic of their parents and were determined to succeed. Both were also interested in understanding their respective games. Moore was one of the youngest players to take FA coaching badges and was a student of the West Ham Academy under Malcolm Allison, Noel Cantwell and Ron Greenwood. Gooch's cricketing intelligence and thoughtful approach to the game are well known to BBC listeners and to the young players at Essex CCC. Sections of the book include a look at the technical skill and tactical awareness of these two great sporting talents.

Although the careers of Moore and Gooch provide the centrepiece of the book, I am keen to set their magnificent achievements within the local sporting culture. Based around the lives of our two heroes, each chapter of the book is an attempt to construct a social history of sport in East London and Essex over the past 40 years. Sunday morning football on Hackney Marshes and club cricket at Brentwood are all part of the colourful and rich tapestry of sport in the area. Travel around Essex and you will encounter sport at every turn. The book provides a record of the wealth of memories and stories that are the heart and soul of football and cricket and should appeal to sports lovers everywhere.

Can there be another public sports facility anywhere in the world like Hackney Marshes? Football, and to a lesser extent hockey and rugby, has been played at Hackney Marshes since around 1881, and at the height of its popularity there were 120

pitches on the Marsh available for schools and local clubs. An extraordinary number of internationals and sporting household names emerged from the area in the 40 years between 1960 and 2000. They all enjoyed their first experience of sport on the fertile sporting turf of grounds such as Wanstead Flats, Low Hall Farm, Fairlop and the jewel in the sporting crown, Hackney Marshes. Both Moore and Gooch played on these grounds as young boys, and a further aim of the book is to trace the history of these rich sporting grounds and reveal the stories of some of their most intriguing characters.

A sporting hall of fame

In the post-war period the Essex/East London connection produced a host of famous sporting names, in addition to Moore and Gooch. Cricketers included Doug Insole, Trevor Bailey, Keith Fletcher, John Lever, Derek Pringle, Nasser Hussain, Alistair Cook, Brian 'Tonker' Taylor, Barry Knight, Neil Foster, Alan Lilley, Robin Hobbs, Keith Pont and the exciting young prospect, Ravi Bopara. The book will look at the question: how did Essex CCC manage to produce an unprecedented four England captains in 20 years in Fletcher, Gooch, Hussain and Cook.

Footballers from the area include David Beckham, Teddy Sheringham, Sir Alf Ramsey, Jimmy Greaves, Harry Redknapp, Paul Ince, Jamie Redknapp, Sol Campbell, Terry Venables, Martin Peters, Jermain Defoe, Laurie Cunningham, Frank Lampard Snr, Frank Lampard Jnr, Mick Leach, Ian and Roger Morgan, Denis Bond, Ken Brown, Brendon Batson, Derek Bellotti, Alan Curbishley, John Terry and the late Jimmy Neighbour. Dear old Sir Trevor Brooking was born in 1948 in the part of Essex that is now the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Dean Macey, the great decathlete, is from humble Canvey Island, while rugby legend Lawrence Dallaglio and Olympic gold medallist Christine Ohuruogu are genuine East Enders. World champions Ted 'Kid' Lewis, Lennox Lewis, Charlie Magri and Daniel Mendoza came out of East London boxing clubs. If we were really generous we might also include those Essex world champions from snooker, Steve Davis and Ronnie O'Sullivan.

The book will attempt to identify what it is about the area that

has produced such an unusually large number of world-class sporting stars.

By any standards this is an impressive record, but it is Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch who have done most to help shape the aspirations of local people, challenging the class-based prejudices of the conventional image of East London and Essex. Bobby Moore, the area's greatest sporting figure, was able to draw on his own considerable personal resources and those of his family to meet the ferocious hopes of a nation in 1966. Like Moore, Gooch drew on his own exceptional ability, pride and resolve to fulfil every ounce of his considerable potential to become a genuine sporting hero to cricket lovers in his native Essex, both as a player and in retirement.

For many, sport is simply fun. It can be a diversion from a stressful or difficult life. Both Moore and Gooch demonstrated a delight in playing and had great fun along the way. Sport is played at all levels for the sheer joy of it and humorous stories abound. Humour will be a constant theme in what follows as sporting tales are told and retold, revealing the true meaning of playing sport. But, of course, there is a familiar, often ugly and violent motive for playing sport. This can be as much a feature of its attraction as playing for the sheer fun of it. Humour and aggression are a part of the rich texture of amateur and professional sport and provide a central narrative thread of the book.

Building for the future

East London has always been a difficult place to grow up. Moore and Gooch had close family support as youngsters, as well as encouragement from teachers and club coaches. From this solid base they were able to realise their undoubted potential and become the best they could be. Young people need role models, and Moore was inspired by his boyhood hero, footballer Duncan Edwards. Typically, Gooch gained inspiration from more local figures such as Keith Fletcher and Trevor Bailey, although his own boyhood idol was, of course, Bobby Moore. Today's promising young sports stars draw on the example of Moore and Gooch, and others such as Lennox Lewis, Macey and Ohuruogu.

Many youngsters from the area show real sporting promise at school, but either through lack of support or negative peer

pressure they lose their way. However, despite the often hostile environment of East London and the eastern parts of Essex, many prosper to become successful footballers, cricketers, athletes and musicians or simply go on to secure decent jobs. Singer Leona Lewis, Ravi Bopara, sprinter Jeanette Kwakye and The Hammers' young hopeful, Mark Noble, are all inspirational role models for young people in their communities. In the 2008 Summer Olympics young Kwakye was the first British woman to reach a 100-metres final for 24 years, and her success in Beijing has inspired her to become a mentor for budding young London athletes. In the same way, Lennox Lewis has shown his commitment to helping disadvantaged young people from East London with his college in Hackney. West Ham United, too, are committed to helping their community and there are signs that this is paying real dividends in increasing participation in sport among local kids.

