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David Lewis, the Hammers fan Down Under who wanted to see the playoff final so much he bought the TV rights and ended up showing it around the country, is still receiving messages of thanks for enabling West Ham supporters to see their heroes 'live' in Australia.

He has remained steadfast, though, in his refusal of marriage to one grateful lady!

He is now looking at setting up supporters' groups in Australia after being overwhelmed by the depth of the support shown by West Ham's Antipodean friends.

A signed shirt from the club raised money in an auction to be split between the Bobby Moore Fund and the Melanoma Foundation.

Here is a selection of the messages which prove the strength of West Ham's support in Australia:

Dear David,

The result yesterday was heart breaking. I listened to it on the radio. I did not go to the game because I gave my tickets to be auction for the Bobby Moore Fund. They raised £900 for the charity.

However whilst listening to the radio I heard quite a few people in Australia being interviewed who were going to watch the match on TV. I presume that was thanks to you. I hope that despite West Ham losing you still managed to have a fantastic day. The thing about West ham supporters is that they are loyal through good times and disappointing times.

Stephanie Moore

London

Firstly I would like to thank you wholeheartedly for arranging to have the play-off final televised. Despite the result it was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life. My partner (sadly a Man Utd fan) came along - she had a great time as well. The cover fee was a pittance compared with the experience. It was amazing how it drew all the Hammers out of the woodwork. I think I saw every replica shirt WHUFC has released since the early 90s.

Thanks again for all you have done, I never thought I'd be any more proud to be a Hammer.

Graham Drummond

Mt Gravatt, QLD

Dear David

I am writing to thank you for having the initiative to go and buy the rights for the Hammers promotion push. While the result was devastating, the atmosphere was

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great at the Celtic Club (Melbourne). To have so many other Hammers supporters in the claret and blue was fantastic.

Chris D'Astoli

Victoria

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It's been a hard week living with a Palace fan!!

Stuart Allabush

Sydney

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David it was a god-scent (sic.) to find a location to watch the game on Saturday night. My partner, James, has been a fan since birth (as was his father) and since I dragged him back here to Oz to live with me two years ago he has been distressed at not being able to see The Hammers play.

I will be sure to pass this email onto him to encourage him to get involved with any Hammers action in Australia. It was priceless to see how happy he was to be surrounded by fellow fans on Saturday although his mood after the game was not so great!

Well done for keeping the spirit alive.

Angela Smith

Sydney

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David,

Congratulations on a superb effort in getting the coverage you did for the game. We had over 400 in the end in Perth and it was fantastic.

Once again well done on a mammoth achievement. You did WHUFC proud!

All the best,

Russell Corr

Perth

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What you have achieved is what us Aussie Hammers fans - who aren't English - have been dreaming about for years. You have united so many people and regardless, win or lose, it was and was going to be the best night out for all fans, Palace and Hammers. Since we were relegated and televised matches became extinct...more so for the Palace fans who probably wouldn't have seen a match on Aussie TV since Les Murray had dark hair.

My Missus and I were amazed to see so many Hammers fans packed in to one venue! Haven't seen another Hammers shirt in Melbourne until Saturday night.

The other good thing about this is that maybe with the amount of support you created for this event Fox may think differently next year and show some of our matches. We know from Saturday that we have the interest!

Anyway on behalf of the 600+ Hammers fans down here in Melbourne, thank you from the bottom of our hearts David, thank you!

Damian Wintle

Melbourne

-----

David,

just a short note to thank you for giving me and my son the opportunity to see the Hammers on Saturday night. I know it wasn't the result we wanted but having first gone to Upton Park at the insistence of a Pommie girlfriend (who became my wife) and her Dad way back in 1973 (We returned to Oz in 1978), I was happy to be surrounded once again by those passionate supporters I remember so well. And there is always next season.

Kind Regards,

Bruce Fraser

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Thankyou very much for putting on the football at the weekend. I was at the Pig 'n' Whistle in Brisbane and it was packed

full of us Hammers. There was a great atmosphere and also a great deal of heartbreak at the final whistle. I couldn't believe there were so many Hammers fans in Brisbane. I moved here 18 months ago, as my wife is from Brisbane, after being a season ticket holder for 6 years. It is very hard to deal with the fact that there is no West Ham coverage here in Australia. So thanks again for bringing the final to us, even though the result didn't go our way.

Hopefully we'll lift the league winners trophy next season & get our club back to where it rightfully belongs.

Best Regards

Dave Rhodes

Brisbane QLD

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David

I just sent an email via your DLA website to thank you for your efforts. I was at the Brisbane venue where there was a great atmosphere. West Ham fans are the greatest in the world and us out here in Aus are very grateful for being able to see a rare glimpse of our beloved club.

So the team didn't put out on the night but you did along with the 2,500 of us that cheered ourselves silly in the venues around Australia. West Ham is more than just a football team and we as fans represent a whole lot more than that shambles on Saturday gives us credit for. You like the rest of us are a credit to West Ham United Football Club.

West Ham 'til I die!

Yours

Dave Rhodes

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What you have done is a great leap forward for followers of real football in this country. For too long we have been stuffed around by TV networks who either buy the rights and don't show the games, or just won't buy the rights in the first place.

