

# HIT THE BAR!



August 2025

**£1**

90 goals  
and 30 wins  
needed.  
No pressure  
lads.



# FIXTURES 25/26

## AUGUST

9 – Woking (A)

16 – Boreham Wood (H)

19 – Solihull Moors (H)

23 – Wealdstone (A)

25 – Braintree Town (H)

30 – Sutton United (A)

## SEPTEMBER

3 – Brackley Town (A)

6 – Truro City (H)

13 – Aldershot Town (H)

20 – Altrincham (A)

23 – York City (A)

27 – Rochdale (H)

## OCTOBER

1 – Hartlepool United (H)

4 – Scunthorpe United (A)

11 - FA Cup fourth round qualifying

18 – Forest Green Rovers (H)

25 – Yeovil Town (A)

## NOVEMBER

1 - FA Cup first round proper

4 – FC Halifax Town (H)

8 – Southend United (A)

15 – Eastleigh (H)

22 – Boston United (A)

29 – Tamworth (H)

## DECEMBER

6 – Woking (H)

20 – 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)

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# EDITORS BLEAT



**Welcome to the National League.** Not a first line I take any pleasure in writing, but we are very much there on merit and as the cover suggests, this isn't going to be easy.

The one positive at the back of last season was the unfailing support from the fans, both home and away. This continued into the season ticket sales and we look set to cause crowd congestion problems up and down the country. There's going to be a large London Branch following at Woking on the 9th August—it's going to be a bit of a Jam!

It's a very hectic few weeks for the branch. Following the AGM in June and then the fixture release it was clear that its going to be flat out securing and distributing tickets, finding meeting pubs in places we've not been to before or recently and providing advice to members about travel and ground access. All of which is long way of saying that Andy Hall, Anna Jensen and others have created a new Matchdays page on our website: <https://www.carlislelondonbranch.org/matchdays> This has all the information you'll need to meet up with the Branch and get to the grounds.

I'll take this opportunity to thank Tom Piatak for giving over an hour of his time to answer branch members questions in a virtual Q&A session the other week. Tom promised to try to join us pre-match in Woking. The family have said that they really enjoy and value the social side of supporting Carlisle, so we'll be letting them know our meeting pubs and plans as the season progresses.

***Up the Blues (with a little too much red for me)***

**John B**

# NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



**I worried that two consecutive relegations consigning us to non-league football would cause a bad reaction among our fanbase with a massive drop off in support and possibly some toxicity.**

Incredibly, there seems to be a fantastic level of positivity around the club with a record number of season tickets sold, shirt sales going well and 500 fans travelling to Fylde for a pre-season friendly. Certainly, Carlisle fans are going to make sure that the team will have the support to get us back into the football league.

**The London Branch will be in action very quickly with 3 major south-east games in August.** Visits to Woking, Wealdstone and Sutton are making sure that we are kept very busy.

Terry, matchday organiser and his assis-

tant Mike, have been beavering away but also meeting lots of challenges as the National League works very differently to what we are used to. This year may be difficult ticket wise with quite a few games over subscribed and information sometimes difficult to get from the away clubs. **Make sure that you are getting ticket and match information by ticking “Interested” in Match Tickets & Travel on your Membermojo account** <https://membermojo.co.uk/cusclb>. As well as ticket arrangements through the branch, some clubs will insist on you buying tickets through their website and we need to let you know that in advance.

**We will have to be strict this season for oversubscribed games; ordering only one ticket per member. Make sure that your children and partner are members and that you have funds in your Ticket Deposit Scheme account so that we can deliver to you at the same level we always have.**

It was great that Tom Piatak joined us last Thursday to provide a Q&A with members online. I wasn't able to make it, but those that did tell me that Tom was open and honest in answering questions from club ambitions to the training centre, to the squad, to the commercial side. You can view the forum here:

<https://www.carlislelondonbranch.org/piatakzoom>

If you have children (5-13), make sure that they get a “memory for life” by being a mascot at an away game. When they walk out on the pitch with their heroes, they will remember it for ever. Drop an email to [mascots@cusclb.com](mailto:mascots@cusclb.com) and let them know which match you would like to attend.

**Lots of members go to the first home game of the season** – this season Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 3pm against Borehamwood. The “Carlisle Twig” have invited members to join them for drinks on the Friday 8pm and/or pre-match 12.30pm. For details contact Mike [car-ruthers29@btinternet.com](mailto:car-ruthers29@btinternet.com)

**Branch member Neil Nixon joined his lifelong friend Ian Teasdale for a day in an ongoing fundraiser.** Ian has a stage four cancer diagnosis and is embarked on a last round of all the Wainwright fells, a project he calls Terminal Hillness.

**The aim is to raise £21,400, which**

**works out at £100 per summit, to establish a Maggie's Cancer Care base in north Cumbria,** meaning those in need of counselling or other help in the area will no longer need to travel to Newcastle to access the services. Anyone wishing to know more, or donate can find the JustGiving page by Googling "Terminal Hillness" + JustGiving or following the link:

[https://www.justgiving.com/page/terminalhillness?utm\\_medium=FR&utm\\_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/page/terminalhillness?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL)

**London Branch t-shirt on the summit of Ullock Pike alongside a Maggie's Cancer Care t-shirt.**



# MEMORY GARDEN

I don't know who had the initial idea for a memorial garden at Brunton Park but when I heard about it I just thought what a brilliant idea. Football for many is a religion and where better to go to spend a quiet moment remembering fellow supporters, relatives or friends than at our 'church'. If you haven't visited it then I do urge you to do so the next time you are in the vicinity of Brunton Park.

When the Trust announced they would be selling Memorial Plaques to be placed in the garden I was sitting on a bus going home after one or two beers with friends in the city. So as you do at those moments I posted a message on one of the branch WhatsApp Groups suggesting it would be a great idea to buy a couple of plaques for Bob Brookes & Dave Nicholson who had been stalwarts of the branch and well known to branch members and much missed by their families and friends.



I awoke to a flood of messages from the group agreeing to the suggestion and offering to help fund the cost. A testament to the high regard with which they were held. My thanks to all who contributed.

An order was duly placed and thanks to Simon we were able to take advantage of the generous discount offered to Trust members for both plaques.

It took nearly 6 months but eventually this year the plaques were erected and in time for Bobs widow Makiko to visit the garden when she travelled up to Brunton Park for the Salford victory, which was her first visit since his death.

**A special mention to Simon Clarkson & John Notman for their hard work and dedication to the garden.**

*Howard Atkinson*

# KEEP THE FAITH



**It's the start of the season and there's plenty of optimism amongst supporters for the coming campaign.**

The long awaited confirmation of Mark Hughes' appointment was announced, the new signings have been well received as have the appointment of two new coaches, a new Director of Football, a new Head of Recruitment and an experienced adviser to the Board.

The outcome of the Club's end of season review mainly confirmed that the decisions that had already been made were the right decisions. **Optimism has resulted in season ticket sales**

**being at their highest level ever.**

**Is the optimism warranted? To an extent, yes.** After all, we can't possibly be as bad as we've been for the last two seasons can we? Also, the significant changes made to the way the club is run, and to the playing side in particular, has to bear some fruit. On the other hand, after two seasons of barely winning any games it's going to be difficult to turn the ship around quickly. There was a bit of a renaissance towards the end of last season, and fortunately Mark Hughes remains as Head Coach, but the improvements in results only came in the last half a dozen games so no firm conclusions can be drawn from that.

**With new players now in we also have a squad of 28, I think. That's far too big so somehow some players on longish contracts are going to have to be moved on.** As Mark Hughes has already said, he'd have problems with too big a squad.

**A reference in the end of season review to having a club DNA is slightly worrying as the attempt to impose a style of play on the team caused us problems last season.** If brought in properly though, it can be an ad-

vantage so the way of playing is consistent through all the teams from Academy to first team. Having said that, a manager or head coach should be chosen to win matches first and foremost and circumstances at any point in time can dictate how you play.



