



West Ham United F.C.

After several seasons of mixed success playing in the London League, and one season in the Southern League on 5 July 1900, Thames Ironworks F.C. re-formed under the new name - West Ham United F.C.

“I know about Arnold Hills and he’s quite a man of today really if you look at what he was doing and he didn’t want it going professional and that’s why he detached himself from the Thames Ironworks and West Ham.” Stacey (fan since the 1970s)

Hills, facing financial problems, was not keen to re-negotiate further rental for the Club at the Memorial Grounds. The final home match took place there on 30 April 1904 and the club moved to a new stadium, originally, nicknamed The Castle, but later known as Upton Park or the Boleyn Ground, for the start of the 1904/05 season.



Boleyn Castle



Chicken Run

The legendary Jimmy Ruffell graced the pitch in the 1920s and 1930s. His grandson Andrew talks here:

“He played more games than any other West Ham player at that time until Bobby Moore, he was quite a small, fast winger,...passed his record number of games for West Ham in 1973.” Andrew (b.1957, fan)

The football League was suspended just three games into the 1939/40 season due to the onset of the Second World War, although West Ham United continued to compete throughout the conflict-torn decade. Fighting for King and Country, forty one players swapped their football kit for military uniform.

In August 1944, a German V-1 flying bomb landed on the south-west corner of the pitch, causing severe damage to two stands and the Club offices. The bombing forced the team to play games away from home while repairs were undertaken, returning to the stadium that December.

“Well the whole stadium was completely wooden built originally, The East Stand, the Chicken Run ...was the first cantilever stand in the country...My dad used to take me to the Chicken Run, so we used to watch games from the side of the ground, as opposed to behind the goal, and again you could sit on the wall of the chicken run and touch the players and talk to them as they come to take throw-ins, you were that close.” Lew (b. 1951, fan)



Jimmy Ruffell

Bomb damage to stadium



An Eastside Community Heritage exhibition. Visit our website www.hidden-histories.org.uk