

HIT THE BAR!

The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine



December 2025

£1



FIXTURES 25/26

*****WARNING*****

As we have discovered, fixtures in the NFL are often re-scheduled.
VHTB will provide updates as soon as we hear of any changes.

DECEMBER

21 – Boreham Wood (A)

26 – Gateshead (A)

30 – Morecambe (H)

JANUARY

3 – Wealdstone (H)

17 – Solihull Moors (A)

21 – York City (H)

24 – Aldershot Town (A)

31 – Altrincham (H)

FEBRUARY

7 – Rochdale (A)

10 – Scunthorpe United (H)

14 – Forest Green Rovers (A)

21 – Yeovil Town (H)

25 – Hartlepool United (A)

28 – Eastleigh (A)

MARCH

7 – Southend United (H)

14 – Tamworth (A)

21 – Boston United (H)

24 – FC Halifax Town (A)

28 – Braintree Town (A)

APRIL

3 – Gateshead (H)

6 – Morecambe (A)

11 – Sutton United (H)

18 – Truro City (A)

25 – Brackley Town (H)

The London Branch owns 2 season tickets for the Paddock terrace at Brunton Park. As a member, each ticket is available to you for a cost of just £10 - compared to £20 in advance and £24 on the day.

To use a ticket/s, contact seasontickets@cusclb.com 2 weeks in advance. Preference will be given to those who haven't used them ever before, or in the current season.



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EDITORS BLEAT



Welcome to HTB! 339.

A bit of a bumper pre-Xmas issue to celebrate HTB's status as (deep breath) the oldest, continuously in print football fanzine, certainly in the UK, possibly the world.

Special thanks to Graeme Harker who has compiled a special section to celebrate the lives of some of the former players who passed in 2025. I had deliberately left publication of this edition until after the Woking match, in order to have a 'top of the league' front cover. As a supporter since 1967, I should really have known what a hostage to fortune that was..

Listening to Radio Cumbria, Paul Huntington's increasing worried analysis of gaps left, runs and not stopped at source (and other tactical insights which make me realise that I don't *really* understand the game) confirmed my growing unease that the team lacks enough structure and game plan. Georgie Kelly's recent interview where he indicated that he's not sure what sort of ball is going to be played by Linney or Conn-Clarke confirmed the feeling that we aren't as organised and disciplined in our play as perhaps we need to be to get the massive points total that Nick Dawson's article indicates we will need. Do we need some fresh input into the coaching staff?



The movement of matches from Saturday at 3.00 and the odd travel times that brings must have an impact on the players and it certainly makes life hard for home and away fans. The TV coverage which created that problem has enabled the branch to have 'get togethers' in London to watch matches. Attendance numbers show there is demand for that shared matchday experience.

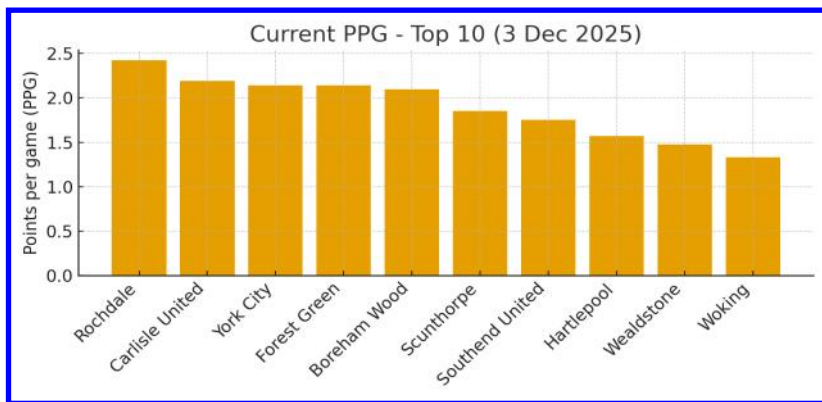
As you see, the fox has his Santa hat on, so Happy Christmas one and all and here's hoping that 2026 bring us the big present of League football.

John B



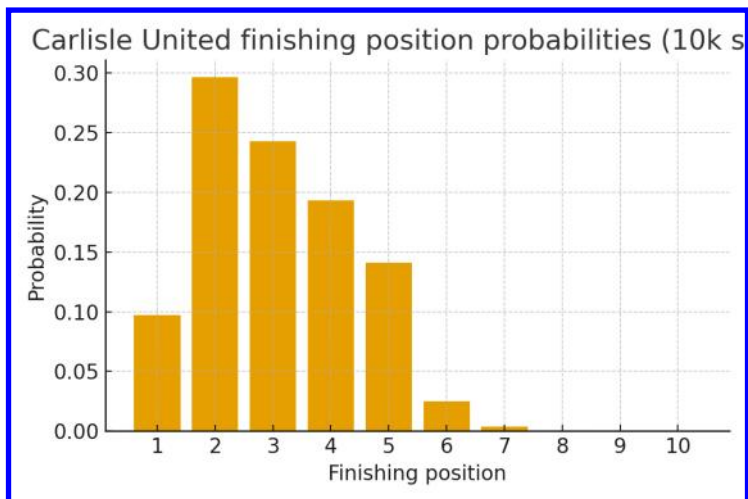
CAN WE DO IT?

Nick Dawson has been talking to AI again. You will recall that in October the “Monte Carlo simulation” predicted us to finish 1st or 2nd with around 95 points. Nick ran the model again on 3rd December based on the current points per game being achieved by the top ten clubs, as shown below.

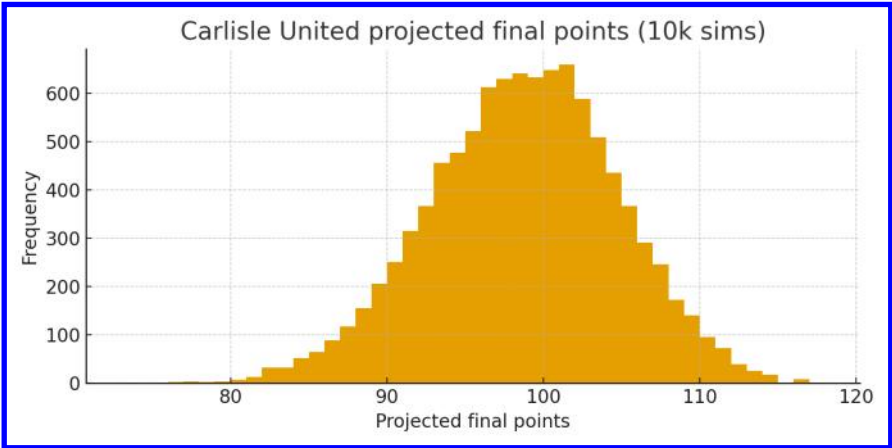


Each teams remaining matches were then simulated in 10,000 iterations, using a conservative smoothed estimate of its win/draw/loss probabilities derived from current record. This is a simplified model and does not simulate head-to-head fixtures explicitly. **This results in us being predicted to finish second ,**

Va



A bit more detail



Carlisle United have a 9.7% likelihood of being top, a 39.4% likelihood of being first or second and a 63.6% likelihood of being in the top three, in a tight race among the current top five teams.

The 10,000 iterations of our matches indicate that we are most likely to finish with over 100 points - and it looks as if we'll need them!



HIT THE BAR!

August 2025

£1

90 goals and 30 wins needed. No pressure lads.

HIT THE BAR! 337Page 1

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



We have just lost our first game after 11 unbeaten. After losing against Blackpool in the cup, we head back into the fray against Woking on Wednesday and will hopefully continue that run.

I think we are in the top pot this season.

I expect us to be competing for promotion at the end of the season. Rochdale are on top and 2 games in hand but a complete mess of a pitch that is going to see them with a fixture problem. Forest Green get a little excitable down to their manager and owner. Decent team but I expect them to fall away. Borehamwood has performed well but I can't seem them lasting the season.

York City look great – are scoring for fun and look really well set up. I believe they and Carlisle will be fighting for the top spot. At the moment, York looks

better but I expect that to swing to and fro. Here is hoping.

I absolutely loved our trip to Reading in the last round of the cup. To be 2-0 down at 90 minutes and then to win the game 3-2 after extra time was mint.