**The club had a DNA of sorts in its golden era of the 1960's and 70's but the common thread to that was Dick Young who, despite being called the trainer, was basically the first team coach.** The style of play we had in those days was called 'push and run', more recently called pass and move. I'm not sure what

they call it nowadays - probably possession based football. The key thing is to get good footballers to play as a team. In my opinion it's good recruitment that's the key to success in football. Let's hope we're getting that right now. The signs are good.

**As for where we'll finish in the National League, it's a big ask to expect automatic promotion considering how poor our performances have been for 2 years now.**

**York City** were close to automatic promotion last season finishing well ahead of the rest of the pack in second place. They are now a well backed club financially and are likely to be even stronger this season.

**Forest Green**, who finished third last season, have a new manager in Robbie Savage, are also well backed financially and I think will challenge once again. **I'm predicting we'll finish third and hoping we can surge back into the Football League through the play offs.**

**Ken Hullock**

**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@cusclub.com](mailto:seasontickets@cusclub.com) 2 weeks in advance.** Preference will be given to those who haven't used them ever before or in the current season.

# INFORMATION POINT

Email: [content@cusclb.com](mailto:content@cusclb.com) with your contributions for our media

- ⇒ **Hit The Bar! Fanzine** – 5-6 times per season 40-60 pages. Delivered electronically but you can collect a free copy at games or pay £5 (£15 overseas) to have it posted.
- ⇒ **Weekly Virtual Hit The Bar! newsletter** – keeps you up to date with what is going on at the club and with the branch. Every Friday morning.
- ⇒ **Website** – [www.carlislelondonbranch.org](http://www.carlislelondonbranch.org) Re-vamped with everything from latest news to away day meeting places and mascots.
- ⇒ **X (Twitter)** - [@cusclbontour](https://twitter.com/cusclbontour). Lots of info and can also be used to ask questions directly of the branch.
- ⇒ **Whatsapp Groups (email [chairman@cusclb.com](mailto:chairman@cusclb.com) to be added to those you want to join giving your mobile number).**
  - **LB Carlisle Football ONLY** – lots of views and arguments about our team
  - **LB General Crack** – anything and everything discussion between members as long as it is not abusive, racist or any other ..ist.
  - **CUSCLB Matchday Travel** – details of match travel from London.
  - **CUSCLB Carlisle Social** – Cumbrian based members social group organising regular social events in Carlisle.
  - **CUFC Home and Away** – North West (Merseyside, Cheshire, Manchester) based match and social.
  - Other whatsapp groups are set up as needed e.g. annual summer trip group
  - **Instagram** – [@cusc\\_london\\_branch](https://www.instagram.com/cusc_london_branch)
  - **Facebook** – [@CUSC-London-Branch](https://www.facebook.com/CUSC-London-Branch)
  - **Youtube** – [@cusclb](https://www.youtube.com/@cusclb)
  - **Bluesky** - [@cusclondonbranch.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/cusclondonbranch.bsky.social)

# BRANCH SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING

**We are looking forward to presenting our £625 donation to James Toser – the CEO of the Carlisle United Community Sports Trust on the pitch at the first league game, from the proceeds of the 74-75 shirt sales.**

I have often said to everyone how impressed I am with CUCST – they do an enormous amount of good in Cumbria from kids' summer soccer schools, bereavement cafes, support for neuro-diverse kids at Brunton Park, armed forces' days, "girls' emerging talent" to encourage girls to play sport, "United in memories" supporting dementia. Have a look at what they do <https://www.facebook.com/cufccst/>

**We will be meeting James and his team to see what other projects we can help with for next season.**

We were delighted to provide the match worn shirt for Jack Ellis at the end of the season, which we received as sponsors, to James Stringer so that he could present it to his Mum, who taught Jack in his primary school years, for her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. James, unasked for, responded by finding a rare Carlisle shirt and presenting it to the Carlisle Collective (quite

a few are LB members) to add to the archive they are building.

**In the next season we will continue with sponsorship of Jack, the Ladies Team and have already bought two season tickets for the Paddock** (remember to use them- it will save you £13 a ticket on match day prices. Email [seasontickets@cusclub.com](mailto:seasontickets@cusclub.com).)

**We will also continue to manage the away mascots and pay for the goody bags** although Simon and Anna are not sure yet how the organisation will work in the National League which is likely to be a little less organised than the EFL.

We will be looking at ways to help the CUFC Academy next season as well.

Remember it is **your** money that we are spending supporting **our club** so feel free to tell us what you think about what we are supporting and share your ideas.





The London Branch Summer trip is now such an institution after its 45+ years existence it is hard to imagine it not happening. This year's trip to Bilbao followed the familiar theme of Friday night meal and Saturday

morning guided walk, but the tours seem to get longer and more varied.

Peter and Carolyn arrived from Santander having travelled on the ferry from Plymouth – they were heading home on

the train via San Sebastian and Bayonne. Tony and Sally drove down through France to spend a few days with Tony's sister in the Dordogne. Ken and Jean had a few days in San Sebastian before arriving while others of us had a few days afterwards there. Helen headed on to Madrid. Others stayed longer in Bilbao and had day trips to San Sebastian and Santander. Everyone commented that the trip worked really well, and they loved the region.

**There were 38 travellers including one of the branch founders, Dave Spencer, who finally decided that he trusted us enough after 50 years to come on a summer trip.** It was great to welcome Clive and Ruth on their first trip and many that hadn't been for a while like Andrew and Claire. There were a few regular travellers that couldn't make it this year for various reasons, but we were particularly sad that Amanda suffered a late injury and that Frank was still undergoing treatment for a health challenge. We kept them on the WhatsApp, and they kept in touch.

Mike Kilner provided an excellent guide to Bilbao and even organised via WhatsApp a gourmet Pintxos and Drinks Bar Tour on the Saturday night which was loved by those that went. (Note: Pintxos are the local speciality and delicious snacks available in every bar re-

sembling small tapas). Later Mike Caruthers provided another excellent guide to San Sebastian that many of us used.

I was a little concerned when I arrived in Bilbao that several early travellers had passed the designated Friday restaurant and referred to the rough looking street that it was on, with graffiti, drugs and guys hanging around. They also mentioned the dodgy bar next door. Mike, Kim, Maggie and I decided to go to the restaurant early while others were meeting for drinks to find the restaurant was not going to be ready until 30 minutes late and had to move to said dodgy bar to wait. We passed on the news to the travellers to delay and then found that Jane joined us when she arrived at the appointed time and couldn't get in. In fairness, the dodgy bar proved pretty good with decent music and good and cheap drinks.

The restaurant, when we finally got in was brilliant, with friendly service, great food including squid rice, beef cheeks and cheesecake, and freely flowing wine, beer and soft drinks. Definitely, 5 star in every way.

The next morning, we planned to meet at the Arriaga Theatre before our guided walk. To the delight of Clive and Andrew, there was a huge classic car rally on the forecourt and along the river.



**Clockwise from top:**  
**Transporter Bridge**  
**Flower Dog**  
**Oldest bar in Bilbao**  
**Bathing beauties**



We had the chance to see some amazing cars before the obligatory team photo and then split into our two tour groups for the guided walk.

**Both were great tours of the old town and along the river finishing at the legendary Guggenheim Museum.** Gillan led the first group and Saio led our group. Saio was a lovely, knowledgeable but fierce Basque who totally destroyed a street photographer with a verbal onslaught who tried to photograph us before asking permission. A highlight of the tour was a strongman contest happening in the main old town square that seemed to consist of leaping up and down with a huge rock, chopping huge pieces of wood and a massive clanging of metal bars against other metal bars. In fact, Saio did really well competing with this, a live kids show in front of the cathedral, giant stilted puppets and live and loud music that seemed to start up every time she started to give us information.

