



Mr Flackwell Heath: club president, Ken Cook, surveys the Wilks Park stand *Picture by VIRGINIA COOPER*

KEN Crook is a local sporting figure whose devotion to his club could never be questioned.

From the days when his brother Francis captained Flackwell Heath — now in Diadora League Division Three — the family connection to the club has been inseparable.

Even through his days with Wycombe Wanderers, Aylesbury and Chalfont Crook, now 59, maintained his love of the Heathens and Wilks Park.

The family tradition is maintained through Ken's son David, in his second year as Flackwell's player-manager.

Ken himself began playing competitive football as one of the founders of the Desborough Athletic under 15 side who played in the Wycombe Minor League.

Two years later, in 1950, he began his career with Flackwell. Even being stationed at Oxford (or "abroad" as Crook puts it) during his National Service could not stop him playing weekly for the club.

Soon his talents at centre half were recognised and Crook received his invitation to turn out for Wycombe Wanderers, so realising a childhood ambition.

Crook fondly recalls the enthusiasm and huge crowds which Wycombe enjoyed in those amateur days and harks back to old opponents like Pat Hasty, Eddie Reynolds and Charlie Mertimer.

His most abiding memory is an own goal against the famous Corinthian Casuals at the Oval.

Crook returned to Flackwell in the Sixties after spells with Aylesbury and

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Chalfont. He accumulated a cabinet full of medals during his 20-year career, including representative honours for Berks and Bucks, without once being booked.

He was on hand to coach the Heathens through some very successful periods in the Sixties. Since 1970 the development of the club has been largely down to his activities as treasurer.

His enthusiasm today remains undiminished. Crook lives opposite Wilks Park with wife Jill, and, as the club president, treasurer and groundsman, he is yet to miss a first-team game this season.

In spite of Crook's efforts at encouraging local involvement at the club, attendances are down this season, but while Flackwell are unlikely to return to the dizzy heights of the 1948 Wycombe Senior Cup Final when they beat the Wanderers 2-1 before a crowd of 5,534, Crook's dedication surely deserves as much support as possible.

The team then travelled to neighbours Slough Town on Wednesday April 1st and returned with a 3-1 victory, thus completing the double over the Rebels. Casey converted a good cross from Hutchinson after three minutes only for the hosts to level before the interval. Due to injuries, Slough played most of the second half with only ten men; ex-Wanderer Steve Whitby put through his own goal (65 minutes) and Paul Kelly secured the points ten minutes later. Overall a good entertaining local derby.

Blues line-up:- T. Roffey, L. Spalding, R. Antone, D. Owens, S. Walford, P. Kelly, B. Vowden (P. Kelloway 60 mins), K. Casey, G. Wood, J. Deakin, T. Gooden. Sub (G. Tilly).