2 weeks ago, was the London Branch annual trip en masse to Brunton Park. 42 of us were in the United Lounge in the East Stand. A grand time was had by all with the slightly surreal element of bumping into Michael Knighton several times when he was invited back for the unveiling of the Honours Board in the boardroom listing all the owners, managers and honours the club have won. Bobby Moncur, Roddy Collins and Chris Beech were fellow guests and probably more welcome to most fans.

It was a great day out at Southend. I had an inkling we may win when I heard that Chris Tembey and his Supporters team had won 4-2 in the morning in their new Carlisle United donated shorts. We did win – it was great.

Have a wonderful Xmas and New Year.

Up the blues, Dave Brown



KEEP THE FAITH



Our FA Cup defeat by Blackpool was obviously disappointing and doubly so that we couldn't make more of a fight of it. There was no coming back after being 3-0 down at half time. At least we can focus on the league now. I'm just hoping that there isn't a reaction from the FA Cup defeat when the team runs out against Woking. As far as I'm concerned, even though I'm going to Market Harborough this Saturday, we can put out a reserve team against Harborough Town in the FA Trophy. Promotion out of the National League is our sole aim now. It would still be good to progress though, as it

will give those players not seeing much first team football invaluable competitive game time.

It was good to see Hayden Atkinson get an outing against Blackpool. Although we have a bit of an emergency at centre back, with Mugabi and Thomas long term injured, Feeney ill and potential replacement Grant also out injured, it was surprising to hear he'd been recalled from loan at Workington and unusual to see a youth team player (Atkinson is only 17) get on the pitch in such an important game, albeit when the game was basically done and dusted. I'm sure he'll be starting the match at Harborough. Hopefully, he can progress to be our next Academy graduate to play regular first team football.

Which brings me to the uncertainty surrounding the Academy. The club, at this juncture, could have done without the loss of its Academy Manager. I'm saying this because the prospects for the future of the Academy are a bit up in the air, so it's not a good time to try and recruit someone of high calibre to run it. The big threat is the potential loss of funding if we fail to get promoted back to the EFL at the first attempt.



As you're probably aware we lose half the grant to the Academy if we remain in the National League for more than one year and all of it if we're still there after two years. The club's last annual accounts showed that this grant was approximately £0.5 million.

A number of clubs relegated out of the Football League have had their academy status downgraded, or lost their academy completely, as a result of relegation out of the Football League and their failure to get back within two years. The same fate awaits Carlisle if they are down more than two years. Of course it can be quickly regained on promotion again. Oldham Athletic got back after three years and have had their category 3 status restored. On the other hand Scunthorpe lost their academy completely. There are other downsides to losing category 3 status as well. Apart from the loss of funding, the club will also lose the right for compensation for any players in the academy signed by another professional club. If the club were to adopt a self-funded category 4 status this would mean that we would operate only from the Under-17 age group upwards and lose the U9-U16 age groups covered by category 3. Additionally, the youth teams would have to leave the official EFL Youth Alliance league and find alternative

competitive games.

Can we expect the Piataks to fully fund the potential loss of income? They obviously don't have a bottomless pit of money and, in any event, it's likely that additional money spent on the academy will mean less money for other projects.

Keeping up with other clubs in terms of spending means that owners have to reach deeper and deeper into their pockets. There's a lot of money being invested in football in this country, and that's at all levels of the game. The latest that's come to my attention is Wrexham - yet again. Not satisfied with the income received as a result of the takeover by wealthy celebrity film stars and the spin-off commercial income from TV, they've been fishing for other investors and have landed the new owners of Atletico Madrid as minority investors. To those that have will be given more! However, that's not the worst of it. I scrolled down the BBC news item on this and came across this headline:- *"Football stadium's £18m grant will 'transform Wrexham' says minister"*. I immediately thought surely this is not public money being used to fund an already commercially viable and seemingly well off football club? Oh yes it is! It's being justified by the Labour Welsh Minister



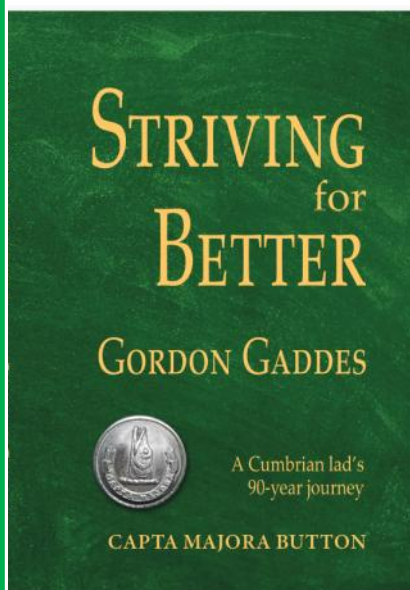
for Culture as regenerating the heart of Wrexham but it's basically being provided to build a new stand at what used to be called the Racecourse Ground, as well as upgrades to floodlights, pitch and other stadium infrastructure. Perhaps the good residents of Wrexham are happy with this but I suspect that the vast majority of money is coming from the Welsh government which in turn gets 50% of its money from central government coffers. In other words the money is yours and mine that is being used! At a time when public services are at such a low ebb having been starved of cash, I don't think that this is an appropriate way to spend public money. I suspect we won't have heard the last of this.

Anyway enough of other club's finances and doom and gloom about the potential future of our academy. We have the busy festive season rush of games coming up. Fingers crossed that we don't run into problems over this period and that we can ease ourselves away from one or two more teams battling it out at the top. It's probably not the best time to remind people that we've beaten Morecambe only once in 9 home league games. We'll make it 2 in 10.

Have a good Christmas and New Year.

Keep the faith, Ken

Long-time fan Gordon Gaddes had a distinguished career as a Lecturer and Vice-Principal in further education, and as a manager and director in business. Gordon has written a recollection of his life and works. He asks those interested in obtaining a copy to call him on 07561 459633.



HTB! IS THE OLDEST, CONTINUOUSLY IN-PRINT FOOTBALL FANZINE

It's official. Hit the Bar! is confirmed as the oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine in the UK.



This achievement was confirmed by research carried out by Pete Slater, author of the excellent Football Fanzine Culture blog. Leeds-based Pete set himself the task of researching the rich history of football fanzine culture and in the summer of 2025 he shared his findings at the *Voice of the Fans* exhibition, a co-production from Leeds Libraries and the British Library. News from the Leeds event reached

London Branch that Pete had the evidence that Hit the Bar is the UK's oldest, still published fanzine. Following a fascinating zoom call, Pete sent through his findings and these form the basis for the article below. Full details and many more fascinating fanzine-based articles are at:

<https://footballfanzineculture.blog/>

Pete is in contact with the CUFC Heritage Group and plans to visit Brunton Park in the New Year to see the fanzine collection brought together by the group.

So what is a Fanzine?

Perhaps before we go any further, we need to consider what is/was a fanzine in the context of this article. In Pete's view they must fulfil three criteria:

- By fans, totally independent of their subject
 - Be self-published
- Use amateur, unpaid contributors

In the beginning

The first true independent football fanzine is a Celtic 'zine called The Shamrock, published as early as 1962 by an Edinburgh based supporter of Celtic. The first general football fanzine, Foul, came along in 1972 but neither of these lasted too long. Shamrock ceased when Jock Stein was appointed and Celtic started winning again and Foul was the first of many fanzines to fall 'foul' of the law.



So what was the different in the 70s and 80s that allowed fanzines to breathe and prosper? The 70s and 80s were a time of tremendous social upheaval in Britain; the economy was a mess and old social/business norms were falling away for a variety of positive and negative reasons. Football supporting was a microcosm of this, fans were painted with a broad brush through very critical eyes focussed on a minority of supporters causing problems. Clubs were run as fiefdoms by people who saw them as a cash cow with little regard for the safety or comfort of fans and the way clubs communicated was pitiful. The printed press was largely a compliant mouthpiece, and the match day magazine might have a brief, ghost-written column by the manager but that was it.

Self-publishing was enabled by changes in 'technology'. The printing and copying devices now available created a sort of second Gutenberg moment, publication became 'free' again. These changes are often overlooked but the move from Mimeographs to Letraset, Gestetners, risograph printers and Roneo machines, then onto photocopiers was a huge shift and played a massive part in enabling scores of 'proto' writers to live out their dream without worrying about publishers, costs and in some cases too many strictures around grammar and spelling

Fanzines numbers exploded, some of the more successful zines were selling upwards of 20,000 editions a time and more still exist in print form than you

would imagine. Bradford City's The City Gent is still here, one of the oldest continuously produced fanzines around and still managing to sell 700+ editions when published. Remarkably, The Gent has outlived the Bradford City match day magazine, not published for a couple of years now.