**Over the days in Bilbao people visited the amazing Guggenheim, the impressive Stadium of Athletic Bilbao (where Spurs beat Man U), went up the funicular to see fantastic views of the cities and the hills, visited the oldest transporter bridge in the world and a UNESCO heritage site (eat your heart out Newport, Middlesborough and Run-**

**corn), and even spent time on the beach – all using a great, easy and cheap transport network.** Fiona and Johan seem to be the only ones that walked across the top of the transporter while Iain and Mike paddled in the sea at the beach while Helen got her bum soaked with a wave (Iain insists that was her words). People also just got together to chat, eat and enjoy walking around the great narrow streets and feel the unique culture that is Basque.

Clive and Fiona pointed out the peaceful and daily protests that took place – Basque separatists on the Saturday, Veterinary Surgeons on the Sunday – there was even one that greeted us when we arrived in San Sebastian on the Monday.

**I spoke with so many travellers – Jon, Linda, David, Dorothy, Neil and so many more. The London Branch is lucky to have so many great people that make up our group.**

The summer trip was another huge success and I have to give a huge thanks to Howard and Mike that do all the hard work arranging these trips. They have assured me that they will be there next year so get your thinking caps on to decide the next venue for summer trip 2026. We will be asking for suggestions in the next couple of months.

Regards

# Brunton Park Diary 2024/25—THE END

To ensure you have a complete record of our fall into the National League, Mike has written this diary in two sections..

The first covers the end of the 2024/25 season, picking up the story where we left it in HTB 336. Readers of a depressive disposition may therefore choose to skip to Page 28 where the bright dawn of season 25/26 beckons.

## Mar 31st (Mon)

The next round of prospective Breezes, Ellis' and Branthwaites are selected with eight players handed full-time scholarships after navigating through the U16 age group. The names to look out for are goalkeeper **Sam Worth**, right back **William Hatton**, centre back **Olly Penney**, ex- Newcastle United centre back **Alex McDonough**, box-to-box midfielder/right back **Tai Bell**, promising winger and familiar name **William Rafferty**, skilful winger **Reuben Towers**, attacking midfielder **Zac Tonge** and winger **Amaru Smith**.

Some are clearly on a strong trajectory,

local lad **Penney** for example has been with the club since the age of 8 and has already featured heavily for the Under 18s including this season's FA Youth Cup wins against Altrincham and Barnsley while **Bell** played likewise against Altrincham and the loss to Plymouth.

The financial results for 2023/24 are published by the club, hopefully with "the Maths is the Maths" emblazoned like a comet in the sky across the hard back front cover. Headline turnover unsurprisingly hit a record level of £8.31m (up 57%) with matchday, commercial and retail income all going full Jack and the Beanstalk. Thanks to Williamson' January transfer window golden shower up the wall, transfer fee spend was up nearly 7-fold from just £78,000 in 22/3 to £491,000 while the club's total wage bill rose from £3.44m to £4.35m. Football fortune rose from £430,000 to £1.9m, generated almost entirely through player sales. Third party debt was down to £0.2m, the interest bearing Purepay debt repaid by Castle SG and then written off by the new owners.

### **Apr 1st (Tue)**

#### **CHESTERFIELD (0) 2 GABE BREEZE (0) 1**

Cumbria's number 1 prevented a cricket score in one of the most one-sided games in living memory, not helped by Embleton's cretinous early bath not long after his introduction. The early stages of the second half were equally stupendous between the quality of Breeze's shot stopping and the waywardness of the host's finishing. As the shot count approached the 40s, they finally breached the tiring Blues twice and even then, there was a late, almost surreal twist in the tale. A defensive blunder was seized on and finished well by Hugill before deep into stoppage time, Barclay did well to power a header towards the net only for a fine save to prevent an astonishing equaliser.

CUFC\*: **Breeze 8**, Davies 4, McArthur 5, Lavelle 5, Thomas 5, Whelan 4, Vela 4, Fusire 4, Harris 5, Kelly 4, Hugill 6. Subs: Embleton 1, Ellis 6, Bevan 5

### **Apr 5th (Sat)**

#### **CUFC (1) 3 NEWPORT COUNTY (2) 2**

It's 24 November 2015 with 25 minutes left on the clock and Luton Town are flying, 3-1 up against Carlisle, who had earlier levelled just before the interval through Wyke. Fourteen minutes later and Gilliead (66), Ibehre (79) and Asamoah (80) have set up a remarkable recovery, one that even the Hatters had

to doff their headwear to. Scroll forward nearly 10 years, Wyke is back at the club and United haven't won once from being two goals down in the entire time since that night in Bedfordshire.

#### **Matching the storybook team comeback was one on a personal level with Georgie Kelly finally fit, firing and showing the home fans what they've been missing through injury for most of his United career.**

It was almost the perfect line-leading performance, finishing well into the bottom corner after good interplay from Whelan and Wearne and then levelling on the hour from Fusire's pass following a half-cleared corner. United ramped up the pressure in their search for a winner, sub Hugill hitting the left-hand post with a free-kick from 30 yards before Hayden lifted the roof off Brunton Park when he slid home the winner.

CUFC\*: Breeze 6, Davies 6, Ellis 7, Thomas 6, Hayden 7, Vela 6, Whelan 6, Fusire 7, Harris 6, Wearne 6, **Kelly 8**. Subs: McArthur 6, Dennis 7

### **Apr 7th (Mon)**

A £10 ticket offer is announced for the Good Friday clash with high-flying Port Vale.

### **Apr 8th (Tue)**

#### **CUFC YTH 0 GRIMSBY TOWN YTH 2**

**Apr 12th (Sat)**

**MORECAMBE (0) 0 CUFC (1) 2**

**An outstanding team performance with Thomas, Ellis, Whelan, Hayden and Kelly all catching the eye and everyone else not far behind them, the great escape just may be on.** There

seemed only one result the moment Kelly headed home Ellis' cross for the opener. The young right-back was the creator for the second too, clipping a ball back into the box for Thomas to beat the offside trap, control and slap the ball past the keeper. Kelly was only denied a deserved brace after his late effort was ruled out for a Bevan handball in the build-up.

CUFC\*: Breeze 7, Ellis 8, Harper 7, **Thomas 8**, Hayden 8, Fusire 7, Whelan 6, Harris 7, Wearne 6, Dennis 6, Kelly 8.

**Apr 14th (Mon)**

We're fourth in the table and just outside the automatics! Unfortunately, on this occasion it's the annual agents' fees splurge table, the Blues shelling out £192,888 to players' and coaches' Mr 15% between 2 February 2024 and 3 February 2025. Even when in League One, the figure was only £62,682.

**Apr 15th (Tue)**

**PORT VALE YTH (0) 1 CUFC YTH (1) 1**

So nearly an impressive win, the home side only equalising with almost the last

kick of the game. An early 6th minute lead from Oli Penney looked to have won it with the young Blues also striking the post and going close on several occasions while Silltoe in the sticks saved a home penalty in the second half.

After 22 years as a player, former winger **Nicky Adams** announces he will hang up his boots at the end of the season to take up a full-time coaching role with Wigan. As a spoiler, Adams ends his playing days on a high after lifting the NWCFL Premier Division title with Bury.

**Apr 18th (Fri)**

After a long battle with Hodgkin lymphoma, there's very sad news at the passing of former Blue **Joe Thompson** at the age of just 36.

**CUFC (2) 3 PORT VALE (0) 2**

**Playing front-foot, aggressive and direct football, the Blues deservedly held a superb 3-0 lead only to nearly throw it away by the end, their blushes saved by Breeze's superb 92nd minute penalty stop** clinching three vital points and probably adding another chunk of cash to his transfer value in the process. Cheered on by nearly 11,000 home fans in a crowd of 12,305, the Blues ran the show for the first hour. Fusire, Whelan and Wearne were excellent in midfield with Kelly and Dennis driving defenders

to distraction up front. Three goals in just twelve barmy minutes either side of half-time from Kelly, Dennis and Hayden would surely be enough for most teams but not this Blues side, the old defensive frailties returning to set up the grandstand finish, their player very much making the most of it from Thomas' high boot.