Like Lewis and Kwakye, community leaders and youth workers in the area work tirelessly to counter poverty and deprivation. Schools, colleges and local clubs are committed to maintaining and improving community life in East London's most disadvantaged areas, and there are signs that their hard work is beginning to reap some rewards. In 2009, Repton Boxing Club in Bethnal Green had the most successful year in its long and distinguished history, with an unprecedented five Golden Gloves in the National Championships. Repton's achievement is the result of years of work by scores of dedicated staff and volunteers. The long-term commitment of coaches is vital for the success of such projects. Encouraged by the schools, basketball, athletics and girls' football are all sports in which young people from the area have flourished in recent years as a result of the consistent presence of key people. Moore and Gooch prospered because they had adults around them who gave them the consistency and commitment they needed. These are valuable commodities in building a culture of trust and respect that encourages participation and success among young people.

Graham Gooch has not forgotten the help and encouragement he received as a young man. The Graham Gooch Cricket Academy at Chelmsford was set up in order to develop the next generation of young Essex cricketers. His scholarship scheme is providing promising young players with

expert coaching and the opportunity to spend their winters in India, South Africa or Australia. Gooch's efforts are now producing players of the international calibre of Bopara and Cook, and his example shows just what can be achieved with the right combination of encouragement, sensitive coaching and good facilities.

Can East London/Essex produce another Bobby Moore or Graham Gooch? Despite the efforts of schools and clubs like Repton BC, there are signs that a once thriving and proud sporting culture is struggling. The success of the 2012 London Olympics will be judged locally by the contribution it makes to leading a resurgence of sport in the area and to enriching the lives of thousands of young people from East London.

A glorious tradition

Where the right conditions are in place, sport in Essex and East London is thriving. But, as we shall see, there are real concerns for the future of sport in some of the most disadvantaged areas, where schools, clubs and local authorities are struggling to cope with the often conflicting demands of local and central government, parents and legal restrictions. Perhaps the London Olympics, down the road in Stratford, will provide the impetus and inspiration that teachers, coaches and, most important of all, young people now need. The legacy strategy simply has to succeed.

In the post-war years Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch have epitomised the will, dedication and depth of feeling for their sport shared by thousands of local people. Running out to play in front of 35,000 passionate fans at West Ham's Boleyn Ground, strolling out to bat at Essex County Cricket Ground in a one-day semi-final or wandering over to play on Pitch 93 at Hackney Marshes on a wet and cold Sunday morning are part of the same honourable and, at the best of times, glorious tradition. This book is a celebration of sport in this special place. But it carries a health warning. The tradition needs to be renewed and nurtured constantly or it will be squandered and lost forever.

The first section of the book will focus on football, mainly in East London but also out in the non-League stronghold of Essex. In the second part of the book we will travel out on the M11 to Chelmsford and beyond, where the heart of cricket lies.

The book aims to provide a record of the sporting activities of the two generations of people from East London and Essex in the 40-year period that covers the careers of Moore and Gooch. Through first-hand accounts, we will begin to understand their motivations, recognise their achievements and discover just what sport means to the lives of people from this complex and often troubled area.

CHAPTER ONE

BOVRIL TO BABY BENTLEYS

In its long history the East End of London has experienced the effects of every single element of social, political and industrial change in Britain, but with far greater intensity. Unemployment, immigration, poverty, world wars and industrial change have been experienced in places such as Bethnal Green, Stratford and West Ham with so much more force than elsewhere in Britain. Two examples will suffice. Because of the strategic importance of the East End, its docks, shipbuilding works, transport networks, etc., the area, particularly in the Second World War, became the target for the enemies' fiercest and most prolonged attacks. The impact of war on the collective memory and consciousness of generations of East Enders in the twentieth century can only be imagined.

Walk through parts of Whitechapel and Shoreditch on a Friday afternoon when thousands of local people are leaving their mosques after prayer and you could be forgiven for thinking: is this really inner-city London? Local synagogues and chapels are now mosques whose minarets can be seen clear across East London. This is really nothing new, as synagogues and dissenting chapels have always sat comfortably alongside the lovely Nicholas Hawksmoor churches erected in the early eighteenth century in what is now Tower Hamlets. Immigrants have always brought their religion to the area, whether they be Huguenots, Jews escaping from Nazi programmes to the safety of Spitalfields, Africans fleeing from the crimes of Idi Amin or Jamaicans in search of work. Local people from every background have had to adjust and cope with the changes and challenges that shifting immigration patterns have brought to the area. Chinatown in Limehouse is long established and now so-called 'Banglatown' in the area around Brick Lane has added to the rich diversity of this part of the capital. In 1974, the Clifton Curry House was the first Indian restaurant to open in Brick Lane, and today the 'Costa Curry' commercial culture has reduced the authenticity of the experience.

For a time it looked as if the colossal impact of two world wars, the challenges of immigration and the trauma of industrial decline would bring the East End to its knees. But as is their habit, local people managed to roll with the punches and survived once again, to such an extent that parts of the East End have become fashionable, and with the 2012 Olympics based in Stratford the future looks bright. The one element that stubbornly refuses to change is the fortunes of West Ham United, who continue to bring joy and frustration in equal measure.

Much of the credit for the recovery of East London since 1945 must go to the post-war generation of East Enders. The parents of Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch were part of the wartime generation, and Moore himself was a war baby. Both families experienced the harsh post-war East End world of austerity and rebuilding in which as one observer put it,

This community, gone forever, was once bound by a common element – poverty.

- John Rennie (2009), 'Bound Together by Poverty', East End Life (free weekly Tower Hamlets newspaper).

Growing up in these difficult times influenced the way our heroes came to see the world. They were both self-motivated achievers who learnt the hard-won values of discipline and commitment in a tough and unforgiving environment. East London took two generations to recover from the shock and devastation of the Blitz. It was in this period of renewal that Moore and Gooch embarked on the early parts of their careers.

Bobby Moore was an East Londoner through and through, and Graham Gooch continues to show his gratitude and loyalty to the area through his work with young Essex cricketers. But before we examine the local influences on Moore and Gooch in their own time, it is worth reflecting on some of the history of this very special part of London where our two heroes were born and raised. Sport can never be isolated from society in general, and it is interesting to reflect on the wider events that shape the lives of great sports figures.