How many fanzines are there, how many were there?

Pete soon realised that the answer to that question was far from easy to find.

"I started thinking about how many fanzines there had been. I assumed that this would be an easy task and was sure a list would already exist, surely someone had thought "I'll make a list of every football fanzine that existed, including its price, start and end dates, anecdotes about the fanzine, links to copies still available and if it moved online."

You know where I'm heading with this, a Sisyphean task, it took a year to 'complete' (it will never be complete). So how did the list 'arrive'? Come with me down this rabbit hole."

Having realised that a 'google search' wasn't going to provide the answer, Pete found lists of fanzines in the National Football Museum and National Library of Scotland and remembered that until May 2000, the magazine "When Saturday Comes" carried a listing of 400 titles.

Promotion of the Voice of the Fans exhibition resulted in Pete making contact with many former and current editors and contributors. This was combined with trips to view the surprising number of fanzine collections in academic institutions around the country. Perhaps the



	Fanzine	Club	Years
1	Hit The Bar	Carlisle	51
2	City Gent	Bradford City	41
3	Wombles Downunder	Wimbledon	40
4	Leyton Orientear	Leyton Orient	38
5	A Kick UP The R's	QPR	38
6	Not The View	Celtic	38
7	The Fox	Leicester City	38
8	Red News	Manchester United	37
9	The Gooner	Arsenal	37
10	Dial M For Merthyr	Merthyr Tydfil	37
11	Fly Me To The Moon	Middlesbrough	36
12	Talking Bull	Hereford	36
13	4000 Holes	Blackburn Rovers	36
14	A Love Supreme	Sunderland	36
15	Give Em Beans	Barrow	36
16	The Square Ball	Leeds United	36
17	United We stand	Manchester United	36
18	Orneblikket	Crystal Palace	34
19	Pandamonium	Leyton Orient	34
20	Derek I'm Gutted	Port Vale	30
21	Red All Over The Land	Liverpool	30
22	The Wanderer	Wycombe Wanderers	30



best of these is the National Library of Scotland (NLS) and their frankly incredible collection of Scottish fanzines. He noted other excellent 'local' collections are located at: Carlisle University, University College Cork, York University, British Library London, Exeter University archive, the Bishopsgate Institute, Leeds Central Library, People's Collection Wales (online), National Football Museum in Manchester, Dundee FC Historical Society and the Charlton FC Museum (matchdays only). In a surreal twist there is also a very good collection of largely Shrewsbury fanzines at the De Paul University in Chicago, I'm sure there are many more.

The List

Pete set about creating the definitive list of fanzines as part of the preparation for Voice of the Fans, the exhibition on football fanzines and fanzine culture at Leeds Central Library in the summer of 2025. The list includes key statistics about each fanzine (date first published, number of editions etc.)

So, How many Fanzines have there been?

The total number of fanzines Pete has listed as being for sale in the British Isles is currently 1,771. In the English League structure there have been 958 fanzines with 312 in the English non-league structure. Only four of the established big clubs today appear in the top 10 in terms of number of fanzines per club.

In the Scottish Senior structure he found 198 and a further 38 in the Scottish Junior leagues, with Hearts

seemingly having had the most prolific writer fan-base across the British Isles. There are 71 still in print with eight of those resolutely in print form only.

Which is the oldest fanzine?

And here we are, top of the league!

As the table shows, the oldest, continuously in-print fanzine is Hit the Bar, the Carlisle United fanzine running since 1974 and still going strong!! Hit

The Bar is also the first and so far only fanzine to hit 50 years old. Pete commenting; "Incredible support through thick and thin for one of the great footballing outposts of the isles. A great fanzine and a brilliant achievement."

What is remarkable about this classification is that only four of the 20 are 'big' clubs. This proves once again that the meaning of 'big' in football and fanzine world is not literal. As the perfect example of this, Leyton Orient deserve a special mention as they have TWO fanzines in the Premier League! Plus there are two 'non-league' sides here, Hereford and Merthyr, still going after all these years, with Barrow not long back in the league structure as well!!

Some of the fanzines in this top 20 are still edited by their creators, some onto the third generation of troops manning the barricades.

Chapeau to each and every one of you but especially to 'little' Carlisle United and the team behind the venerable old man, Hit The Bar, we suspect you might be champion for a while yet (Well, at least nine years anyway).



Issues	Club	Fanzine
1	656 Middlesbrough	Fly Me To The Moon *
2	654 Stoke City	The Oatcake
3	629 West Ham Utd	Over Land & Sea (OLAS)
4	394 QPR	A Kick Up the R's *
5	379 Birmingham City	Made In Brum
6	358 Manchester United	United We Stand
7	350 Carlisle United	Hit The Bar *
8	335 Manchester United	Red News
9	311 Arsenal	The Gooner *
10	309 Liverpool	Red All Over The Land *
11	309 Celtic	Not The View *
12	306 Stoke City	Potters Monthly
13	300 Manchester City	King Of The Kippax
14	296 Leyton Orient	Leyton Orientear *
15	295 Manchester United	Red Issue
16	282 Rangers	Number One
17	272 Bristol City	One Team In Bristol*
18	268 Wimbledon	Wombles Downunder *
19	267 Sunderland	A Love Supreme *
20	263 Chelsea	CFCUK *



Number of issues published

Once again, a truly astounding table, perhaps more skewed to better supported clubs with broader reach in this case. That makes Middlesbrough's Fly Me to The Moon's achievement even more remarkable, as is the fact that this landmark was reached without anyone realising in the game vs Oxford the 19th March this year. Hit the Bar again appears – this time in 7th between two Salford-based and now-defunct fanzines, with a now a total of 339 copies. However, not all these fanzines are still going, an asterisk * denotes the ones still in print. **On this basis, Hit the Bar sits third in the table behind Fly me the Moon and QPR's Kick up the R's and ahead of Arsenal's 37 year-old Gooner.**

We're not alone: the other Carlisle Fanzines

Following our zoom conversation, Peter very kindly provided the information he had collated about other Carlisle fanzines. He reports:

"We've traced 11 or 12 Carlisle fanzines over the years which is quite incredible for a club this size. To give you an idea other clubs that have had 12 fanzines are Liverpool, Southend United, Watford, Plymouth Argyle, Leicester City, Rangers and Reading.

To put this in perspective, if you add ALL of the fanzines from your main rivals in the fanzine era (Barrow, Preston, Hartlepool and Workington) have only 20 between them with 15 of those coming from Preston

For the record these are the names of the fanzines we've traced (confirmed by sight, having a copy, a listing on two forum sources or in a library catalogue:

- *For Fox Sake*
- *Hit The Bar*
- *Land Of Sheep And Glory*
- *Carlisle Utd*
- *Olga the Fox*
- *Reeves Is Offside Again*
- *So Jack Ashhurst Where's My Shirt*
- *The Adventures Of Olga The Fox*
- *The Cumberland Sausage*
- *The Foxy Ferret*
- *Watching From The Warwick*
- *What The Fox Is Going On?"*

Pete asks HTB readers - If you know of any more, please get in touch with him via email at fanzineFC@gmail.com, on Twitter @fanzinefc or Bluesky @fanzinefc.bsky.social

In the next edition of HTB! we'll share more of the history of HTB! and acknowledge the many people who've written for it, edited it and produced it over the past 51 years.



BRANCH FOOTBALL TEAM DOES IT SWIFTLY



Back l-r) Ralph Wood, Scott Naylor, Dave Scott, Harvey Tiffen, Lucas Tembey, Joseph Scott, Steve Batey **(Front l-r)** Andrew Dobinson, Tom Templeton, Chris Tembey, Jason Casey, Gijs Hoogland.

Coppermill Swifts v CUSCLB FC

Date: 08.11.25

Venue: Low Hall, South Access Road,
Walthamstow

This report must start with a note of thanks: **A huge “thank you” in fact, to Stef & Nigel at CUFC and Dave and Simon.** Between them they not only managed to sign-off and collate a brand-new supporters team kit but impressively had the whole lot packed and shipped directly to me.