CUFC\*: Breeze 8, Ellis 7, Harper 7, Hayden 8, Thomas 7, Whelan 8, Fusire 7, Harris 7, Wearne 7, Dennis 7, **Kelly 9**.

#### **Apr 21st (Mon)**

**ACCRINGTON STANLEY (0) 1 CUFC (0) 1**

Shorn of the suspended Dennis after a second yellow celebrating Breeze's penalty save by kicking a protein shake, **United may be drinking one in the last chance saloon in what felt like a relegation play-off, a point just not enough.** Hugill was a limited understudy, finishing weakly after being put through by Thomas in one of the few moments of note in the first half, Stanley preferring to mix it up and make the game as stop-start as possible. Their plan by and large worked and when a home cross was steered past Breeze and then big Georgie so unluckily hit their post, it looked a long way back. Whelan fortunately had other ideas, a lovely, slaloming run in injury-time matched by his finish past former Blue Kelly in the goal.

CUFC\*: Breeze 6, Ellis 6, Harper 6, Thomas 6, Hayden 6, **Whelan 7**, Fusire 6, Harris 5, Wearne 5, Hugill 5, Kelly 6. Subs: Vela 5, Embleton 5

#### **Apr 22nd (Tue)**

Jordan Irving's stunning goal sees Carlisle City claim Fred Conway Cumberland Cup glory at the expense of Penrith in front of 757 at Brunton Park. United's teenage loan defender **Josh O'Brien** featured for City.

#### **Apr 25th (Fri)**

Local main shirt sponsor Aqua Pura agree a new three-year deal with the Blues - a team of bottlers sponsoring a team of, well, every supporter can finish that sentence.

#### **Apr 26th (Sat)**

**PNE YOUTH (0) 0 CUFC YTH (0) 1**

David beats Goliath as Birch's 22nd-placed youngsters win at the 4th-placed rabble down the M6 thanks to a 70th minute goal, having also hit the bar in the first period.

**CHELTENHAM (2) 3 CUFC (1) 2**

**What's that about lightning striking twice, the same bloody team confirming a second ejection from the EFL.**

As usual it's the hope that kills you, Dennis' composed finish had set the Blues' expectant fans up for surely an

other victory. Morecambe Part II here we come. The game turned on the hapless Tom Nield, the same officiator at the Wembley Play-Off final two years earlier, awarding the hosts a spot kick after Breeze had clearly got to the ball first. It was 2-1 before they could clear their heads, Thomas unable to deal with a long ball over the top and Breeze caught in no man's land. There was still a bit of fight left from the Blues, Kelly's bandaged bonce meeting Embleton's excellent curling cross. A bit of end to end 'next goal wins' always seemed likely to fall the way of the Glos side and so it proved.

CUFC\*: Breeze 5, Ellis 6, Harper 5, Hayden 6, Thomas 5, Whelan 5, Fusire 5, Harris 6, **Wearne 7**, Dennis 6, Kelly 6.  
Subs: Vela 5, Embleton 6

#### **Apr 28th (Mon)**

The big clear out begins with **Rob Clarkson** now ex-CUFC Sporting Director, the writing and his haemoglobin on the wall almost the moment Hughes came and publicly criticised several aspects of the squad, including its fitness. Clibbo later confirms the departure as being a club decision and not one with any input from United's outside consultants.

After an outstanding season with Burnley including 29 clean sheets, former United academy keeper **James Trafford**

is named in the Championship team of the season at the EFL Awards. United's Community Sports Trust also made it onto the shortlist for the Green Club Award, thanks to their Komatsu Climate Heroes project.

Former loan midfield wizard **Adam Clayton** is appointed as permanent player-gaffer of NPL East Division side Matlock Town having joined the Gladiators as player-coach last October.

#### **May 2nd (Fri)**

Having airbrushed CUFC from his CV, ex-coach **Jake Simpson** becomes the new head of sport science at Scottish Premiership side Kilmarnock after his recent stint assisting Dan Kirkup at Carlisle City.

#### **May 3rd (Sat)**

##### **CUFC YTH (1) 3 ROCHDALE YTH (2) 4**

Rigby, Smith and Lowes were the scorers in an end of season goal jamboree that left the Blues 22nd out of the 25 teams with a record of W6 D6 L12.

##### **CUFC (2) 2 SALFORD (1) 2**

No winners over the 90 minutes apart from the Spireites, who benefitted from Salford's two dropped points to sneak into the play-offs. The chant of "Mark Hughes' blue and white army" around the ground at full-time suggested the fans have made their mind up on the

pending managerial decision, even if a 'lap of appreciation' felt barely deserved to some regulars. With Cole 'fifty pence foot' Stockton spurning various chances, United made them pay by scoring twice in as many minutes through Wearne and Dennis with Fusire and Ellis for not the first time, getting the assists. Fifty pence foot was unfortunately able to use his head instead to pull one back and not unlike the Vale match, the Blues went from being in control to needing to be watched though the fingers of a raised hand. The inevitable equaliser seemed to give United a second wind and Kelly was only denied by an excellent save just inside the post when causing chaos in the penalty area after Ellis' looping cross had found him.

CUFC\*: Breeze 7, Ellis 6, Harper 6, Thomas 6, Hayden 6, Whelan 6, Fusire 7, **Harris 7**, Wearne 7, Dennis 7, Kelly 6.  
Subs: Hugill 6, Embleton 6, Guy 6

\*\*\*\*\*

**News and Star (JC) average ratings from the 2024/25 league season (min. 12 starts in rated games):**

**GABE BREEZE – 6.2**

KADEEM HARRIS – 6.1

SAM LAVELLE – 5.9

AARON HAYDEN – 5.9

TERELL THOMAS – 5.8

CALLUM WHELAN – 5.8

STEPHEN WEARNE – 5.8

ARCHIE DAVIES – 5.6

JON MELLISH – 5.5

DOMINIC SADI – 5.5

CAMERON HARPER – 5.5

HARRISON NEAL – 5.5

HARRY LEWIS – 5.5

HARRISON BIGGINS – 5.3

JORDAN JONES – 5.3

LUKE ARMSTRONG – 5.3

BEN BARCLAY – 5

JOSH VELA – 5

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### **THE END OF SEASON SUMMARY**

aka The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, includes a remarkable average home league gate of **7,425**, their second-highest average home attendance for 17 years despite being relegated from the EFL. Even the League Two title-winning 2005/06 season only attracted an average 7,218 fans per game, the figure being United's fourth best average crowd since 1976/77.

**Matt Dennis finished as United's leading marksman with six goals in 11 starts (+3 sub), the lowest tally ever for the club's top scorer in a season.** Next came Kelly with five and Lavelle with four.

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***Mike Kilner***

# COLLECTIVE MEMORIES



**With the highly successful Backing the Blues exhibition closing at Tullie it seemed as good a time as any for Mike Carruthers & Howard Atkinson to meet with the curator of the project, Tim Mills (above) to chat about the exhibition and where it goes in the future.**

Tim was born in Swindon, well somebody has to be, in 1981 but grew up in Cirencester so at the time had little interest in football. Then came the 1990 Italy World Cup which grabbed his attention. His dog is even named after Enzo Scifo. The cinematic nature of the coverage and the theatre of it. The first game between Italy & Came-

ron had the 3 consecutive tackles that took out Caniggia which was like performative dance. He loved the late great Schillaci and Gazza and his tears. It was the first time he felt the emotion of football.

He got a membership card for Swindon in 1990 and his first game was a 2-1 defeat by Port Vale at home. He was hooked by the excitement of being at a stadium. The smells & the sounds gripped him rather than the football. He has no interest in tactics but its going to a stadium that he loves. He had a gran who lived in Birkenhead and he visited frequently so he became interested in Liverpool. His gran sent him cuttings of John Barnes in particular.

He then moved to Plymouth for 12 years and every so often he went to their home games. He would walk to stadium through the park and enjoy the experience of going to a pub for a couple of pints. Then the mass walk to the stadium was exhilarating.