Courage in adversity

Most British professional football clubs emerged from working-

class communities at the end of the nineteenth century, usually in inner-city areas. West Ham United are no different, and we can understand the club and its supporters a little more if we take a brief look at these communities and their history. In the nineteenth century a handful of great industrial pioneers established major enterprises around the Royal Docks, from which emerged a whole culture of sports and leisure clubs. Henry Tate built a sugar refinery in Silvertown in 1878, while Abram Lyle opened a similar works at Plaistow Wharf a few years later. The two firms combined in 1921, forming what became the world-famous sugar company, Tate & Lyle, a major employer in the area for generations. One of the company's first projects was to establish a sports club, complete with a private ground and clubhouse in the heart of the East End, a major contribution at the time to the growth of local sport in the area.

Heavy industry has been a feature of life in East London since the mid-eighteenth century. The River Lea's network of canals, employed today to carry materials up to Stratford for the new Olympic Stadium, have been used for industrial purposes for 200 years. House Mill, built on Three Mills Island, was once the largest and most powerful tidal mill in the UK. Clock Mill was built in 1817 and the third mill, a windmill, stood on the island until 1838. The mills were used originally to grind grain for flour but were later used in the distilling process. There were also tanneries and smoked salmon sheds on the urban sections of the Lea, along which barges carried gunpowder to Waltham Abbey in Essex.

As far back as 1852, the year of the last outbreak of cholera in East London, the industrial pioneer S.W. Silver established a rubber company down by the river, and Silvertown was born. Local people quickly acquired industrial skills of every type and there was no shortage of work, although conditions were usually unpleasant and often dangerous. In 1880, as the industrial revolution took a firm hold, the Royal Primrose Soap Works was opened by John Knight, again in Silvertown, a further source of employment to hard-working locals. This accelerated development of new industry had both positive and negative consequences. The jobs were welcome, but the accompanying rapid population growth caused severe housing problems as jerry-built estates were thrown up on swampland in Canning Town and West Ham. Population growth and inadequate

housing caused a crisis in public health, as noted by Albert Dickens, brother of the even then famous Charles, in his Board of Health report, published in 1855:

It was impossible to describe the miserable state Canning Town was in: there was neither drainage nor paving; in winter the streets were impassable; cholera raged very much in this district.

- J. Bird (2002), The Newham Story: A Short History of Newham, ed. S.E. Kirby, London Borough of Newham.

Despite these often appalling social problems, the rapid rate of industrial growth in the East End continued with the largest gas plant in the world opening in the Plaistow area in 1869. Named after Simon Adam Beck, the company's President, the area around the works soon became known as Beckton, as it is today. Industrial expansion brought with it a huge demographic shift, with the Royal Docks in particular responsible for a significant increase in population in the East End. The first official census in the UK states that in 1851 the population of West Ham was a surprisingly low 18,000 and that East Ham had as few as 3,000 residents. The 1901 census shows staggering increases in both boroughs, with the population of West Ham rising to 267,000 and East Ham to 96,000. Immigration was a contributory factor to these increases, as people from all over the world were attracted to the area by the work to be found in the docks and surrounding industry.

Teenage rebels

East Enders are known to possess an independent spirit acquired in hard and difficult times. As the area became the industrial heartland of London in the late nineteenth century, locals began to earn a radical reputation as they sought to improve their wages and standard of living. The famous Match Girls' strike in 1888 at the Bryant & May factory, another major employer in the locality, is a powerful example of the area's militant industrial history. The strike began when three female employees were fired for stirring up unrest among the girls employed in the factory. Angry at the sackings, over 100 girls left the firm at Bow for the Fleet Street offices of radical journalist, Annie Besant. She quickly became the spokesperson for the girls and began to organise them into strike action. All

the girls were teenagers and became inspired by Besant's militant example. The Match Girls' Strike lasted for three weeks and ended with the firm acceding to all the girls' demands and recognising the Women Match Workers' Union. Annie Besant was important to the success of the action, but the strike would not have occurred without the natural sense of justice of a group of strong teenage girls who were angered by Bryant & May's refusal to increase their pay of 4 shillings a week, despite the firm being hugely profitable.

The true spirit of East London

Despite the evidence of an extremely hard-working industrial past, there is an image of East Enders as naturally feckless and indolent, preferring crime to hard work and self-improvement. West Ham United have some of the most aggressive fans in Europe, and in some respects are 'brand leaders' for the type of football violence that almost ruined the professional game in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. The Kray twins from Bethnal Green have their own hard-won reputation for violence and intimidation. I prefer to look to the courage of the Match Girls, the growth of trade unions in the late nineteenth century and the anti-fascist protests of the 1930s as a reflection of the true spirit of East London and its people. This spirit is evident in the determination and courage displayed by Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch as they set out to conquer the sporting world in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The kind of lazy thinking that misrepresents East End people ignores the fact that they have shown real independence and ingenuity in solving some of the social problems caused by industrial decline, war and immigration. The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) thrived in East London in the early twentieth century, while library membership increased significantly at that time and continues to increase to this day. Town halls and libraries opened in Canning Town and Manor Park around the end of the nineteenth century, and the much-respected Toynbee Hall opened for local people in 1884. A Technical Institute for trade and science courses was opened in East Ham by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905. But, as one of Charles Dickens' characters said, "We can't always be a-learning."

East Enders enjoy a night out, and by 1917, prior to the

outbreak of the First World War, there were an astonishing 17 cinemas in West Ham alone. These community initiatives introduced at the end of the old century are evidence of a healthy civic energy and are a tribute to the resourcefulness and ambition of local people, despite their undeserved reputation to the contrary. East Enders fought hard to win for themselves the kinds of opportunities in education, community life and culture that were mostly denied them in the nineteenth century. They also began to make their voice heard, largely through the election of Keir Hardie in 1892, the first Labour MP in England, as the nineteenth century democratic revolution reached East London.