With a new kit at the ready, we just needed an opposition to face. Easier said than done. With the best opportunities falling in August and before most pitches were marked and set-up, it was a scan down the fixture list for the next best possible opportunity. 'Southend Away' with a later kick-off time could work but without a supporter's team to play, we had to look elsewhere. Gillingham fans? A logistical travelling nightmare. Orient fans? They had been due to play the Coppermill Swifts but a 12:30pm kick-off for Orient marked the end of that. How about we step in? **Coppermill were absolutely on board. Opposition sorted, could we muster enough bodies ourselves.** A week prior, heading to Reading the answer was "no". At one point we'd dropped to 8 and that was likely that. Last chance saloon then, Steve Batey and Jugsy went on a recruitment charge and pulled in a couple of potential new players at the London Branch meet-up boozer, The Greyfriar. Dave Scott kindly offered what body he could after a recent knee operation. With one other potential, it was a risk but worth a shot: **GAME ON!**

In the week came the great news Joseph Scott was available, which meant Dave was definitely 'up for it'. Scott Naylor, one of the new recruits in Reading had decided that a drive from Swin-

don just to pull on the new blue kit was worth it's while and signed up, Jugsy was 100% there....and we'd reached the magic number – 12 to be precise. Dave Scott offered to stand in goal if we were short of a 'keeper, which we were!

Here is where the thanks continue: The magnificent 12 players, Neil Nixon and Suzanne Batey in support, along with Scott's family who had joined him in the drive from Swindon.

We were set; the weather and pitch were ideal, the kit looked stunning.

Although due for a 10:30am kick-off it was all fairly relaxed and at 10:45am we got under way, CUSCLB FC kicking off the first game of the new kit era.

Even though we had a 12th man, at the Swifts request we went without lino's and let the Ref decide such decisions. Apparently having lino's had caused more problems than their worth for the Swifts in recent matches, so we were happy to oblige. We had no plans to play a high line!

Dave in goal, Steve and Dobbo at full back, Tom and Ralph in the heart of the defence. They were shielded by Captain Tembey as a holding midfielder, leaving Lucas and Joseph to sit as the advanced midfield pairing. Gijs, Scott and Jugsy would rotate on the flanks and Harvey played the lone ranger up top. Work





with the tools at your disposal they say, well these proved to be weapons more than tools!

The morning dew made the surface wet and the ball even more so, that being said there were some really good passages of play and we started well which led to confidence building. Given our last 11-a-side game was 18 months ago, it was an impressive sight to see the team click. Dobbo and Jugsy were creating so much down the right and creating moments not only for Harvey but the two advanced midfielders. Jugsy was even dishing out some back-heel passes. The left hand-side was carefully dealt with and Tom and Ralph were clearing their lines for fun. Harvey's task was tough but the reward of a goal was soon to follow, a fine ball from Jugsy into the box saw confusion between the Swifts 'keeper and one of their centre-halves. They collided together and missed the ball, leaving Harvey with the glorious task of rolling the ball into an empty net. The 'Linney-CCC

handshake' was deployed for the first time and our tails were well and truly up. 1-0

The Swifts were keen to persist playing out from the back and this would prove to be their downfall. A loose pass across the edge of the box was met by the onrushing Harvey, who took a touch and then lifted it beautifully over the 'keeper and into the net. 2-0

After that the Swifts went more direct and deployed their one real threat – the long throw in (yes, it really is back!). Long balls into the channels were the tactic which CUSCLB FC dealt with relatively well, Joseph's height a real help defending any resulting throw-ins.

It was the Carlisle boys in blue who would play the better football and a neat one-two between Lucas and Gijs sent Lucas through on the inside left. A great run was met by an even better finish, a sweet left foot strike across the 'keeper and into the far corner. 3-0.

Now in dreamland it was just a case of seeing things through to half-time. Unfortunately, we didn't quite make it. Another long throw came in from our right and the flick this time eluded everyone, Dave included. The ball landed a yard from goal to see an easy tap-in for the Swifts and a glimmer of hope for the second half. 3-1





Half-Time 3-1

The half time team talk was still positive and confidence was high with a belief that we could carry things on in the second half.

The Swifts chasing the game went full-on direct and for the blues it was just a case of standing strong, looking to hit on the break. Carlisle did just that with the move of the game. Captain Tembey found Gijs on the right wing who sent Harvey away further down the line, his deep cross to the far post was met expertly by young Lucas, who's cushioned volley cut back was perfect for the on-rushing Joseph to smash into the top of the net. 4-1

Now it was just a case of seeing the game out. Not helped when Tembey Snr failed to flick on Dave's bye-kick, the

Swifts midfielder nipped in and sent the ball into the area before it was clipped over the onrushing Dave. 4-2

After that Joseph became a defensive rock, his height and heading protected the goal from multiple long throw ins and the one-time Dave was beaten, Dobbo was in the right place to head brilliantly away off the line. The lack of a lino then came along to haunt the Swifts, as another punt into the box from a free kick was flicked into the net but from what looked like an offside position, so the Ref disallowed it. The angered Swifts were turned away as we remained calm and appreciative – only Steve Batey knows if it was truly offside or not!

The game played out with the blues managing things superbly and Dave was dominant in goal, claiming any loose ball and taking the odd kick for his troubles. The blues continued to hold firm whilst creating openings on the break, from one attempt new signing Scott even attempted an over-head kick! (We later informed him that kind of skill wasn't the done thing in this team!) The game had one final big chance but it was a Carlisle one. In defending one final torpedo into the box the ball broke and Lucas ran over half the length of the pitch. In rounding the 'keeper he was tripped so the shot toward the





empty net was off balance and weak as he fell. The Ref blew the whistle but for full time rather than a penalty. He argued that he couldn't face the Swifts backlash if he pointed to the spot!

It mattered not; we had achieved an outstanding result against a decent opposition who certainly brought a physical and direct element to proceedings today. The Swifts felt hard done by at the final scoreline but I think those in blue felt we'd fully earned the win with a mighty fine display.

Full-Time 4-2

Harvey Tiffen (2), Lucas Tembey, Joseph Scott

As if that wasn't good enough, we later celebrated 90 minutes of joy in South-end. Nigel Clibbens was met on the train back into London afterwards, allowing an in-person "thank you" for the kit - although he couldn't be tempted to take it home for a wash!

This was one hell of a day; two enjoyable games with plenty of goals and two massive wins to boot. Huge thanks to the 12 heroes who put in one hell of an effort:

MOTM - Joseph Scott

(Dave Scott later admitted that he hadn't played in goal since the age of 8. To play a blinder just 5 weeks after a knee op deserves a special mention!)



Was the trek to see TamWORTH IT?

Dave Spencer shares the agony of a day out on the railways.

I've made the long 2 leg slog from Brighton to see Carlisle play a few times and the journey has always worked like clockwork.

Eager to see Carlisle brush aside Tamworth I get up at 07:30, a brisk 30 minute walk to Brighton station and then onwards via a short underground hop from Victoria to Euston, providing a useful 40 minute rest for scan at Euston's Pret a Manger.

Only 2 British Rail trains, and we start with Brighton. Er...but we don't.

The departure board at Brighton as expected shows the first leg to Victoria at 08:39 - but what is that addition? 'Cancelled'.

Is that the end before the start of my Tamworth trek? I ask a train attendant and he directs me to Platform 5 and a train to St. Pancras. A rough calculation looks like I can make it to Euston and the second leg. I'm a Northerner, we don't give in. Tamworth, you're still on!

It's a slow coach (Literally, 14 stops on the way) but you probably don't know the ending of the Thameslink route as it runs from the countryside into an enclosed London tunnel with 5 short stops. I'll be in St. Pancras soon. Er...but I won't. The penultimate stop at Farringdon has me looking at my watch. The train is stuck there. 15 frustrating minutes but at last we're off. From St. I

bolt and run as fast as I can up to Euston. Not a good idea as having heart failure 3 years ago my pacemaker just won't let me struggle along at a more than a jog. Got there, yeah. 2 minutes too late.! Next train in 1 hour.