**He only found out about the Backing the Blues project quite late in the day due to being fully engaged in another project. He spotted an advert in Arts**

**Jobs for a curator for a football exhibition. It was his dream job as he loves football, museums & art galleries.**

He had visited the city in 2015 for a conference. He felt Carlisle was quite similar to Cirencester which made him feel at home in some ways. He lives in Birmingham so he had a bit of a commute but he loves trains and the strangeness of the countryside was very appealing though not so much in the winter. His



first visit to the archive saw him overwhelmed by the material. Then he met John Notman whose first observation was 'you are not from Carlisle'! A tricky time but he came to realise there was no malice behind Nottys comment its just how he is.

But he believes it was important that an outsider took the curator role as it gave distance from the Club and helped objectivity. It prevented oversentimentality.

A lot of the groundwork to identify key themes had already been done by the collective \*. But he was staying to up to 10.00 pm every night reviewing material especially photographs. A lot of discussion with collective about the key events and people. Constant thinking and rethinking of ideas. They had only 6 weeks to create the exhibition which was an insanely short timescale. Normally you get at least a year!

**He remembered crying in front of everyone at a meeting because he was so overwhelmed by the content, the time-scale & the passion and enthusiasm of the collective.** He was determined to make the exhibition worthy of the material and those involved and make sure it exceeded what he felt were low expectations from some in the city. He wanted to challenge and subvert a commonly held beliefs and create a contemporary art exhibition in disguise where we use football as a conduit to explore human experience. It would always engage Carlisle United fans as they were always going to come but he wanted to draw in non fans. Subvert & challenge

peoples expectations which he believes the exhibition achieved.

The collective were the key to the project to him. He only spent 2 or 3 days a week in the city so he had to concentrate on the members of the collective and university staff who were seconded to the project and allowed the best reproduction of the photos and other material.

He had to bring key organisations together who had never worked together before. Cooperation was the key thing.

The primary relationship he had was with the collective. He remembers suggesting to David Steele that he appear on Mastermind only for David to modestly and quietly point out he was on the show in 1990!

There were frustrations that mainly were caused by the severe time constraints but caused him a few moments when one or other of the collective wanted to tell a story around an exhibit and they really didn't have time for it. But he has loved the experience. The WhatsApp group was very enjoyable. He is a fairly solitary person often working by himself but he found it very rewarding to be working as a group and to bounce ideas off each other

He visited the Fan Zone for the Euros and found that very useful. He has thrown himself into the city and tried to get under the skin of the city and be fully immersed in the area. He felt the good vibes and the friendliness and openness of the people of the city. Openness and honesty were a feature

of the work on the exhibition.

It was a big experiment and helped to justify things they had to leave out. Although there was a moment when he wondered how he would fill the space. With about 3 weeks to go before going live David Steele had mentioned that we should exhibit things within living memory which he felt was right. People have a much deeper connection to things they have experienced. It was important to enable fans and others to see themselves in the exhibition which enables people to feel valued and invested and that its for them and they tell their mates about it. He wanted it to be more than a few shirts and balls. Lets take a creative risk. Colin Cowx files was a great example. Around 90 files formed a contemporary piece of sculpture which represented Colins devotion, passion & commitment. Lisa Holmes wedding dress was another he loved. His favourite exhibit was probably the 'Carlisle was made for me and I was made for Carlisle' banner.

### **How did you feel on the opening night?**

He felt it was a super positive evening. Clearly it wasn't quite what some people were expecting which was a good thing. It was good to see everyone dressed up. He was supposed to be on holiday with his partner but had to move it to be able to attend the opening. Though it did enable them to visit the Lake District. Great turnout with ex players and managers.

As the exhibition progressed the most satisfying element has been watching the collective members owning the pro-

ject and watching their confidence growing such that they gave gallery tours which most wouldn't have done prior to the exhibition. Watching children visiting on Thursday to meet the players was heartwarming. The magic of football was in evidence.

The inclusion of the Women's team and location opposite the men's team was very important to him.

**There was a lot of local media interest to show the importance of the exhibition and provided needed publicity. It also enhanced the confidence of the collective to give interviews to the media.**

**A bit of fun was also in evidence. Trying to break the run of poor results led to the publicity given to Nottys lucky scarf. John was reluctant to get in-**



**volved but he did so and enjoyed the feedback.**

When the players visited the gallery there was a real buzz as lots of kids attended. He also saw a lot of people who would never normally visit a museum which was very satisfying.

It was recurring theme of visitors asking about friends and relatives who had played for Carlisle which he thought was very satisfying. It opens up a new space of enquiry and relationship building. He rejoined Facebook purely to see what people were posting about finding themselves in pictures etc.

The exhibition closed at Tullie in November and has now gone on the road. This was a requirement for getting the funding. He wanted to respect what we had achieved with the exhibition and keep up the standard and not make it a box ticking exercise.

The plan was to link exhibits with specific sites. The cathedral was chosen as one site to reflect that football is a religion. Its quite playful. The Kev Beattie material naturally belonged at Botcherby Community Centre. 7 or 8 sites were chosen. The Kings Head pub has a display and also the pub sign was temporarily changed to a picture of Michael Knighton with his lips to the 1994/5 Division 3 Trophy.

He has tried to equip the collective with the skills and infrastructure to archive material and move things forward. Derek had idea about putting together specific displays in the away end about past fixtures of the team being played

that week with a special slideshow in the away concourse and in the directors boardroom. This was successfully trialled at the Swindon away game.

How does the exhibition compare with other projects you have worked on? It's a unique experience and a dream job that has been far and away the most enriching and rewarding job he has ever worked on. Absolutely loved the whole experience which was uniquely special.

Carlisle United are now the first result he looks for. He now has a wonderful knowledge of the past history but little about the current. He subscribes to CUTV to listen to live games and enjoys the Brunton Bugle podcast. He is not super tribal with football but he now has a strong connection to the Club and to the city.

To conclude he has been obsessed with the project since May and it will be very strange not to be travelling up to the city. Walking through Rickerby Park to the museum or visiting the Kings Head will be moments he will miss amongst many others. Its been an obsession but the city and the club will always have a special place in his heart.

***Mike Carruthers & Howard Atkinson***



## The Carlisle Collective

The collective are a group of volunteers who have been heavily involved in the collation, recording and archiving of the vast number of donations of material that constituted the exhibition. Several are branch members and the full roll of honour is:-

Simon Clarkson

Mike Carruthers

Mike Cheshire

John Notman

David Steele

Derek Paterson

Barbara Abbott

John Priddle

Joun Waugh

Richard Sunderland

Ron Maddison

Terry McCarthy



# Brunton Park Diary

## 2025/26

### THE ONLY WAY IS UP?

#### May 9th (Fri)

Cumbria's answer to Batman and Robin, manager **Darren Edmondson** and his assistant in tights **Richard Prokas**, see the bat signal above the Workington Reds stadium and answer their call to come back for another spell. Their departure leaves Penrith looking for a new managerial team.

#### May 10th (Sat)

Existing season ticket holders will see an extra saving (6 v 5 games in 24/5) if renewing for the National League campaign, a bargain given the number of drubbings United will be handing out to various villages and small towns next season. The new season ticket holders saving goes from 3 to now 4 games while general match ticket pricing is unchanged.

#### May 12th (Mon)

Altrincham director of football and ex-loan full-back **Marc Tierney** is appointed as United's new head of football operations. The 39-year-old will look after recruitment, topping up the biscuit tin,

and medical, with a remit covering the first team through to the academy. Along with the Blues back in 2004/5, Tierney's league career included spells with Oldham, Shrewsbury Town, Colchester United, Norwich City and Bolton Wanderers. After retiring ten years ago through injury, he's worked in scouting and recruitment as an independent consultant.

#### May 14th (Wed)

Not too much to cover from the latest CUSG meeting. Replacement dug outs hopefully in place in time for the start of next season - the old ones were starting to crumble in the face of the abuse hurled from the Paddock at Williamson-ball - is about as exciting as it gets although hold on folks, the new stand banners are likely to feature club legends rather than the playing squad with the Trust and CUSG involved in the selection.