Metropolitan Essex

London's East End has never been a recognisably single social entity. Bethnal Green, Shoreditch and Whitechapel, close to the City of London, have always been London boroughs, whereas the area further east around what is now known as Newham, which includes Plaistow, Newbury Park, Stratford, East Ham and West Ham, were metropolitan boroughs of Essex County Council up until 1965. This is the traditional home of West Ham United.

The local professional football club emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in metropolitan Essex. In 1846 C.J. Mare & Co. opened a shipyard at Bow Creek, although the company's name was later changed to the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company. The firm's football team eventually became West Ham United Football Club. Newspapers began to refer to the team as 'Hammers', but the fans, with a good sense of history, still use the original 'Irons'. "Come on you Irons" is still the chant you are most likely to hear ringing round Upton Park today.

A feature of the area's history is that, as the population increased, local sporting facilities began to spring up across the East End to complement the libraries, cinemas and music halls. West Ham United Football Club was established in 1900, while in 1905 local footballers were accommodated in the newly opened Plashet Park and Central Park in leafy East Ham. Memorial Park was opened in industrial West Ham in 1909, complete with splendid cycle and motorcycle tracks. Further east, the Forest Gate Public Hall introduced a roller-skating rink

in 1909, and out on the fringe of Epping Forest Wanstead Flats offered football and cricket pitches, the Whit Monday Fair and open spaces designed to ease the stresses of living in overcrowded accommodation and working long hours in the factory or down at the docks.

A slow decline

If the industrial revolution of the mid-eighteenth century established the employment patterns for the area for 100 years, after 1900 we begin to see a gradual decline of the old East London staple industries such as the docks, sugar refineries and shipbuilding. High levels of unemployment led West Ham to become the first borough to set up a Distress Committee under the Unemployed Workers Act of 1905, to provide assistance to those without work. In an attempt to lower the unemployment figures, the government set up the controversial emigration scheme to Australia or Canada. In 1906/07 1,204 men, women and children left the area, preferring to take their chances in a new land. As in the industrial north of England, new technology and the increased use of sophisticated machinery meant fewer jobs, and the work that remained was usually dull and repetitive, further alienating workers from their means of livelihood.

The event that most clearly signalled the end of a rare period of economic growth and relative prosperity in East London was the construction of *HMS Thunderer*, the very last ship to be built at the Thames Ironworks before its closure in 1912. Dockers were the heart and soul of the East End and formed the core of West Ham fans. However, business has no sentiment and, operating on the precept that unemployment drives down wages, local employers were quick to act and wages across all industries were drastically cut, making it even more difficult for families to make ends meet. The 'call on' system in the docks, which involved men turning up in the hope of being picked out by the foreman for a day's work, illustrates the hardships that local people faced. Gus Webb, a former docker, recalls the 'call on' in the 1920s:

I can remember as a kid, five or six years of age, they used to take dockers on at the top of my turning and on the way to school of a morning the place would be full of people, and half an hour later

there wasn't a soul there. It was a hard life, If your face didn't fit you didn't get picked.

- Bird (2002).

Even up to the early years of the twentieth century it was still thought that if you were unemployed and poor it was your own lazy fault, and this view became more entrenched as unemployment began to bite. But a group of local men named the Plaistow Landgrabbers helped to change attitudes to the unemployed when in July 1906 they occupied some waste ground in St Mary's Road, cleared the site and planted vegetables. The Triangle Camp, as it became known because of the shape of the plots, was eventually taken back by the council, but not before the men achieved their aim of showing that they were willing to work and that waste ground could be made productive. The men made their point, displaying the courage and sense of purpose common to people of the area. As the twentieth century developed they needed to draw on these qualities with increasing frequency.

As things began to get worse, two very different sets of people had no trouble finding work. Prostitution was endemic down in the streets of Whitechapel and Shoreditch, and East End girls would travel to Soho and the 'other end' to work for organised vice racketeers. But another set of people reacted in a different way to the growing problem of poverty and hunger in the area. The churches in East London have always had a charitable rather than merely a preaching function and they were keen to help as well as convert. Local churches opened a series of soup kitchens in the hardest hit areas, delivered hundreds of meals to the poorest families and provided shoes and clothing to those in need. One particular church in West Ham, in a neighbourhood of high unemployment, opened their kitchen four days each week and fed over 300 people a day.

The churches were keen to keep people out of the workhouses at all costs. There were workhouses all over the East End who were ready to give a home to the most destitute families. The official line of the Parish Unions was that admission was restricted to the criminally insane, imbeciles or idiots, but unofficially they admitted many families below the breadline. But these were harsh and unwelcoming places that operated a very strict regime. They really were the last resort. The

workhouse authorities split families; husbands from wives and children from their parents. The food was appalling and the accommodation was damp and rat-infested. Many were sizeable institutions. At the end of the nineteenth century the Bethnal Green workhouse housed 109 people, 46 men and 63 women. It is worth remembering that there were no benefits available in those days, just a little parish poor relief for the worse off. Some of the sturdier local women were so desperate to keep their families out of the workhouses that they earned 'nubbins', or pin money, by taking part in organised street fighting in front of large crowds on Sunday afternoons. The Whitechapel Workhouse in Vallance Road, home of the infamous Kray family, later became an infirmary, before emerging in the twentieth century as St Peter's Hospital. This was quite a common change of use, but most of the workhouses were demolished in the middle of the twentieth century and all were closed down in the 1930s. Most have been turned into pubs, almshouses, local museums or trendy apartments for the new inhabitants of the area.

East Enders are endlessly resourceful and, in addition to the free food offered by the churches, private kitchens and cafés were quickly set up by enterprising locals. One such was Rumfords in Hackney, whose delights included the following: boiled beef and vegetables; 3d; half a pound of rice plum pudding, 1d; and a pint of pease soup, 1d. Not your gastro-pub food of today's trendier establishments around Hoxton Market, but nourishing nosh for the poverty-stricken unemployed of the late nineteenth century.

