

Foot-the-ball



"The households of Mitwold engage in feuding and bitter rivalry... [Here] many of the best known ball games are played, and it is a regular occurrence for some dispute to be settled by a savage game of rugby, football or rounders"

A legendary game between the towns of Wayford and Hay is celebrated in this song and also provides an origin myth for some local standing stones!

by Kit Barbourne and Gerald Merrowvale

C (instrumental) G B \flat F G C G C D

8 G C G C C F G

13 C G C

17 G C D G C

21 Chorus: C F G C G

26 C D G F C

30

1. They ga thered by the gol - den fields, One
swore to sett - le the ri - val - ry of

2. glo - rious summ - er's day, And Hay, For foot - the - ball's - a
Way - ford and of

game for all, for rich, for poor, for fools, The bett - er for being

un - en - cumb - ered by such things as rules. The ball, the ball! There's

no - thing like the ball! None shall ev er stop our play and

none of us shall fall! We, the March - ers, me - rry all, be -

34

C F G C G C F

smirched with mud and grime, And now we'll chase the ball for - ev - er,

38

til the end of time.

1. They gathered by the golden fields
 One glorious summer's day
 And swore to settle the rivalry
 Of Wayford and of Hay
 For foot-the-ball's a game for all,
 For rich, for poor, for fools,
 The better for being unencumbered
 By such things as rules

Chorus:
 The ball, the ball!
 There's nothing like the ball!
 None shall ever stop our play
 And none of us shall fall!
 We, the Marchers, merry all
 Besmirched with mud and grime
 And now we'll chase the ball forever,
 'til the end of time.

2. They kicked off at the Maiden Stone,
 The ball placed on the ground
 And as the ball bounced down the hill
 Each shot off like a hound
 Upon the ground behind the ball,
 Their feet beat like bass drums,
 And blue were the contusions
 They got from all the scrums.

Chorus

3. Two pipers played a merry jig,
 The music it was bracing,
 And loud were all the lusty shouts
 Of all who went a-chasing.
 Oblivious to all the rules
 Much to the ref's dismay
 One goalmouth was the Wayford Inn
 And one the Inn at Hay

4. Sometimes the ball went northward,
 And sometimes to the south,
 Sometimes a player had to spit
 The teeth out from his mouth.
 Sometimes they ran on through a hedge,
 Sometimes into a pond;
 At last the ball bounced to the south
 Through the barley and beyond.

Chorus

5. And soon the Wayford boys seemed poised
 For one last dash victorious;
 One well-aimed shot through Hay's defence,
 The ending would be glorious!
 They'd pound their fists upon the bar,
 Get drunk on Hay's fine ale -
 But then the fellow with the ball
 Turned ghastly white and pale:

6. The local killjoy, he stepped out
 "This is no time for play
 You should be all a-tilling crops
 Not entering the fray
 For you are all unvirtuous fools
 And nothing can atone!"
 The local killjoy waved his staff
 And turned them all to stone.

Chorus

7. But if that was their punishment
 Then none of them lamented;
 The killjoy was a craven fool
 To think that they repented:
 For all the days within the year
 Are now for foot-the-ball,
 And they shall be eternally
 Entangled in the brawl.

Chorus