#### May 16th (Fri)

There are no big surprises as the club announces its list of players checking into Hotel Du One, the departures of recent skippers **Guy** and **Lavelle** argua-

bly the closest to having a case. As expected, **Dennis** and **Harris** are offered new deals although few realistically believe they'll sign them, even if on good terms. Rejuvenated since Hughes' appointment, **Ellis** is the sole player to have his extension option activated while **Jake 'the tank' Allen** also received a thumbs up over his pro contract.

Players released: **Ben Barclay, Taylor Charters, Anton Dudik, Paul Dummett, Callum Guy, Sam Lavelle, Dylan McGeouch and Josh Vela**

Loan players returning to their parent club: **Joe Bevan, Sean Fusire, Joe Hugill and Charlie McArthur**

Scholars who were offered and have accepted professional deals: **Jake Allan, Sam Hetherington and Dan Hopper**

Scholarships extended for a third year: **Freddie O'Donoghue and Thomas Randall**

Elsewhere, ex-loan centre half **Tom Anderson** leaves promoted Donny for the security of a two-year deal with League Two bound Shrewsbury Betting Syndicate FC. Former midfielder **Adam Murray** decides not to extend his managerial stay with National League South club Eastbourne Borough for family reasons.

### **May 17th (Sat)**

Diary regular **Richard Keogh** leaves the Donkey Lashers to become assistant boss at Barnsley under the recently appointed Conor Hourihane.

### **May 19th (Mon)**

Having completed his task to perfection, Bantams Secret Agent **Greg Abbott** is the latest to be pogoed from the backroom as his much-anticipated departure from the Head of Recruitment role is confirmed.

### **May 20th (Tue)**

Fresh from his last role, **Adam Murray** joins Kidderminster as their new manager.

### **May 22nd (Thu)**

Season ticket sales go past 1,500.

### **May 25th (Sun)**

The Blues are linked with a move to Fylde's highly rated midfielder **Nick Haughton**. The 30-year-old has previous league experience with Fleetwood and Salford and finished with 19 goals from 45 NL games, despite Fylde's relegation.

### **May 28th (Wed)**

Season ticket sales go past 2,000.

Ex-assistant boss **Ian Watson** is appointed boss of National League North club

South Shields, quitting his coaching position at MK Dons in the process.

### May 29th (Thu)

“And Elvis has left the building” or Brentford to be precise with news that they are looking for a new head of individual player development following ex-gaffer **Steven Pressley’s** decision to go.

Former Curle era young’un **Cameron Salkeld** joins National League North and recent FA Trophy finalists Spennymoor Town.



### May 30th (Fri)

Prolific 28-year-old forward **Regan Linney** becomes Sparky’s first summer signing, joining on a three-year deal for an undisclosed fee from fellow NL side Altrincham. Well known to Tierney, Linney made the league’s team of the season after hitting 24 goals to lift his total

for them to 42 goals in 91 NL appearances after joining them in early 2023 from FC United of Manchester. Altrincham reportedly knocked back a 150k offer from another club in January after putting a 250k price tag on him.

Peter Murphy’s Queen of the South hand former loan **Taylor Charters** a contract, allowing the people of Dumfries the enjoyment of watching him flit in and out of the side for the next couple of years.

Football League World report that Notts County, Fleetwood Town, Walsall and Port Vale have all submitted offers to woo **Dennis** from United.

### Jun 2nd (Mon)

‘Elvis’ is back in the building, this time at Dundee in his first dugout hotseat role since departing the Blues back in November 2019.

If two partners ever deserved each other it’s Crypto Crawley and **Harry McKirdy** as he presumably joins on school-boy forms.

The mighty Blyth Town at step 26 is the latest destination of former forward **Sam Fishburn**, following his end of season release from Scunny.

Ex-coach and now ex-Gateshead FC manager **Carl Magnay** hands in his resignation and the keys to his sponsored scooter with the troubled club. A couple of days later seems him announced as the new assistant to new South Shields manager **Ian Watson**.

### **Jun 3rd (Tue)**

The club announce sailing past the 2,500-season ticket mark.

United's pre-season will start with behind closed doors game against Scottish Premiership side Motherwell on Tuesday, July 8 followed by a second "Oi no peeking, eff off" fixture against an unnamed side on 12 July. See end for the remaining fixtures.

New Kilmarnock boss Stuart Kettlewell tweets (and then deletes) a post saying he was offered the United job shortly after leaving Motherwell around the time of MW's booting.

### **Jun 4th (Wed)**

The rumour mill gets it right as **Dennis** turns down staying with United to sign a three-year deal at Notts County.

### **Jun 9th (Mon)**

The 3,000-season ticket mark is passed.

Ex-Blue **Patrick Brough** completes a

move to CUFC Retirement Home Tranmere Branch on a two-year deal, turning down a come-back-and-train offer from current club Northampton Town.

### **Jun 10th (Tue)**

Although no longer able to make the finals, **Thomas** helps Saint Lucia defeat Barbados 2-1 in their latest World Cup Qualifier.

### **Jun 11th (Wed)**

The first details surrounding the club's top-to-bottom review undertaken in conjunction with General Sports Worldwide and Reed Consulting are published. **Jamie Devitt** will return to his Academy role and **Jack Cudworth** joins permanently as Head of Goalkeeping. The highly experienced **Paul Hart** (Dirty Leeds, Forest, the Wendies etc.) is being brought in as a new advisor to the club's board. Hart had been out of football since last August after leaving his assistant manager role at Charlton Athletic.

Former front man **Tristan Abrahams** could be lining up against the Blues next season as he signs for the almost ironically nicknamed 'Shots'.

### **Jun 12th (Thu)**

Forgotten man **Will Patching** may be the first victim of the review's findings into the club's fitness (or lack of) as he's

shipped out to Northern Irish side Coleraine FC on loan until the end of the season with a recall option in January.

**Morgan Feeney's** Wiki page gets an interesting edit as rumours swirl to him rejoining the Blues:

## Morgan Feeney

Article Talk



**Morgan Feeney** AKA "The ginger Maldini" (born 8 February 1999) is an English professional footballer who plays as a defender for HMS WALK THE NATIONAL LEAGUE. Otherwise known as Carlisle United.

Morgan Feeney	
Personal information	
Full name	Morgan Feeney <sup>[1]</sup>
Date of birth	8 February 1999 (age 26)
Place of birth	Bootle, England
Height	6 ft 3 in (1.90 m)
Position(s)	Defender

### Jun 13th (Fri)

Ex-academy central defender **Jack Dickinson** signs for the Edmondson's Jameaters while free-agent **Gethin Jones** joins MK Franchise after leaving Bolton Wanderers.

### Jun 16th (Mon)

Old boy **Ashley Nadesan**, fresh from his release from the Gills, could be renewing acquaintances as he joins Sutton United on a one-year deal with the option of a one-year extension.

### Jun 17th (Tue)

The rumours prove true as the Blues again prove that they do love an old boy by announcing the return of the Ginger Maldini aka **Morgan Feeney** on a two-year deal following his release from Shrewsbury Betting Syndicate FC.



**Tomas Holy** signs for Czech National Football League (second tier) side SK Artis Brno for one year with an option.

In a sentence nobody thought plausible, ex-loanee **Tyler Burey** could be com-

peting in the qualifying stages of the Champions League after he signs for Bosnian champions Zrinjski Mostar.

### **Jun 18th (Wed)**

Respected recruitment guru **Martin Foyle** agrees to leave Scottish Premiership side St Mirren to head the same role with the Blues. Foyle played over 900 games at the likes of top-tier Oxford Utd, Southampton and Blackburn before a ten-year managerial career and his more recent incarnation as head of recruitment at the likes of Northampton and Motherwell.

### **Jun 19th (Thu)**

Clearly not doing it for the money, **Jack Stretton** joins crisis club Morecambe on a one-year deal following his summer departure from Burton Albion.