Ok not a disaster, I'm going to miss the first 15 minutes if I can still get a taxi from Carlisle rail station to Brunton Park. I know things go in three's but there is no way that a third train failure mixture of cancellations, train stuck in tunnel and other things like signal failures can stop the Tamworth bound train. We chug along (no, it's not a steam train but it might as well be). Eventually we're at Crewe to be comforted with the news that there is signalling problems between Warrington and Wigan and we're on hold for over an hour. I look at my watch which seems to have turn into a turbo fuelled parody of the time I would like it to be. We're not moving. We will be says the train announcer. **Trouble is that will be just after 3pm and the match has started.** Is the trek to see Tamworth worth it? Quite honestly I'd only see the last few minutes (in hindsight an exciting period of the game!) and turned round to face south. The Crewe to Euston roars on, only stopped once as it speeds unimpaired. **After 8 and a half hours of getting nowhere I'm on the train to Brighton (another hour).**

So was the effort to see TamWORTH IT! I don't know, I wasn't there.



Brunton Park Diary

2025/26

Oct 15th (Wed)

**GATESHEAD YTH (0) 0 CUFC YTH (2) 3 –
FA YOUTH CUP THIRD QR**

Birch's Babes made it eight unanswered goals in their two qualifiers easily disposing of their hosts through Lambert, Towers and Smith.

CUFC XI: Worth, Atkinson, Hatton (McDonough 80), Porter, Penney, Rigby, Towers (Rafferty 73), Lowes, Lambert (Bell 67), Mason (Wade 80), Smith (Tonge 76).

Oct 18th (Sat)

**CUFC YTH 2 BOLTON YTH 0 – YOUTH
ALLIANCE CUP NORTH**

Facing the division's league leaders, goals from Smith and Towers see the Young Blues carry forward their fine midweek form to advance.

**CARLISLE UTD (2) 4 FOREST GREEN
ROVERS (1) 2**

A rocking Brunton Park, an opposition manager in the crosshairs and a massive three points, what more can you ask for? Billed as the face-off between master and apprentice, or old school perm versus blonde ladyboy if watching from the Paddock, an absorbing game saw both teams go toe-to-toe. A good start for the Blues saw Williams and CCC combining for **Linney** to finish strongly





into the bottom corner and then Kelly denied by a fine save. Clarke levelled after the impressive Buyabu stripped Harper to leave a tap-in. Savage was then left tearing his hair out, well at least some of it, by his backline playing silly b@ll@cks and gifting it to that man **Linney** again to regain the lead. A brief pause for breath and United coughed up a soft goal of their own for the equaliser. On came the Blues' bomb squad and the fresh legs worked, Mendy tripping Linney to earn an early shower and then the top scorer finding the rampaging **Macadam** to smash the Blues back into the lead home to send Brunton Park bouncing. **Kelly** converted a late penalty after being pulled down to put the cherry on the top.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 7, Davies

7, Harper 6, Feeney 7, Hayden 7, Grant 6 (Ellis 7), Gilliead 6 (Macadam 8), Williams 7, Conn-Clarke 6 (Jones 6), **Linney 9** (Armstrong), Kelly 7.

Oct 21st (Tue)

Robbie's post-game sour grapes lead to the FA contacting United to investigate the alleged verbal abuse handed out to Savage, which may have crossed the line of a suggested visit to the barbers.

Oct 25th (Sat)

SALFORD YTH (1) 1 CUFC YTH (1) 4

A recurring winning score at Salford, two goals from Rafferty and one from Towers and Wade made it a comfortable win. Towers scored the first with a fine curling effort into the opposite corner from the right-hand edge of the box. United had started the game



strongly but a defensive lapse gave away the equaliser and then the hosts had the better chances including a strike against the bar. Some strong words at half-time saw United go on to rout their opponents.

YEOVIL TOWN (1) 1 CUFC (0) 1

Widely seen as an off day, super-sub **Macadam's** latest goal of the season contender rescuing a point. There was too much long stuff to a well-marshalled Kelly in the first period, the Blues looking lethargic in their attempts to break forward with the Somerset men raising their game and scoring from a Feeney own goal. Linney and CCC started to find space with both going close in the search for a winner.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Davies 6 (Jones 6), Harper 6, Feeney 6, Hayden 7, Grant 5, Gilliead 5 (**Macadam 7**), Williams 6 (Luamba 6), Conn-Clarke 6, Linney 6, Kelly 5.

Oct 28th (Tue)

CUFC YTH (0) 0 BLACKPOOL YTH (0) 1 – FA YOUTH CUP FIRST ROUND

A cruel exit for the high-flying Blues ended hope of making good progress and scalping a few league clubs along the way. Both keepers were kept busy, the Donkey Lashers maybe edging possession with the Blues arguably creating the better of the clear-cut chances, none more so than when the ball broke in the box to Towers and he fired over



an unguarded net. Mason was also denied by a superb save before the heart-break of a late winner when a drilled clearance struck their forward and ricocheted into the onion bag. A long way to go but Atkinson, Lowes and Smith look the most likely to eventually make the step up to the professional league if their upward trajectory continues.

CUFC: Worth, Atkinson, Hodgson (Wade 87), Porter, Penney, Rigby, Towers (Rafferty 73), Lowes, Lambert (Bell 66), Mason, Smith.

Oct 30th (Thu)

After 13 years of putting up with James Phillips, former midfielder **Chris Lumsdon** announces his departure from his role with BBC Radio Cumbria, for breaching the Beeb's Code of Conduct. This amounted to nothing more than sharing a social media post from another Instagram account that referred to the recent killing of a man in London.

Nov 1st (Sat)

READING (1) 2 CUFC (0) 3 – FA CUP R1 AET

The 'View from Another Planet' match report from Reading FC fans site [The Tilehurst End](#) says it all really:

"Well then. Where do you start with that?

At 90 minutes, this game looked like it would surely end up as a solid, encouraging start to the Leam Richardson era. Reading were two goals to the good, thanks to Lewis Wing and Mark O'Mahony, with the visitors seemingly kept at arm's length. Surely even the bizarre eight minutes of time added on wouldn't be an issue.



On 90+3, Regan Linney slammed home for 2-1, picking up a loose ball after the initial free kick had gone through the ball. Five minutes later he had his brace, thanks to a howler from Jack Stevens at the death. It took Linney just four minutes into extra-time to complete his hat-trick, Carlisle United's impressive turnaround and the Royals' embarrass-



ment.

Actually no, that's not quite right. The embarrassment didn't stop there.

Look, this is the FA Cup: weird things can and do happen. Regardless of the gulf in quality on paper - the Cumbrians sitting two divisions below us - the drama of such occasions is ripe territory for bizarre swings in fortune. If the Royals' woes had ended with Stevens' howler, or even Linney's third, that would be one thing.

But just as bad as all that - worse, really - was the limp, weak reaction to going behind. Forget tactics, formations and personnel - the fundamental non-negotiable of any side should be to never be out-fought, always to give as much as you can. But with the score at 2-3, and an embarrassing FA Cup exit on the cards, it's as if Reading were oblivious to what was happening.

Simply put, the Royals didn't make Carlisle work hard enough for their win - bar a couple of long-range shots, their 'keeper wasn't tested. It was complacent, uninspiring and angering - as fans made clear at full-time with the loudest booing of the season.

On the one hand, this pathetic collapse wasn't that surprising. After all, teams that have just sacked a manager aren't in the best of states anyway, let alone

when it's a club with form for struggling against non-league sides in this competition.

The first half an hour was pretty encouraging for Reading, with the game quickly settling down into the pattern of the home side looking to unlock the visitors. To do that, Richardson had given the Royals a different in-possession structure, suggesting an immediate attempt at getting his new team firing as an attacking force. In build-up, Reading essentially went 3-2-4-1: Yiadom deep with the centre-backs and the double pivot staying put, Matty Jacob and Daniel Kyerewaa holding width, and Paddy Lane coming very central to provide close support for Kelvin Ehibhathiomhan.

It bore some fruit, with Reading looking stronger attacking down the left. On one occasion, around 10 minutes in, Lane and Jacob combined on that flank before Kamari Doyle finished, only for the goal to be ruled out (I think for handball).

Reading weren't to be denied for too long though. Just over half an hour in, Lewis Wing put in a corner that wasn't cleared, instead eventually coming back to him in the area, in space, allowing him to slam home past the 'keeper. 1-0.