Being a Newcastle United fan, I don't hold a torch for either WHU or Palace, but fair play to you, I've got to say I admire your enterprise. Is there any scope for further actions of this kind? E.g. it's frustrated the tripe out of me this season that we haven't seen anything of the UEFA Cup, with Newcastle and numerous other English and Scottish teams involved.

Next season, I'm sure, will be equally frustrating. And I'm sure there are other niches for showing important UK club football to a market which is out here gasping for it. I hope you manage to make a profit out of this one. I assure you there are thousands of exiled fans out here hoping you not only succeed, but continue into the future. Good luck to West Ham tonight, and I'll look forward to seeing them against Newcastle in the EPL.

Steve Cornelius

Bondi NSW

----- Speaking for myself, I really don't know how to thank you sufficiently.

Getting a ticket to the telecast was my equivalent of getting a ticket to Cardiff.

It is simply amazing what you (& your staff) have managed to do for us in Oz.

Passion is a very underrated virtue.

Thanks again & I hope you can finally relax & enjoy the night.

Cheers,

Nic

-----  
David - I'd just like to echo Derek's sentiments

I'm leaving my gig half way thru the nite - thanks to YOU !! And off to the Windsor to see WEST HAM's biggest game in 20 years beamed live from Cardiff.

I sincerely hope you end up doing really well at out this all (financially and socially)

HOTY - they should give u some kind of award when you're over there.

Derek Pocock

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David,

You, sir, are simply the best. You have to be Hammer of the Year by a country mile. Our guys had better give everything tomorrow win or lose. On second thoughts a win would be payback for Dowie's own goal a few years ago. Good luck in all your ventures David.

Cheers

Derek in Nanaimo  
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David Lewis, having somewhat recovered from the crushing disappointment of Saturday night's result, I would again like to sincerely thank you for your efforts in bringing this broadcast to us.

The feeling of being amongst West Ham was almost overwhelming and something I had frankly forgotten after all the years since I was last at a West Ham game.

So thank you again from the bottom of my heart for helping me to re-acquaint with what being West Ham means. Thank you for rekindling that which became dormant in me due to forced separation.

You have made hundreds, if not thousands, of exiled Hammers happy and as I now grieve quietly for what might have been, I am indebted to you for helping me to experience all the emotions that I have experienced again in the last 7 or 8 days.

You, sir, are a true Hammer.

HAMMERDOWNUNDER  
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Hi,

I know you have no idea who I am, but I just wanted to thank you for bringing the game on Saturday to Melbourne and the rest of Australia.

I was convinced I would have to spend the night logged on watching the live results, but because of your great gift to all West Ham supporters I can now spend it and hopefully celebrate with a bunch of other West Ham supporters.

So a big thank you from me and I am sure a great deal of other West Ham supporters around Australia and hopefully look forward to next season in the Premiership.

Samantha Taylor

Melbourne  
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This geeza has made my year! I have NEVER been a prouder Hammers than this moment! 12,000 miles away and we pack out 6 venues across the country. True supporters - Hammers til we die!

Would not have been possible if DPL didn't have balls of steel and put his cash on the line!

DPL - what's your real name mate?

I think I speak for all Hammers down under when I say you should be knighted!

walkster oz  
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A note from the long suffering wife!

It's been a long and tumultuous week.

I've been constantly updated and have read all your messages and am not only amazed at your passion and devotion to your team but that other people apart from David could get so revved up over a silly game! I thought my husband was mad but if he has made so many people happy and they all think the same way as he does, then how wrong was I and how proud could I be?!

green\_eyes  
-----

David,

This is a magnificent gesture on you part I hope that every WHU fan in Australia

supports your venture. I have been following West Ham since 1943 and you have to be the No.1 supporter.

This should be posted in the WHU dressing room just to show how we live and die with this team...

Dear David,

Re: Our West Ham vs. Crystal Palace

Thank you from the bottom of my claret and blue heart for making last Saturday night/ Sunday morning one of the most memorable days of my life. I applaud your enterprise and passion - you made many West Ham fans feel loved that night by helping to broadcast our biggest match since the 1980 FA Cup Final.

I'm sure many fans chatted with you on the night and I don't expect you to remember all of us, we had a brief chat (I'm the Australian of Yugoslav parentage). At the end of the night, even with a heavy heart, I had to shake your hand and thank you again for all of your efforts, you really don't know what it meant to me to be in the company of so many Hammers fans - where did we all come from!

Like you I've followed the Hammers for over 32 years, I was six when I got hooked on them and now, at 38, they form a major part of my life. We had our own little Upton Park that night, I sang myself hoarse with so many renditions of 'Bubbles'.

I don't know about you, but after the match I was numb with disbelief.....only now has it really sunk in and I'm not afraid to say I have shed a tear or two. What will keep me going is knowing that I'm not alone and that I have so many mates that are as passionate about our club as I am - there is no other club like West Ham!

We at West Ham have something none of the other clubs have - supporters with massive hearts and true passion. We have the potential to be as big as the Man. U's of this world, it disappoints me that we sometimes forget that there is a world beyond E13, I'm pleased it took someone like yourself to show the world what being a West Ham supporter means.

Once again, thank you. If the result wasn't what we all wanted, the highlight must have been when we all sang 'There's only one Trevor Brooking'.....and as far as I'm concerned there's only one David Lewis as well.....up the 'Ammers!

Yours truly,

Serge Knezevic

by Khris Raistrick

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