### **Jun 23rd (Mon)**

Fight club founder **Canice Carroll** moves to Chippenham Town following his release last month from Oxford City after 125 appearances and seven goals.

Former Blues right-back **Gary Miller** becomes the new head of youth academy and emerging talent at Scottish Championship side Greenock Morton following a similar role with Alloa Athletic.

### **Jun 24th (Tue)**

26-year-old speedster **David Ajiboye** will be looking to become the new Rod Thomas (and not Garry Worrall) after being allowed to join the Blues from Peterborough United on a two-year deal. Ajiboye has had various encounters with United in the past including Sutton United, the Posh and more recently, the weird mob from south Wales. He was also included in the Vanarama National League Team of the Season XI in 2020/1 as part of Sutton's promotion campaign.

Former bench warming defender **Seán Grehan** gets a big move to Donny Rovers on a three-year deal following a successful loan season with former club Bohemians whilst still on Palace's books. The 21-year-old also recently captained the Republic of Ireland U21s.

Another almost eye-rubbing move is fellow ex-splinter chaser and free agent **Max Crocombe** getting a deal with Championship side Millwall after departing Burton. The Curle era keeper only played four EFL Trophy games for United.

### **Jun 25th (Wed)**

22-year-old fleet-footed, right-sided winger **Junior Luamba** becomes United's fourth signing as he exits stage left from Salford City on a two-year deal for an undisclosed fee. Known for his strong



work ethic, which is how players who run around like headless chickens are often labelled, Luamba spent part of last season on loan to York City where he made 18 appearances, netting once, with two assists. Given the physical nature of the National League, it's said that Junior will relish that side of the challenge and has the strength and athleticism to more than handle himself.

**The widely leaked new home kit for next season is officially revealed to a Marmite-like scale of love & hate opinions.** The latter are dominated by the prolific amount of red in the kit, lending 11 players resembling a 1970s, drug-fuelled advert being filmed for Aquafresh toothpaste. Others appreciate the chance to deviate from plain blue

and particularly the direct homage to the iconic 1994/95 'deckchair army' green, red and white striped away kit with blue substituting green. It's blue shorts and socks again while the home keeper kit appears to be in Starburst/Opal Fruit lime green.

### Jun 26th (Thu)



20-year-old left-back **Sam Murray** is brought in on a one-year deal. The ex-Man Utd former England youth international was released over the summer after seven EFL Trophy including their 2-1 win at Brunton Park back in August 2022. He was also part of their 2021/22 FA Youth Cup winning team alongside Kobbie Mainoo and Alejandro Garnacho.

### Jun 27th (Fri)

Season ticket sales (3,236 with a month to go) surpass last season's total of 3,221.

Ex-Blue **Elliot Watt** signs for Motherwell on a two-year deal after his exit from Burton Albion while another former loan player, **Max Ehmer**, joins National League South club Ebbsfleet United following his release from Gillingham.

### Jun 29th (Sun)

Beech-era midfielder **Joe Riley** hangs onto his National League status by making a move to Tamworth from AFC Fylde.

### Jun 30th (Mon)

It's all change in the dugout, **Glyn Hodges** sadly departing due to the impact on his family life with the amount of travelling involved. In his place arrives **Frankie McAvoy** and the familiar face of **Gavin Skelton**.

51-year-old experienced coach McAvoy has held first team coaching roles at Hamilton, Norwich and Preston NE including a moderately successful spell as head coach. His most recent role was at AFC Fylde as interim assistant coach, which ran from March until the end of the 24/5 season.

The fans' reaction to ex-Blue **Offy Zanzala** signing for NL North side Chester City is a thing of beauty, various AFC Fylde supporters enjoying the pile on.



**Ben Barclay** follows in the footsteps of Gary Dicker, joining hometown club Brighton & Hove Albion as an over-age player and mentor with the Seagulls' under-21s and possibly signalling his retirement from the senior game in the process.

### Jul 2nd (Wed)

United's pre-leaked away kit gets its

official launch with the black, mint green, grey and white number with black shorts and black socks generally getting the thumbs up. The away keeper strip suitably designed to make the eyes of opposition strikers bleed is a dark pink colour.

### **Jul 3rd (Thu)**

The bookies' odds for Celtic retaining their title are slashed with news **Mike Williamson** is appointed first-team coach with Glasgow Rangers, where his mate Russell Martin is the manager - well, he will be until November.

Former Blue and Monkey Hangers legend **Gary Liddle** becomes their lead professional development phase coach, while remaining as manager of NPL Premier club Whitby Town.

### **Jul 4th (Fri)**

The man who put the "NO!! MAN!!!?" in Norman is back in football with news that former gloveman **Magnus Norman** has signed for Isthmian League side St Albans City FC following his release from Oldham Athletic.

### **Jul 5th (Sat)**

**RANGERS ACADEMY XI (1) 6 CUFC ACADEMY XI (1) 3 – YTH PS FRIENDLY**

Up against a strong team further into their season with Scottish U19 interna-

tionals in their line-up, CUFC used rolling subs to give the full squad including several U16s a run out, which eventually showed as the scoreline went from 1-1 to 5-1 in the space of 12 second-half minutes. The goals came from Atkinson, scoring from a half-cleared corner, Towers, with the goal of the game rifling into the top corner from distance, and Mason, tapping home after great work by Smith, as United never gave up and made a fist of it.

### **Jul 8th (Tue)**

**MOTHERWELL (0) 1 CUFC (0) 0 – PS FRIENDLY (BCD)**

A tough first-time trot for several new faces against a Premiership team returning to competitive action the coming weekend. In a game of few clear chances, the Well won through an undisputed second-half penalty following Breeze's leg sweep straight out of Mortal Kombat.

CUFC (first half) - Lewis, Williams, Atkinson, Hayden, Harper, Whelan, Hetherington, Hopper, Embleton, Armstrong, Linney

CUFC (second half) - Breeze, Davies, Ellis, Thomas, Murray, Robson, Ajiboye, Luamba, Lowes, O'Donoghue, Scott

CUFC give the National League Cup a big

raspberry and decide not to enter the competition.

**Sam Lavelle** and **Dylan McGeouch** feature for the PFA XI in a pre-season game against Worksop Town in a bid to retain fitness and put themselves in the shop window. Others in the camp but not involved include former Blues **Sam Cosgrove**, **Paul Dummett**, and as it later turns out, **Kadeem Harris**.

### **Jul 9th (Wed)**

#### **CELTIC ACADEMY XI (0) 1 CUFC ACADEMY XI (0) 0 – YTH PS FRIENDLY**

A very good effort from the youth team with key players Atkinson and Lowes rested after playing 24 hours earlier against Motherwell with the first team. Eight of the starting XI were under 17's with 2 under 16's on the bench, including the highly rated Wade and Boertien, one of Paul's lads.

The local player roundabout is in working order, former youth player **Keelan Leslie** returning to the Jameaters after a spell with Carlisle City while City pick up another ex-Blue **Jordan Holt**, who returns from Gretna 2008.

33-year-old former United striker **Ryan Bowman** sets up house on the naughty step, banned from football for three-and-a-half years after admitting making

6,397 bets on football between June 2015 and September 2023 including bets against Shrewsbury when he was playing for them. Makes you wonder how many balls he headed to be that daft.

### **Jul 10th (Thu)**

The well-travelled **Nahki Wells** joins Luton Town after his release from Bristol City where he scored 10 goals in 43 games last season, taking his EFL onion bag tally to 174 – and still not rated by Greg Abbott.

### **Jul 11th (Fri)**

26-year-old **Josh Grant** is Hughes' latest recruit, joining on a one-year contract with an option for a further year. Grant started at Chelsea's academy and had loans with Yeovil Town and Plymouth Argyle before a permanent move in 2020 to Bristol Rovers, featuring in their promotion-winning League Two campaign. Leaving last summer, the defensive midfielder was picked up and played well for Wealdstone in the NL. Known to new head of recruitment Martin Foyle, he was invited up for a trial when the team returned to training and impressed sufficiently to earn a deal.