The Royals had further chances in a half that was overall comfortable (Carlisle



offering little bar a header from a free-kick that went in, but was ruled out for offside). Kyerewaa, played in by Doyle down the right, set up Ehibhationmhan for an effort that was fired over the bar, before the centre-forward forced an excellent one-handed stop from the goalie with a powerful header (via a right-footed Lane cross from the left).

Half time: 1-0

Going again after the break has been an issue for Reading this season, and so it proved again today. Carlisle looked the stronger side in the early stages of the second half, with the Royals struggling to rebuild the momentum they'd managed before the interval.

Richardson then turned to his bench a couple of times. Yiadom (exposed defensively somewhat and tiring) was sensibly swapped out for Kelvin Abrefa on the hour mark, with Mark O'Mahony introduced for Lane, who'd continued his recent improvement.

And the Irishman had an instant impact off the bench. On 68 minutes, Doyle floated in a cross to him from the right, O'Mahony controlled well and bounced his finish home, off the turf and past the 'keeper for 2-0.

The second goal brought a lift to the

home side, with Ehibhationmhan (pushed out to the left when O'Mahony replaced Lane) looking more confident. He forced a strong save with a low, hard effort that seemed destined for the bottom corner, while Jacob blasted over from a corner.

Richardson turned to his bench twice more in the 81st minute. On came the returning Mamadi Camara and Andre Garcia, replacing Kyerewaa and Ehibhationmhan out wide. Though neither had a huge attacking impact and Reading did go off the boil somewhat as the second half progressed, a two-goal lead really should have been good enough.

Linney had other ideas, of course, making it 2-1 and then 2-2 in front of an ecstatic away end. While there was a freak element to both of those goals - the ball going loose after a free-kick had gone through Reading's wall, and Stevens' weak goalkeeping - the goal for 2-3 was a catalogue of defensive errors. The Royals were badly stretched, ragged and then punished by his finish from the edge of the area.

Full-time: 2-3

I was really hoping Richardson would go in strongly in his post-match media comments, but he decided not to do so, instead taking a more analytical tone.



min£ed



LINNEY NETS LUMBRIANS £45,000 PRIZE





To be fair though, his point that Reading's performance was too polarised either side of the break - becoming too individual in the second half - was a good one.

With a seemingly ever-growing injury list, there's probably not a huge amount of changes he can make on Thursday, when Stevenage come to town. There must, however, be some kind of substantial response to this performance."

CUFC (no Player Ratings): Lewis, Harper, Feeney, Hayden, Ajiboye (Linney 69), Luamba (Davies 80), Gilliead (Wearne 80), Williams, Armstrong (Kelly 69), Macadam (Whelan 69), Conn-Clarke (Grant 110)

Nov 3rd (Mon)

After a nine-year wait since **Mysterious Curle's** win, four wins and a draw in league and cup during October helps **Sparky** bag a manager of the month.

The beaches of League One - but maybe not beyond this season - Blackpool await the Blues in the FA Cup second round with United seeking cold revenge for the youngsters' recent defeat.

Nov 4th (Tue)

CUFC (1) 2 HALIFAX TOWN (0) 0

We are top of the league say we are top of the league. The Blues brushed aside the emotional rollercoaster and expended effort at Reading, topped by the long trek back, to bicycle kick this potential banana skin into the back of the food recycling caddy. Overcoming the early loss of Hayden (warm up) and





Former Beech-era Blue, Secret Agent **Steve Collis**, becomes the Minstermen's new goalkeeping coach.

Nov 4th (Tue)

Nearly 20 years after his league debut, **Paul Huntingdon** hangs up his boots to launch a youth coaching venture.

Nov 7th (Fri)

After his exile in Albania, former big unit at the back **Dynel Simeu** is given the chance to resurrect his EFL career after Oldham hand him a short-term deal until January.

Nov 8th (Sat)

SOUTHEND (1) 1 CUFC (2) 2

United started like a train and while they fleetingly looked on course for a comfortable win, this end-to-end terrific advert for the National League showed

Thomas (hamstring knock) by the sixth minute with Ellis ably filling in, Luamba had a day out with a goal in each half, all four forwards including CCC involved in inviting the big winger to drill home his first. The second put the game to bed, Feeney meeting Harper's corner for Luamba to touch it in from close range.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Davies 6, Harper 7, Thomas (Ellis 7), Feeney 8, Gilliead 6, Macadam 7, **Luamba 8**, Conn -Clarke 8 (Wearne 6), Linney 7 (Armstrong), Kelly 7



that both teams will in the mix come the final weeks of the season. Good sides know how to deliver backs to the wall performances and led by Feeney, who has few piers (sorry), the team stood up and delivered it in (sand) buckets. Looking every penny of his last transfer fee, **Conn Clarke** is worryingly for every other side in the NL, looking well above even this class of football and only needed a yard of space to open his body, pick his spot and fire in the opener from a Williams inside pass.



Riding the disruption of losing Luamba to injury, CCC and Linney combined for the top-scorer to drive into the box and slot the ball across the keeper into the opposite corner for a trademark goal. The Essex boys pulled one back to keep

the game alive, which was frustratingly maintained when their keeper pulled off a fine stop from CCC with his left leg while all his weight was in the opposite direction. The fleet-footed Williams then skied one over the bar after an excellent break while the Shrimpers missed good chances of their own. They also had half a shout for a penalty against Davies denied and given as a foul outside the box.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 8, Williams 7, Harper 7, Hayden 8, Feeney 9, Gilliead 7, Macadam 7, Luamba 6 (Davies 5, Ellis 7), **Conn-Clarke 9** (Armstrong), Linney 7 (Grant), Kelly 7

Nov 11th (Tue)

CUFC YTH (0) 2 PNE YTH (0) 1 – YOUTH ALLIANCE CUP QUARTER-FINALS

The Blues came from behind to advance and looked the better team. Like an extra from Frozen, the equaliser came courtesy of a Nathan Snowball own goal. Lambert thought he had grabbed the lead when he flicked a header toward the bottom-right corner only for the keeper to turn it around the post. Mason broke away, rounded the stopper and with an open net beckoning the ball, he was unlucky to see it bobble and ricochet off the post. Enter stoppage-time and a goal line scramble ends with Rigby getting the winner.



Nov 13th (Thu)

Charlie 'more pins than a bowling alley'

Wyke spills the beans on his injuries and long rehabilitation. The ill-fated sub appearance against (spit) Cheltenham Town back in the mists of October 2024 left him with a dislocation of his left ankle and extensive ligament and cartilage damage.

NIFL Premiership side Ballymena United sign ex-Blue **Dylan McGeouch** on a

added to the Scotland Under-21 squad for their European Under-21 Championship qualifiers against Gibraltar and Bulgaria.

Nov 15th (Sat)

CUFC (0) 1 EASTLEIGH (0) 1

A wasteful United were punished for fluffing their lines, Eastleigh hanging on for almost the entire game to set-up the perfect sucker punch just as the 90 minutes was coming up. A bumper crowd was treated to Kelly having the



short-term deal while rivals Coleraine have been alerted that the Blues may be looking to permanently move on **Will Patching**, once they found the keys to the low-loader truck.

Former academy player **Ryan Carr** is

kind of day with his finishing that would tear his hair out if he had any. One went just over the bar, another sailed straight onto it and later it was the post's turn to taste football. **Luamba** did well to turn and finish after further good work from CCC but that elusive second



wouldn't come. The introduction of fresh legs this time went against the Blues, particularly the precaution of taking off the excellent Macadam after feeling a bit of cramp. The Spitfires shot home only for Armstrong to be denied a dramatic last gasp winner, sliding his shot past the keeper to strike the inside the post and roll just the wrong side of the goal line just as nearly 11,000 fans held their breath in anticipation.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Williams 7, Harper 6, Feeney 6, Hayden 7, Gilliead 6, Macadam 7 (Ellis), Luamba 7, Conn-Clarke 7 (Wearne), Linney 6, Kelly 6 (Armstrong).

The Cumbrians will be backed by a sell-out following of 3,559 against the Donkey Lashers with news that our extra allocation of tickets has disappeared faster than a buffet on a US cruise ship.

Nov 17th (Mon)

High-flying Southern League Premier Division Central side Harborough Town will be trying to stop the Blues making the FA Trophy fourth round in their return to a competition they last featured 20 years ago. It won't be easy; the hosts have the benefit of a 4G artificial pitch and have never previously played the Cumbrians.