Churches also offered schooling to local children. This was of dubious quality and the Ragged Schools and Scattered Schools probably offered a more rounded education, as we can see today at the Ragged School Museum in Mile End. In 1899 the Grays Scattered School was established out in Essex, an indication that metropolitan Essex was not without its own problems.

It would be a mistake to think that East Londoners were cowed by unemployment, poverty and poor housing. Apart from the emergence of leisure and cultural facilities in the nineteenth century, there was music and dancing in clubs and dancehalls across the area. Most pubs had live music at the weekends, with banjo bands being a particular favourite. Music

halls were extremely popular and, like bathhouses, provided places where people could meet, socialise and lift each others' spirits. However, in the early part of the twentieth century their spirit was to be tested by forces that were completely outside their control.

The Great War

The Great War brought shortages and deprivation to East London, as it did across the whole country, although unemployment decreased, largely because a shocking 100,000 men from West Ham alone joined up to serve in the armed forces. Among these was Jack Cornwall VC, who joined the Royal Navy in 1915 at the age of 16. He was killed at the battle of Jutland onboard his ship *HMS Chester* on 31 May 1916. His Commanding Officer paid this tribute:

... John Travers Cornwall was mortally wounded early in the action, but nevertheless remained at a most exposed post, ... awaiting orders..., with the gun's crew dead and wounded around him. He was under sixteen years of age.

Jack was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously, one of only 634 recipients of the honour in the First World War, and was buried in Manor Park Cemetery. There are few that are given to act as heroically as John Cornwall, but thousands of local men had lost their lives by the time the Great War ended on 11th November 1918. You will see memorials to the fallen all over East London; at West Ham bus garage, St Mark's Church, Silvertown and East Ham Memorial Park to name just a few.

After the war had ended, unemployment once again became the most pressing social problem in East London. Many families from the 'deserving poor' received 'outdoor relief' from the Board of Guardians, and by 1925 over 70,000 people in West Ham were receiving relief, which put an enormous strain on cash-strapped local authorities. Councils argued that unemployment should be a national rather than local issue, and West Ham council were forced to borrow money from central government to meet the rising costs of the depression. The council then defaulted on its loan from Westminster and was removed by the Guardians in 1926, the year of the National Strike. But the boards were themselves abolished in 1929, with

the result that, finally, unemployment became a national problem requiring national solutions.

White horses and black shirts

The 1920s and 1930s were a troubled time for East London, but despite the hardships experienced by most locals life did take on a more settled normality. Markets continued to be held in Green Street and at Stratford, while on Sundays East Enders flocked to Petticoat Lane. Sport, as always, continued to provide an antidote to difficult times. West Ham United were always guaranteed to raise the spirits in East London, so when they reached the FA Cup final in 1923 hopes were high. Sadly, victory was denied their long-suffering supporters and The Hammers were beaten 2-0 by Bolton Wanderers in the famous White Horse final, named after a police horse whose calm dignity prevented a potential disaster when the huge crowd at Wembley spilled out across the pitch.

Just like my dreams they fade and die ...

But East Enders are ever resilient and continued to build a civic and sporting culture even in the difficult years between the wars. West Ham speedway stadium opened in Prince Regent Lane in 1928, and the local team quickly became one of the most successful in the country. The stadium remained open and active until it was finally closed in 1972, and in addition to speedway it also hosted greyhound racing, stock car racing and football matches. It is a sign of a changing sporting culture that speedway and greyhound racing, once so popular in most areas of London up until the 1960s, have almost dropped off the local sporting radar. For a short time Thames Association FC used the old speedway stadium as their home ground, but the club folded in the 1930s. West Ham United never played there and stayed local to the Boleyn, their home from 1904.

Away from sport, the economic depression of the 1930s continued unabated. Times like these can exploit potential divisions in society and lay them bare, so to speak. Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts dared to exploit poverty and hardship in the early 1930s by revealing their prejudices and taking the easy and banal route of blaming immigrants for high unemployment. The target for Mosley and his henchmen was

the local Jewish community, who had opened a synagogue in the Barking Road in 1923 and owned many successful businesses in East Ham. As today, there was some local hostility towards Jews and other immigrant communities, but there was greater opposition to the Fascist movement. In 1935 Mosley ran the gauntlet of over 700 protestors at a fascist rally at Stratford Town Hall, where his inflammatory rhetoric couldn't be heard over the noise of the protestors, and later, in 1937, the British Fascist Party was routed at the historic battle of Cable Street in Stepney. There has always been a degree of racial tension in the East End, and a minority of local activists like nothing more than to stir up trouble. Largely, however, they have been marginalised and the various ethnic groups living in the area exist side by side with a degree of co-operation and mutual tolerance, if not always real harmony.

West Ham United set a good example by becoming one of the first professional clubs to have black players in their first team. The legendary Bermudian, Clyde Best, Clive Charles and Ade Coker followed John Charles into the West Ham sides of the 1960s and 1970s. Apart from Best, all were born locally, and even the great Bermudian liked to think of himself as a local. Today, of course, it would be impossible to imagine a Premier League side without a strong ethnic mix of players - one of the most welcome sights in British sport.

East London under siege

On 3rd September 1939 war was declared for the second time in a generation. The paraphernalia of war at home was quickly brought into everyday life. Air-raid shelters and sirens, gas masks and blackouts became routine. In East Ham 9,000 people volunteered for civil defence duties, as the area moved tentatively through the period of the 'phoney war'. In September 1939, West Ham ARP (Air Raid Precautions) issued 1,700 respirators for children under two years of age, and the local registry offices wondered how they were going to keep track of newborn babies. Eighty underground stations were converted to protect local people from the Nazi night raiders, but many preferred to take their chances with their own crude back-garden shelter or simply, as my parents did, bundled the children under the stairs when the siren sounded.

