

WHY should the ball used in the FA Cup Final of 1912 have been kept on a stand in the study of an Islington priest?

Many of the kids lucky enough to visit that study came within touching distance of a football for the first time.

They must have visualised themselves booting it at Highbury Fields, the length of Upper-street away, instead of taking a "flier" at a rotting cabbage in the adjoining Chapel-street market.

Cowsheds

For the Reverend Tiverton Preedy the ball was a reminder that he and a few other young men formed the club that later became Barnsley.

And Barnsley whose cup winning goal of 1912 came in the dying minutes of a replay at Sheffield never forgot their reverend founder. After the victory—over West Bromwich Albion—the ball used in the game was presented to him.

When young Preedy, in his first curacy at St Peters, Barnsley, walked out on the local rugby club because they had arranged a game for Good Friday, he little thought he would play leading roles in two great stories in British sport.

Preedy, who was born in Norwich, saw the Barnsley club grow to League eminence before, in 1896, he came to Islington to administer the Mission in White Lion-street, near the Angel, started by the fashionable West End congregation of All Saints, Margaret-street.

They were dilapidated premises to which he came daily, the cowsheds of a local dairyman, bare of furniture and any comfort.

The Mission House provided by Captain Charles Penton, whose family gave its name to the surrounding district of Pentonville, was still a long way off Preedy

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slept on the floor with his overcoat as a blanket until friends and neighbours provided their gifts. He used to recall with a chuckle that the first piece of furniture he possessed was a card table.

Reputation

His stay at All Saints lasted for the rest of his life—30 years. His Mission became famous in sporting circles and he was beloved by the coster folk who lived in the drab streets around him.

Preedy wasn't a big man. He stood about 5ft 5 and the billycock hat which sometimes replaced his biretta gave him a benign appearance.

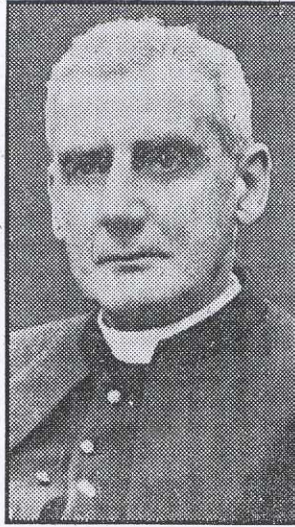
Yet he acquired a reputation with his fists in the boxing ring which, in 1906, he had erected in the crypt under the Mission Hall. He sparred with amateur and professionals alike.

Terry Allen

Champions used it for their more serious fight preparations. Men like Matt Wells, Dick Smith and Pat O'Keefe.

In later years Len Harvey worked-out there and Chapel Market's Terry Allen, who later became world flyweight champion had his boyhood lessons in the All Saints' ring.

None of the strong men of



the neighbourhood, even when fortified by "fighting" beer, would dare raise a hand to Preedy, who, when the Mission was built, had the window of his study constructed as a bay.

This, it was said, was so he could see the White Lion and the Three Johns public houses, which stood at either end of White Lion-street.

Wrestling fame

And if any husband who had been "reported" by his wife entered one of those buildings Preedy was quickly on the trail. Many wage packets, which normally would have come in for heavy punishment, safely found their way home.

One look at Preedy's steely eyes, the stocky figure and the pair of rock-like fists which he was always prepared to put up without even removing his "dog's" collar, made it clear that he was not a man to trifle with.

While boxing always played a big part in the story of All Saints' Mission—and Preedy put on some wonderful shows—it was wrestling which brought it real fame.

As a tribute to his great

The sporting priest of Islington

By Walter Bartleman

friend and helper, the Earl of Craven, Father Preedy named the wrestling club after the Earl's country seat at Ashdown Park, Shrivensham.

Dingy White Lion-street, with its tiny houses, had never been honoured by such aristocracy, led by the Earl and the Hon Charles Palk, who turned up to see the Tuesday shows.

Five Olympics

The club produced the finest wrestlers in the country. And it gave Preedy great pride when eight of the 12 men chosen to wrestle for Britain in the Paris Olympics of 1924 were members of the Ashdown Club.