Ex-Blues loanee **David Hughes** is drop

kicked by League Two's bottom club Newport County. Experienced former loan defender **Liam Cooper** joins the Owls on a contract until the end of the season. Beechball alert. The Hartlepool Mail reveal that Pools have held talks with former player and ex-United gaffer **Chris Beech** over their vacant hot seat. The Monkey Hangers' Nicky Featherstone remains acting on an interim basis will the search continues.

Nov 19th (Wed)

GREYSTOKE (0) 0 CUFC XI (2) 4 - CUMBERLAND CUP SECOND ROUND (played at Penrith)

A routine win against their hard-working Westmorland League Division One opponents thanks to goals from Lambert, Rafferty, Wade and Towers. First-year professional Sam Hetherington captained a side otherwise made up of youth team players.

CUFC XI: Worth (Robinson 82), Hatton, Hodgson, Rigby, McDonough, Hetherington (Bell 46), Rafferty, Tonge (Wade 72), Lambert, Mason (Miller 78), Smith (Towers 46)

Nov 21st (Fri)

After racking up 83 appearances in a variety of positions, 22-year-old one-of-our-own **Jack Ellis** signs a contract extension until the summer of 2027, with





an option of a further year. His sheer versatility sometimes threatens to reduce the number of starts he might otherwise enjoy, being able to replace 2 or 3 different defence and/or midfield-minded subs.

Nov 22nd (Sat)

BOSTON UTD (0) 1 CUFC (0) 2

Occasionally good, sometimes sublime, a nevertheless mix bag of a performance that was all about escaping deepest Lincolnshire with another three points in the swag bag. On a night when it didn't quite click up front, that man **Macadam** was again at the centre of things whether it was breaking up home attacks or making a lung-bursting run to the opposition box to bury the ball into the net as he did on two occasions. The first owed a credit to Linney's deft nut-

meg performed on a flat-footed home marker, the second on Williams' late driving run from right-back and neat inside pass when approaching in-line with the area.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Williams 7, Harper 5, Feeney 7, Hayden 6, Gilliead 6, **Macadam 8**, Luamba 5 (Davies 6), Conn-Clarke 5 (Wearne 6), Linney 6 (Armstrong), Kelly 5.

Nov 25th (Tue)

Several members of the first-team squad feature in a midweek bounce game with no details of the team, opposition or result given. It was revealed post-game that **Josh Grant** got a bang on the knee during the game, keeping him out of the following weekend.



Ruddy hell, Academy manager **Steven Rudd** is bounced out faster than an England middle-order batsman in Perth after serious allegations involving inappropriate social media messages to some of his young charges. Chris Blake, current head of academy coaching, becomes interim academy manager while a recruitment process for the role commences.

United are set to face Kirkoswald in the Quarter Finals of the Cumberland Cup.

73-year-old former defender **Simon Grand** joins NPL Premier Division Lancaster City Football Club for a second spell as he looks to close in on 800 career games.

Nov 26th (Wed)

Peterborough chairman Darragh MacAnthony latest podcast episode confirms that United have the buy option for **Chris Conn-Clarke**.

Immortalised for his winning header in the 1-0 defeat of top-flight Newcastle United in the FA Cup third round at a packed St James' Park in January 1968, there's sad news at the passing of **Tommy Murray** at the age of 82. This is added to later by the passing of United legend **Les O'Neill** at the age of 81, one of the finest players to grace to Brunton

Park. Please see the separate article in Hit the Bar for more details on Tommy's and Les' careers.

Nov 27th (Thu)

"Old **Neil McDonald** had a club, EIEIO", returning to Barrow for a third spell after agreeing to be their new joint assistant coach.

Nov 28th (Fri)

After a lengthy investigation, tears and tantrums hairdresser Robbie Savage is dismayed to hear the FA take United's side with the Cumbrians fully exonerated from punishment after last month's FGR bantergate episode.

The entire takeover of Gateshead nears completion with news that all 3,500 visitor tickets have been snapped up for the Boxing Day clash.

Nov 29th (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 1 PNE YOUTH (2) 4

United missed the opportunity to go third with three games in hand after the visitors gained revenge for their cup defeat. Amaru Smith had given an early lead for the Blues just after Mason had been denied by a fantastic save. Two close-range finishes put United behind after spurning a 1v1 to extend the lead.

, before Smith did manage to put the hosts in front, as he broke in behind and found the bottom corner 15 minutes in.





The third crashed in off the underside of the bar and a composed finish sealed the points.

CUFC (1) 2 TAMWORTH (1) 1

A grateful return to winning ways at home even if some of the lessons from



the Eastleigh clash were forgotten namely, converting possession against hardworking, organised sides into clear chances and in turn, taking those when presented. What at one point looked every bit on course for a routine win had flipped around early in the second half by which time **Kelly's** tap-in opener had been cancelled out and **Breeze** was facing up to a spot-kick after Williams brought down his man. Penalty heroics duly completed and United gained their second wind. Linney had been denied on a couple of separate occasions before with ten minutes left, his neat, near post cross found the marauding **Kelly** to gleefully volley in the winner in front of the Warwick.

CUFC Player Ratings*: Breeze 8, Wil-



liams 6, Harper 7, Feeney 7, Hayden 7, Gilliead 6 (Armstrong 6), Macadam 7, Luamba 6 (Ajiboye 6), Conn-Clarke 7 (Ellis), Linney 7, **Kelly 8**

Dec 2nd (Tue)

Former midfield ankle-biter **Luke Joyce** quits his role as Brentford's lead north scout to become head of recruitment at Fleetwood Town.

Dec 3rd (Wed)

Super soaraway senior **Derek Asamoah** scores in the same game as his son Zayshaun, as the pair help Isthmian League Southeast Division side Sittingbourne defeat Hassocks 2-1.

Dec 4th (Thu)

Sparky is shortlisted for the National League's manager of the month award for November.

Et tu, Brute? **Roman Caig**, the Blues' lead academy goalkeeping coach covering U9-U19, is poached by the Barcodes to be their new under-9 to under-16 academy goalkeeping coach, where he'll work under his father Tony.

Dec 5th (Fri)

Youngster **Hayden Atkinson** looks on course for a United debut in their FA Trophy third round tie at Harborough Town a week on Saturday after being brought back early from his Workington Reds loan.

Mike Kilner - now on vacation, FA Cup tie v Blackpool & onwards in next HTB!

*Player ratings (star man in bold, min 10 minutes) used with kind permission from [Jon Colman @News & Star](#) - see link for subscription offers and details..



Our FA Cup run ends at Blackpool. A goal from Armstrong gave 3,500+ travelling Cumbrians at least something to cheer. The FA trophy awaits.



London Branch gangs north

Dave Brown reports on the annual branch trip to Brunton Park 'en masse', as we say in London.

This time, organised as usual superbly by Terry McCarthy, 42 of us decided to sample the delights of the United Lounge in the East Stand.