With the fear of bombing uppermost in their minds, local

authorities moved quickly to evacuate children and expectant mothers away from the area. By 15th September 1939 the *Stratford Express* reported that 16,000 people had been evacuated from East Ham and 32,000 from West Ham. Newham Archives reveal that approximately 40,000 local people were evacuated to the country during the first few weeks of the war. By any standards this was a phenomenal achievement. Most were sent to counties in the south-east or up to East Anglia, but they gradually returned as the anticipated bombing raids failed to materialise. But, of course, the bombing came and when it did nobody could have predicted the devastation it would cause. The first bomb fell in Beckton Road, West Ham, on 28th August 1940, and the Blitz itself began on the night of Black Saturday, 7th September, with 300 German bombers dropping 300 tons of high explosives on the East End. The docks and heavy industry were the obvious targets, and it was said that on that night you could read a newspaper in Shaftsbury Avenue from the light of the fires in the Royal Docks. Fires burnt for a week as volunteer firemen fought to contain the blaze and keep the docks open. Local Iris Warren remembers the first night of the Blitz:

On that Saturday night, that we were first bombed, I walked from Walthamstow to Maryland Point and got on a train home. I got off at Manor Park because I lived at East Ham. All along the High Street was on fire, Woolworth's had been bombed on Station Hill and a furniture shop was on fire.

- Newham Archives, Stratford Library.

One of the most tragic incidents in the East End during the war was the disaster at Bethnal Green Underground Station, which was used as an air-raid shelter, on 3rd May 1943, the worst civilian disaster in Britain in which 173 people were killed. A young woman carrying a baby tripped and fell, causing hundreds of people heading down to the Central Line platforms to collapse on top of one another, the casualties being crushed to death by the weight of the bodies. This incident was particularly tragic since its cause remains a mystery. By this time people were well used to air raids and usually headed calmly for the shelters, as they had done many times before. But on this occasion something was different; there was no air raid, and

they did not recognise the explosions they heard. Frightened people abandoned their usual stoic calm and rushed into the station and down the escalators, with tragic consequences. Ironically, the explosion turned out to be artillery fire from home troops drilling in nearby Victoria Park. Tragically, Bethnal Green Station was under construction at the time and there were no handrails on any of the staircases, which added to the chaos as men, women and children tumbled down the escalator. The horror of the disaster was unimaginable – 62 of the dead were local children (Descendants of the victims of the Bethnal Green Underground disaster have organised a campaign to have a Stairway to Heaven memorial erected at the station (March 2009).

Gas masks and goalposts

We know from Anton Rippon's wonderful book *Gas Masks for Goal Posts* that football continued to be played in the area for most of the war. It will hurt Millwall supporters to admit it, but their club was forced to use Upton Park as their home ground after The Den was badly damaged by the Luftwaffe in 1940. Rippon informs us that in 1939,

West Ham United's landlords, the Archdiocese of Westminster, offered the club the Upton Park ground for a yearly rent of only a £1 ...

- A. Rippon (2005), Gas Masks for Goal Posts: Football in Britain During the Second World War, The History Press, p.97

Upton Park was used by the military for drill and as a practice range. It was hit during the early days of the Blitz and the West Stand, housing the club's admin staff, suffered extensive damage. Temporary office accommodation was found outside the ground in the Green Street House pub, known by all Hammers fans as Boleyn Castle. All the club's records were lost in the war along with, as Rippon reveals, those of the London FA, which had recently moved into temporary offices in Upton Park. Not content with inflicting damage on the hallowed ground once, the Nazi bombers struck again in 1944. A dreaded flying bomb fell on the pitch, causing extensive damage to the South Bank stand, and it was not until 1947 that the club were given permission to repair it. The club therefore had to play all

their home-game wartime League fixtures away from Upton Park, until they could safely return to Boleyn Castle when hostilities ceased.

In 1938, the West Ham chairman of the time, W.J. Cearn, suggested that his first team players help the war effort. He encouraged them to join the local Territorials and the reserve police, thus ensuring that the club would be able to put out a decent first team for the duration of the conflict. But many Hammers players saw this as being unpatriotic and later joined the Essex Regiment where they were more likely to be called into active service. In spite of the obvious difficulties, the club did manage to field a decent side during the war and reached the final of the War Cup in 1941. This time they were successful, beating Blackburn Rovers 1-0 in front of 42,000 spectators at Wembley Stadium, at the time temporary home to,

Hundreds of bewildered French and Belgian refugees who had fled Hitler's blitzkrieg into their countries.

- Rippon (2005). P.171

It was generally felt that football, both amateur and professional, would help morale during the war, despite many of the grounds being given over to the military. A police chief in the area remarked at the time that local football should be encouraged; after all, he continued, no one had suggested that people should stop going to church. "Police cells would be full of young men with no outlet for their energies, if things like football were outlawed," he commented rather ruefully.

Professional football raised significant sums for the war effort and continued to be played and watched in East London, despite the lack of transport and the continual threat of German bombs. Local park football in the East End continued where possible, but many grounds were dug up for planting vegetables and Wanstead Flats was used as the site of a prisoner of war camp. Of course, most young men from the area were either away in the war or fully occupied at home in the war effort.

South Hallsville School

Blitz stories are legion and often desperately hard to take. Ordinary tales emerge of people diving for cover when low-flying Nazi planes began spraying the streets with machine-gun

fire. But one tragedy stands out and provides an insight into the depth of suffering that the bombing inflicted on local people. On 10th September 1940, South Hallsville School, full of bombed-out families waiting to be evacuated, suffered a direct hit. The official estimate of dead was 73, but locals claimed that as many as 400 people lost their lives in the worst civilian disaster of the war. It is estimated that a total of around 1,700 civilians in the area lost their lives to the German bombs, a number that would have been much higher but for the provision of air-raid shelters. (The Stratford Express reported that West Ham had space in air-raid shelters for 200,000 people). Unfortunately, these private means of shelter were subject to flooding and more public spaces had to be found. One of these was the crypt of St John's Church on Stratford Broadway, converted in the war to a public shelter. Local Len Shingler remembers sheltering there:

There was a woman down there and she sold pies and cheese and cakes you see. All the cakes were laid out and all the bodies were buried in the walls! There was signs on the wall saying here lays ... these old-fashioned names, you know. And people had bunks down there and they'd go to sleep on them all night.
- Newham Archives.