One of Ashdown's many stars, George Mackenzie, wrestled for Britain in five Olympics from 1908. He also officiated at four Games and was chosen to carry the Union Jack in the parade of Olympic teams at Melbourne in November, 1956. He died seven months later.

No wonder then that the Mission drew visitors from all parts of the world. But a stranger who asked to be directed to All Saints would often draw a blank until being told "Oh, you mean Preedy's."

Distinction

In 1926, in recognition of his great work, Father Preedy was appointed a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral—a rare distinction for an unbeneficed priest.

The news of the Father's elevation spread rapidly through the little streets. Dismay and sadness turned to joy when his flock realised that their friend would not be compelled to leave them and dwell at St Paul's.

By this time his activities, though he still enjoyed a

gentle spar, were more restricted. As he put it, "I prefer now to fight with my jaw."

On April 26, 1928, Prebendary Preedy died in his sleep at the age of 65. Not one coster's stall was put out in Chapel Market or the day of his burial at Islington Cemetery, Finchley.

And of the thousands who gathered to say good-bye to this great man only a token 200 or so managed to get into the Mission for the service conducted by the Bishop of London.

What happened to that Cup Final football? His

executor, Mr John Davies, returned it as Preedy asked he should to the Barnsley club. It is still one of the club's proudest possessions.

All Saints' Mission in White Lion-street is closed and may shortly be demolished. But the story of Father Preedy will live on.

TOMORROW:

John Bromwich and Bob Falkenburg in one of the most nerve-racking games experienced in the Wimbledon lawn tennis championships.

GREYHOUNDS TONIGHT

HARRINGAY: 7.30 Nightly Coup, Sengall, Ellava, Fancy. 7.48 Prestissimo, Gas Champion, Le Coq d'Or. 8.6 Merchant Foundation, Janetina, Rambling Typhoon. 8.26 Blackwater Circle, Nero's Centurion, Rookery Copse. 8.46 Creme De La Creme, Souberie Ann, Stiff Toffee. 9.6 Champion News Box, Hare Sense, Charly Register. 9.25 Latest Story, Missy Bridge, Tanyard Grand. 9.45 Republican Country, Warning Card, Scarlet, Jonquil.

SOUTHEND: 7.30 Harristown Champion, Belle Sandra, Maylin

BEST FORECAST

Northern Lad and Noreview King (reversed), Wembley, 8.37. TRAP DRAW TIP: Howards-town Gu (tp 1 at Hendon, 8.27) is the best-drawn dog tonight.

Eclipse, 7.45 Champion Dash, Terry's Boy, Meapwood Brew. 8.0 Musher's Prince, Lyneve, Brettenham Brindle. 8.15 Electric Guitar, Forest Girl, Cross Prince. 8.30 Maylin Glen, Sweet Tulip, Bryn, Vallant. 8.45 Glenview Blackie, Kilgobnet Favourite, Local Flash. 9.0 Maylin Gaston, Bentley Bail, Spring Tantis Saddle. 9.15 Maylin Emerald, Maylin Fiona, Hopalong Batty. HENDON: 7.30 Jack's Cross, End-

less Years, Holly Garlands. 7.49 Tubrid Moth, Grey Tick, Gower Star. 8.8 Stormy's Last, Hi Fi, Mio Bravo. 8.27 Howardstown, Tom, 8.47 Racing Max, Bluepool Lad, Dura Mater. 8.7 Small Princess, Old's Delight, Kilmacow Drum. 9.26 The Vendor, Testing Time, Jolly Pretence. 9.45 The Sultan, Mill Hill Dot, Midnight Crusader.

WEMBLEY: 7.30 The Revenue, Big Leader, Beechwood Prince. 7.46 Carefree Bill, Silent Feather, Ember's Glowing. 8.3 Husky, Caragh Blossom, Springwell Bob. 8.20 Go On Nooky, Magouna Rhoda, Matchabelli Mandarin. 8.37 Northern Lad, Noreview King, Quare Pool. 8.54 Kilcaskin Kern, Gentle Touch, Outside Left. 9.12 Ballymore, Highwood Spot, Granthamian. 9.30 Latest Spin, Lodestone, What's Yaw.