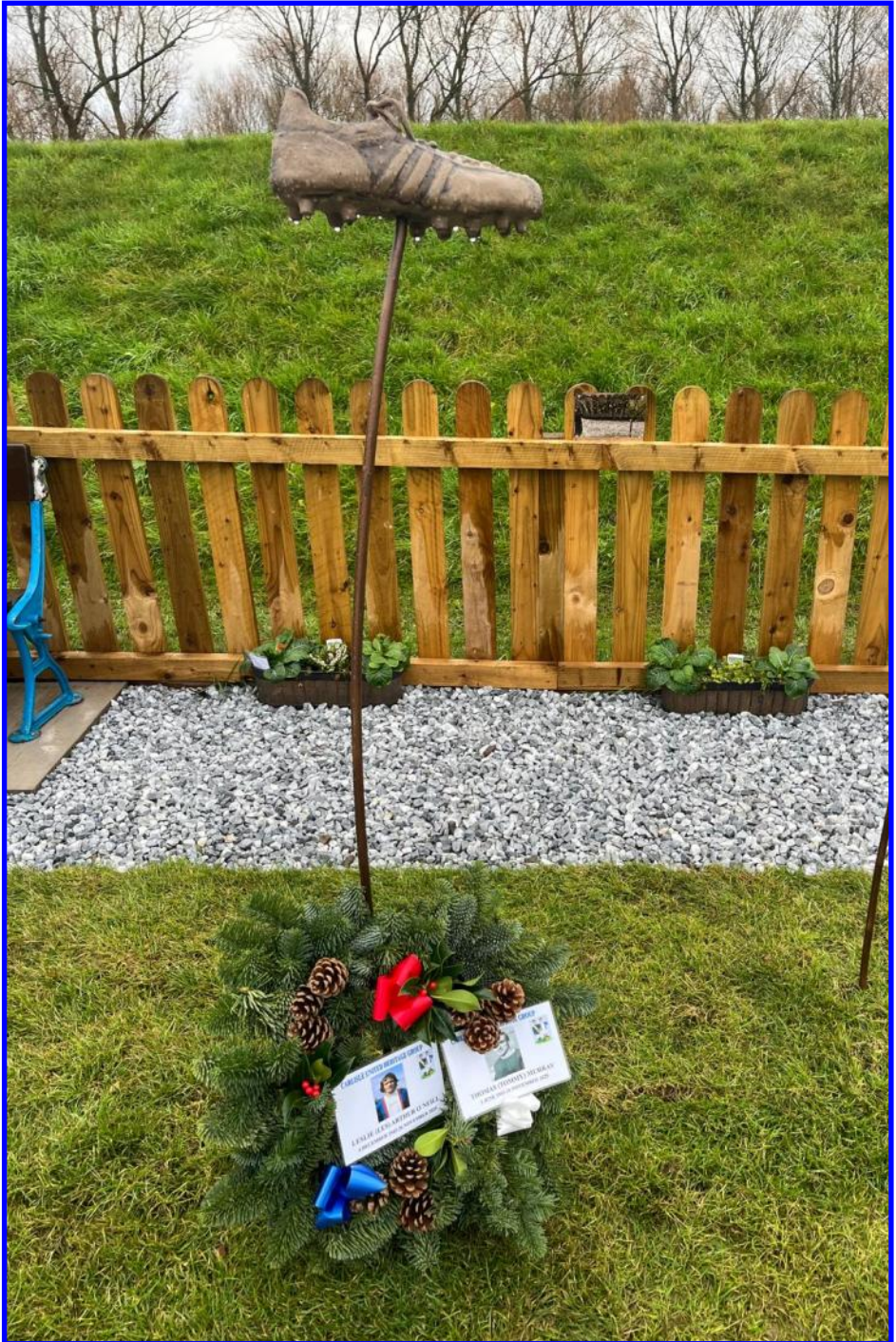
I travelled up on the Friday. Dave Croxford had organised for a crowd of us to meet in the Sportsman for drinks and then onto Casa Romana for a meal (the restaurant recommended by food critic Grace Dent that used to be her and friends "go to" before getting trashed at the Pagoda). It was fantastic meeting up with everyone and Casa Romana always provides great food and atmosphere.

Next morning I walked out of my tiny, awkward room in the Crown and Mitre to see a stunning view of the Cathedral and grounds. Later I was overlooking the Town Hall while eating a decent meal in the lovely breakfast room.

Mike Carruthers and I met up at 10.30am to head down to Brunton Park. I was really keen to visit the Memory Garden. Once there I found the space inspiring and the new art installation very fitting. Members Simon Clarkson

and then **John Notman** have been instrumental in making this such a success. People have told me how they have loved visiting the garden to remember their loved ones while others are pleased to have somewhere to remember our ex-players who have now passed. **Tommy Murray and Les O'Neill** both sadly died that week and I was very moved to watch ex-manager **Bobby Moncur** (below) lay a wreath in memory of them both. John organised this and London Branch-supported it.







The entrance to the memory garden

Roddy Collins, John Notman and Michael Knighton

Steve Hayward meets Jon McLoughlin





Now for the tour of the East Stand facilities conducted by Simon in his SLO role. Everyone seemed very impressed with the work that had been done (including I gather Michael Knighton who had left it as a shell). We visited the 1 box that is free to rent each week (the other 7 boxes were sold for the season very quickly).

The boxes are clean and bright and have a superb view of the ground and the pitch. We walked through the hospitality floor and visited the Cumbria Lounge, 1904 Lounge (fine dining), Boardroom and finally arrived in our allocated United Lounge. The rooms are very impressive – very light and airy with great views towards the river. The Boardroom has some of our iconic tro-

phies along the windows. Everywhere has high quality TVs, and bar and service facilities although a bit lacking in real ales for me.

The day we were there the club were unveiling the new Honours Board in the Boardroom that lists the owners, managers and honours of the club. **Invited for the occasion were former managers Chris Beech, Roddy Collins, Bobby Moncur and Michael Knighton (causing a little consternation to some of our members) as well as former owners John Nixon and Steve Pattison.**

Back to the United Lounge where our group were starting to feel a little squashed. Originally, we had a limit of 42 but we found that a couple of extra





tables had been brought in to accommodate changes due to the day's events. No matter we still had a great time especially when former player Steve Hayward came along for a Q&A. The food was a turkey and cranberry stuffing baguette served with shared plates of roast potatoes, brussels and



carrots. It did arrive a bit late and there were a few grumbles with the food but to be honest I thought that the food was reasonable and the price for the day very good.

Now it was match-time, we headed to our seats and then I heard "Dave" –



Tom Piatak had held up the boardroom party in the lift to say a quick hallo to me. I saw Tom when he joined us at the Weatherspoon's in Wealdstone – he really cares about the supporters and making sure that everyone feels included.

10 rows back from the pitch at the half-way live and our view was excellent. We played well without ever looking totally convincing but got the win we needed. Who knows though if Gabe hadn't saved that pen?

Full time and back to the United Lounge for mince pies.



Shortly afterwards I headed to Carlisle Station for my train to Edinburgh and a couple of days with a friend having enjoyed another great London Branch Carlisle weekend. **Thanks to all the people who made it so good!**



CUSG PREDICTION COMPETITION STANDINGS @ 7/12/25

Pos	Name	Pts		Pos	Name	Pts
1	Pete Edwards	29		31	Ken Hullock A	17
2	Dan Coughlan	28		32	Iain Davidson A	17
3	Rick Wilkes A	27		33	Martin Coughlan	16
4	Simon Clarkson A	25		34	Chris Tembey	16
5	Sandro Scapin	25		35	Mike Kilner B	16
6	Neil Nixon B	24		36	John Kukuc B	16
7	Richard Coughlan	24		37	Lee Rawcliffe LD B	16
8	Mike Kilner A	24		38	Lee Rawcliffe LD A	15
9	Ken Hullock B	23		39	Peter Koelle	15
10	Robert Calvert A	23		40	Bex Potts	15
11	John Kukuc A	23		41	Kev McGeorge	14
12	Martin Broad A	23		42	Ian Kellitt A	14
13	Lee Cragg	22		43	Jason Casey A	13
14	Ian Kellitt B	21		44	Chris Holmes B	13
15	Mike Temple	21		45	Lucas Tembey	13
16	Blake Vamadevan	21		46	Jason Casey LD	13
17	Bob Ham	20		47	Stuart Westhead LD	12
18	Dave Spencer A	20		48	Anna Jensen	11
19	Marley Vamadevan	20		49	Danny Cornwell LD	11
20	Sarah Edwards	19		50	Martin Broad B	10
21	Rick Wilkes B	19		51	Robert Calvert B	10
22	Simon Clarkson B	19		52	Martin Thomas	9
23	Dave Spencer B	19		53	Neil Nixon A	7
24	Chris Holmes A	19		53	Neill Collins	7
25	Dave Brown A	18		55	Bryan Hemingway B	5
26	Martin Lundie	18		56	Maceo Collins	5
27	Iain Davidson B	18		57	Alistair Blackett	4
28	Mark Scott	18		58	Bryan Hemingway A	3
29	Mark Temple	18		59	Dave Brown B	0
30	Andrew Fullalove	17				



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2025/26



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We have regular social events in central London, often at the Civil Service Club, off Whitehall.

Virtual Hit the Bar! carries news of all forthcoming events.



**Look out for details of matches, meeting places
and other events in Virtual HTB! or visit
[www.https://www.carlislelondonbranch.org/](https://www.carlislelondonbranch.org/)**



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