The Blitz was largely over by May 1941, after seven months of the most appalling privation. The war had taken a heavy toll on the area, with thousands dead, 16,000 houses destroyed and a quarter of all families losing their homes. The effect of the war on local communities, schools, hospitals and employment was incalculable. In 1939, the year the war broke out, the population of West Ham had been 294,278 and in 1951 it was only 170,993. Many had died, either at home or in action, and others had moved away to somewhere safer and had chosen not to return. The process of recovery was long and hard, but slowly day-to-day life began to settle down and improve. New homes were built to house the homeless and to prevent overcrowding. The Kier Hardie estate was one of the most ambitious schemes, but progress was slow and building materials were scarce. By the Coronation year of 1953, only one-third of the houses destroyed during the war had been replaced. The East Enders had been hit hard by the war, harder than anywhere else in

Britain. They entered the post-war period of reconstruction punch drunk, but ready to face the next challenge.

We never had it so good?

Bobby Moore was an icon of the sixties, and for many of us 1960 represented a turning point. Socially and culturally the world quite suddenly seemed to become a very different place, new and exhilarating and, best of all, alive. The 1950s were fog-bound, dark and dreary by comparison. Park railings had been ripped out during the war, shops were shabby and unattractive, and crime rates were soaring. In 1938 there had been 58,000 violent crimes in England and Wales; in 1948 there were 130,000. The pre-war world of the 1930s must have appeared altogether more appealing. What was called at the time 'a modern matrimonial landslide' saw divorce rates rise in the UK from 4,100 in 1935 to 60,300 in 1947, as wives struggled to cope with returning soldier husbands, who often had post-war trauma to deal with, as well as children who viewed their father as a stranger in the house.

There is a great deal of nostalgia around for the 1950s: the decade of family values, Ladybird t-shirts, Kia-Ora Suncrush, Saturday morning pictures, Bing Crosby and Dickie Valentine, and London smogs. In the great smog of 1952 12,000 people were killed within just four days in the capital, but little fuss was made of the disaster. Holidays were spent on a windswept beach getting soaked to the skin, with little to do but the occasional donkey ride. Not much to get nostalgic about there. Two things helped to alleviate the boredom. Firstly, the first independent TV channel was set up in 1955 as a rival to the stuffy BBC; and secondly, there was football. Huge crowds were attracted to Football League matches in the 1950s, entranced by the sublime skills of Wilf Mannion, Tom Finney and Stanley Matthews. Just to indicate how popular professional football was at this time, in the 1953/54 season an average of 7,000 people attended Accrington Stanley's home matches. Of course, there was no footie on TV and games always kicked off at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday afternoons. There was little else to do aside from watching wrestling or horse racing on tiny black and white TVs. But things were about to change.

Somewhere around 1960 British people decided to leave behind a post-war world created by the BBC's Light

Programme and Home Service radio stations and chose a more embracing, liberating and popular culture. In 1962 I can clearly remember hearing The Beatles' first single, 'Love Me Do', for the first time in a state of jaw-dropping shock – life would never be the same again. Rapid change occurred in sport as in other areas of life. The minimum wage in football was abolished in 1962, along with the professional/amateur distinction in cricket. Other sports followed cricket's example, although a little more reluctantly where class prejudice was more deeply ingrained.

In 1960, when Bobby Moore was setting out on what was to become one of the greatest careers in sport, the patrician Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister. In March of that remarkable year Elvis Presley returned from US Army duty in West Germany and promptly hit the top of the charts with 'It's Now or Never'. While Elvis was enjoying his return to civilian life, the newly formed Beatles began a 48-night residency in a Hamburg night club, as a prelude to changing popular music forever. In November 1960 the young Senator John Kennedy was elected President of the USA. The *Lady Chatterley* censorship trial in 1960 helped to change the cultural consciousness of a generation and allowed writers and artists the creative freedom they had been denied by British law. The struggle against apartheid in South Africa, in which Graham Gooch became entangled in the 1980s, took a decisive, if tragic, turn with the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960. These events transformed the cultural and political landscape and were to have a dramatic impact on our sporting culture.

Sport is easily dwarfed by such world-changing events, but in the post-war period it felt the force of the revolutionary changes crashing around its often insular world. In 1960 St Paddy won the Derby, Neale Fraser and Maria Bueno were Wimbledon champions, and Arnold Palmer, of course, won the US Masters and the US Open. In the same year Francis Chichester enthralled the British public with his solo adventures in *Gypsy Moth III*. Despite these notable performances, the most important sporting event of 1960 was the Olympic Games held that year in Rome. American Wilma Rudolph, the greatest female sprinter of her era, won three gold medals, but perhaps the greatest athletic achievement in Rome was the victory of Ethiopian Abebe Bikila, who memorably won the men's marathon while running in bare feet.

The gold medal for heavyweight boxing in Rome was won by the greatest boxer the world has ever seen, Cassius Marcellus Clay, who later the same year fought his first professional fight. Clay, who later changed his name to Muhammad Ali, is reputed to have thrown his gold medal away in disgust after being refused service in a Louisiana restaurant. Such discrimination led to the escalation of the civil rights movement in the USA throughout the 1960s. The Alabama marches, the death of Martin Luther King, and the increasing influence of the Black Panthers, to whom Ali was associated, were all events of the sixties, culminating in the Panther protest by medal-winning African American athletes Tommie Smith (gold) and John Carlos (bronze) at the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. Who said that sport should be kept out of politics?

Two years on, back in East London, Bobby Moore was in his fourth season as a professional for West Ham and his progress had been spectacular. In the summer of 1962, at the age of 21, Moore played in all four of England's World Cup matches in Chile, the last of which was the quarter-final defeat by Brazil and his first encounter with the unparalleled Pelé. In 1962 Sir Geoff Hurst was offered a professional contract by Doug Insole at Essex CCC at £6 a week, but Hurst played just one first-class match for the county. Little did he know what fame would engulf him four years later. On a less elevated level, in East London Leyton Orient FC, in many ways West Ham's younger East End footballing brother, enjoyed their first ever season in the old First Division.

