

LEONARD SYDNEY DAWE

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THE SOUTHAMPTON FC PLAYER ARCHIVE



In his year at Southampton, as an amateur centre-forward or inside-forward, Leonard Dawe had to overcome the obstacles imposed by his classes and his glasses. First and foremost, that is to say, football had to compete with his teacher-training studies at Cambridge. His need to wear spectacles while playing was less of a problem; indeed, the Echo applauded his “pluck”, on his debut, as he got “into it” to set up the only goal, breaking a lens in the process.

Amid his spasmodic appearances for the Saints, Leonard enjoyed amateur international recognition. A reserve for the Great Britain team that went to Stockholm for the 1912 Olympics, he was capped by England later in the year. His association with Southampton was necessarily severed in March 1913, when he became a master at the Forest School in Walthamstow. During the War, he served as a Lieutenant with the 1/4th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment in Mesopotamia. Returning to teaching in 1919, he was a master first at St Paul's and then at Strand School, Tulse Hill, where he later became the Head*. His initials, LSD, were an invitation for inventive schoolboys to nick-name him "Moneybags".

In 1925, he began to compile cryptic crosswords for the *Daily Telegraph* and is credited – in the 2008 assessment, *The Lives of the Six Greatest Cryptic-Crossword Setters* – with being “the first man to accept the challenge of creating a daily crossword for a British newspaper.” And a longstanding commitment it became, ending only with his death in 1963. In May 1944, MI5 had cause to investigate Leonard Dawe, when code names about to be used in the Normandy landings – the likes of Utah, Omaha, and Neptune – appeared in his crosswords. It was accepted that he had prepared the suspect crosswords months in advance and that this must all have been a strange coincidence. That conclusion was contradicted 40 years later, however, when an ex-pupil revealed that Dawe would occasionally challenge boys to complete his partially-filled grids. Some lads had used words overheard while hanging around American and Canadian troops billeted near the school in the run-up to D-Day.



A grim-faced Leonard Dawe arrives back in the UK with the survivors of Strand School's ill-fated trip to Germany in 1936.

***While headmaster at the Strand School a party of his pupils had been taken trekking in Germany's the Black Forest in April 1936 and were caught in a blizzard with the result three boys died. Dawe hastened to Germany to accompany the survivor's home but the whole affair came to the attention of Hitler who sensed some political capital could be made from the tragedy (see scrapbook section). He sent a wreath and organized the coffins to be transported back to England free of charge for which the grateful parents wrote to thank him. Although Dawe was not personally held responsible, the teacher who had been with the boys, Kenneth Keast was heavily criticised and the controversy lasted several years as one of the parents campaigned long and hard to prove Keast's negligence. A fuller recall of the whole incident is in "*Days Like These*" available from www.hagiologists.com or the club shop.**

DATE OF BIRTH

3 NOV 1889

HOUSNLOW

DIED: ACTON 12 JAN 1963

TOTAL APPEARANCES

11

YEARS PLAYED

1911 – 1913

GOALS

3