In the decade that followed the sporting year of 1960 the pace of change at home and abroad was rapid and relentless, in politics, the visual arts, film, broadcasting media and particularly music. In Britain in the sixties the world seemed to be full of promise and endless possibilities from the moment that 'Love Me Do' hit the charts. The incomparable Beatles, who quickly became the spiritual leaders of a spirited generation, followed their first British hit with a string of chart-topping singles and albums in Britain, America and half the countries of the world. The world had seen nothing like it.

In sport the decade reached a dizzy climax in 1966 when, on 30th July, the England football team gloriously won the World Cup against West Germany, with all four goals in the final scored by West Ham players, Geoff Hurst (3) and Martin Peters

(1). The other West Ham player in the winning team was, of course, the England captain, Bobby Moore. The East End club had recovered from the war better than most and was producing players of real international class. In 1966 footballers suddenly became celebrities in their own right – indeed, in the last years of that famous decade football was to have its own ‘fifth Beatle’ in the great George Best. Things couldn’t get much better than this. In 1966 was also notable for the following:

- The average house price was £3,840.
- Harold Wilson increased his majority from 4 to 96, joking that England only won the World Cup under a Labour government.
- Ian Brady and Myra Hindley were found guilty of the Moors Murders.
- A slag heap at Aberfan in South Wales engulfed a primary school, killing 116 children and 28 adults.
- John Lennon claimed that The Beatles were “bigger than Jesus”.

But some things were slow to change: right up to the early seventies you could still buy a steaming hot cup of Bovril in the shed behind the West Stand at Upton Park and stir it with a dirty old spoon attached to the counter by an old piece of string.

Park life

Strolling through Ridgeway Park in Chingford in the late sixties, where David Beckham played as a young boy for Ridgeway Rovers, enjoying a summer’s evening on Wanstead Flats, or passing Hackney Marshes on a 38 bus, you would have witnessed dozens of youngsters enjoying energetic games of football and cricket. Some would have been impromptu kickabouts; others were more serious and competitive matches with players changed and wearing proper gear. They would often involve fantasy league and cup competitions, complete with detailed statistics of every match played. Every morning break time in my Chingford school playground, using sections of the chain-link fencing as goalposts, we played out a complex set of fixtures which, over the winter, amounted to a full First Division programme. Stout shoes bought with hard-earned wages were ruined in weeks, to the anger and frustration of hard-up parents. At the end of the ‘season’ one of the boys produced a

detailed league table for our very own Division One championship.

On summer evenings in Marsh Lane in Leyton, Low Hall Farm in Walthamstow, St Mary's Church Playing Fields in Barking and the intriguingly named Nutter Lane at Wanstead were all given over to young people, often highly skilled, playing sophisticated games of football, with coats as goalposts. In some games the standard would not have been out of place in London's senior amateur leagues. Indeed, the casual observer might be forgiven for failing to recognise the young centre forward who on Saturdays knocked in goals for Walthamstow Avenue in the Isthmian League, or the talented inside forward who had recently joined Leyton Orient on semi-pro terms and regularly turned out for Leytonstone FC in front of 5,000 regulars at their High Road ground.

But in the early 1970s something changed. These once tranquil escapes from the clamour of urban streets became dangerous and menacing no-go areas. You could still make the same bus trip, if you were brave enough to make the effort, but you would see a very different picture. The hundreds of games of casual football and cricket where the young Bobby Moore and Graham Gooch displayed their emerging skills had all but disappeared. You would find little activity of any kind apart from that directed by drug dealers, gang crews, and groups of depressed-looking young people stuck in the squalid surroundings of urban living. The decline of London parks between 1970 and 1990 was a symptom of a change in the character of British society, which became polarised and divided as greed and envy were installed as the dominant values of the day. A culture of fear gripped the streets and public spaces in East London as gang culture spilled over into gun and knife crime.

Elvis Presley once said that values were like fingerprints - you leave them everywhere. The old East End values of hard work, achievement and looking out for your neighbour, which nourished Moore and Gooch, were being distorted. But all is not lost. Certainly, Newham Council have recognised the importance of public open spaces to community life and have begun to restore their council parks to something like their former glory. Park-keepers are being reinstated, and floodlit all-weather pitches are being installed, as a different, more

organised kind of open space emerges.

Stirring up trouble

As local people began to recreate their lives, the post-war period saw further increases in settlers from abroad to the area. There were acute labour shortages in the transport and health sectors, and Britain ran recruitment campaigns in the 1950s, particularly in Jamaica, designed to attract people to come to live and work in England. Later, in the mid-1970s, hundreds of East African Asians settled in East and West Ham after being thrown out of their Ugandan homeland by the military dictator, Idi Amin. Fascist groups such as the National Front (NF) or the British National Party (BNP) are quick to exploit potential divisions in society wherever they exist. The NF targeted the East End at this time, attempting to drive a wedge between the newly arrived immigrants and local young men. They gained a small but dangerous following among local skinheads and the hardcore of Upton Park's North Bank. But East Enders rejected the fascist rhetoric and fought back through organisations such as Red Wedge, Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League. Metropolitan Essex boy Billy Bragg, a passionate Hammers supporter, was behind much of the local opposition.

Later, in the 1980s, racial tension did threaten to spill over, with several racially motivated murders in the area, which today might be called 'gangland killings'. However, the neighbourhood ethnic groups fought back, forming political and community organisations to represent their views and interests. Many of these groups have become established and today are integrated into mainstream local politics. There is little doubt that the white working-class, indigenous population had genuine grievances against the housing policies of both Newham and Tower Hamlets, which right-wing group quickly exploited. In fairness, both councils had the difficult task of allocating scarce housing resources between the urgent needs of recently arrived families and locals who had been born and brought up in the area.

Unemployment was also a local political issue in both boroughs and reached a staggering 20 per cent in the 1980s, figures similar to those of the 1930s, as the effects of the latest recession hit East London. Between 1951 and 1975, 40,000 jobs were lost in Newham alone (Bird (2002)). Many long-established