Big Nige lays out the danger of a second season in the NL when it comes to the



academy. Not only is the academy's funding halved, the prescribed compensation if a player left to go up the pyramid - which is already buttons - no longer applies, and they could potentially leave for nothing.

**Jul 12th (Sat)**

**CUFC ACADEMY XI (2) 3 MIDDLESBROUGH ACADEMY XI (1) 2 – YTH PS FRIENDLY**

An impressive defeat of the highly rated Smoggies capped off the first-ever fixture played on the Blues' immaculate new Sheepmount training pitches. The highly rated Olly Penney grabbed a brace with Lewis Lambert getting the other. It could easily have been more with Mason seeing his penalty saved and Rigby striking the woodwork.

**NEWCASTLE XI (1) 4 CUFC XI (0) 0 - PS FRIENDLY (BCD)**

The few members in the squad used to a gentle 45 minutes' work out at this stage against maybe Penrith or Kendal were probably puffing their cheeks at the sight of Eddie Howe bringing down a large contingent of the Barcodes first-team squad to face United. Only a Sean Longstaff goal separated the teams in the first half with Embleton sending in two excellent set-pieces as the Blues threatened. It took over an hour of play for the second to arrive with Joelinton, Jacob Murphy and Parkinson late on, adding a gloss to the scoreline.

New signing Grant didn't feature together with five other expected starters when fully fit and firing - Feeney, Da-

vies, Jones, Kelly and Wyke.

NUFC (first-half): Pope, Trippier, Lascelles, Murphy, Shahaar, Longstaff, Miley, Willock, Sanusi, Neave, Osula

NUFC (second-half): Ruddy, Ashby, Botman, Schar, Targett, Hernes, Joelinton, White, Barnes, Murphy, Parkinson

CUFC (first-half): Breeze, Allan, Ellis, Thomas, Harper, Whelan, Lowes, Luamba, Embleton, Armstrong, Linney

CUFC (second-half): Lewis, Williams, Atkinson, Hayden, Murray, Robson, Ajiboye, Hetherington, Wearne, Scott, O'Donoghue

### **Jul 15th (Tue)**

#### **CARLISLE CITY XI (3) 5 CUFC YTH XI (1) 1 - YTH PS FRIENDLY**

Missing a number of key players training and playing with the first team including O'Donoghue, Lowes, Atkinson and Randall, it was a bit of a shock to the system coming up against hardened seniors. It had all started so well, Lambert's 11<sup>th</sup> minute goal for the Blues coming after his initial shot was saved and able to pass the ball into the empty net on the rebound. The City goals came from expected routes; some were down to not dealing with long balls, others to defensive naivety and overplaying out from the back when there were better options. United did howev-

er, manage to finish the game strongly and created several good chances.

### **Jul 16th (Wed)**

The first 'Dazone' moan and certainly not the last with the trip to Wealdstone on Saturday 23 August shunted back to a 5:30pm kick-off at after being selected for coverage on DAZN.

### **Jul 17th (Thu)**

**Luke Plange's** Mr 15% does it again, earning every penny as he gets his 22-year-old former Blue client (I refuse to use the word "striker") an eye-watering three-year deal with Swiss Super League side Grasshopper Zurich.

### **Jul 18th (Thu)**

Ex-United treatment table roomie **Arthur Gnahoua** signs for National League North Southport, where the Pressley-era winger will be waving for a ball from former loan midfielder Sonny Hilton.

Former loan striker **Brad Young** packs his golf clubs and joins UAE Pro League side FC Baniyas.

### **Jul 19th (Sat)**

#### **CLEATOR MOOR XI (0) 2 CUFC ACADEMY XI (2) 4 – YTH PS FRIENDLY**

Mason, Rigby grabbed the first-half goals with no report on events in the second period.

## **AFC FYLDE XI (0) 0 CUFC XI (2) 2 - PS FRIENDLY**

Plenty of positives with clearly still some areas to work on was the general verdict as fans finally got their first chance to see their heroes this season. Cumbrians love their sheep so appropriately 'BAA' aka 'Born Again Armstrong' looked like the lean, mean, scoring machine we originally hoped we were getting in the January 2024 transfer window, smashing in the first early on. Linney was effective on his left and capped a good performance with a fine second cutting inside the defender and burying his shot.

The quick feet of Ajiboye on the right caused some problems and although he helped create the first, there's hopefully more to come with his final delivery. The other main talking point was central defender Hayden Atkinson, promoted from the youth team and giving the kind of assured performance that sometimes MIA from his defensive name-sake. With Callum Whelan-n'-dealin' pulling the midfield strings and Embleton reading the room and looking like he might give a fig this season, there's the nucleus of a good team there. Harper may have a battle on his hands to keep the left-back shirt out of Murray's mints, sorry, mitts and there were useful half hour cameos from the returning

Kelly, Luamba and Davies.

The Sparky post-match knock update reveals Jones' absence is down to a couple of injury setbacks in training and not as rumoured, a move elsewhere. Feeney picked up an injury in the first week but should be back on the grass in the next couple of weeks, they are just being over-cautious. Wearne went over on his ankle during the Wales training trip but should be back soon while the only potential long termer is the unlucky Sam Hetherington, who needs a scan after a nasty injury suffered in the Newcastle United friendly. Scott went off late with a gashed ankle and Allan missed the game with a minor knock.

Loaned out more times than a library book, **Joe Hugill** joins Barnet from Man Utd for the season. The Bees gaffer promptly compares Hugill's playing style to Jamie Vardy. I'll have a pint of what he's drinking.

## **Jul 22nd (Tue)**

### **SOUTH SHIELDS (0) 1 CUFC XI (1) 2 – PSF**

There was a good report courtesy of Rob76 from the *Buzz Is Back* forum, capturing the key points:

"Loved the ground, full of character and characters. The lady selling the pro-



**Regan Linney celebrates scoring at AFC Fylde.**

**David Ajiboye on the wing in the same match.**

**A game for Harry Lewis and Elliot Embleton at South Shields.**



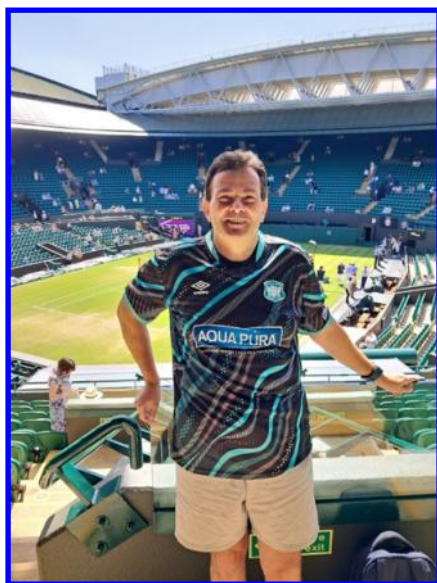
grams was lovely. Stood near the home dug out, the South Shields lads were told to just hassle and do not let them get past under any circumstances. That they did, can't remember a game with so many fouls. The ref was poor and the game was far from free flowing. Lots of pulling back, elbows, little trips, couple of bad challenges all not pulled up by the ref. Both dugouts were not happy with him. Positives from first 45/60 for me. Ellis played really well at the back, Lowes looked assured in the middle for such a young lad which was really pleasing. Kelly had some rough treatment should have had a pen but seemed to come through it ok which is huge for us. Scott did ok but really should be putting chances like he got away. Second 30 was just like Saturday. Linney/Armstrong are relentless, Linney is going to be huge. Midfield was a little ad hoc, Whelan wasn't his normal self. Young Atkinson covered the left side as Thomas had been pulled out of position, Lewis shouted for the back pass Atkinson played it blind got intercepted then it's 2-1 before you know it. Sure, he'll learn, reacted well and again looked decent which was pleasing. Tough day for the young left back Hodgson but such invaluable learning for his development. Again, all about fitness, hopefully no injuries and lots of learning for the young lads. I think come Satur-

day we will see Hughes team selection idea for the season coming into play then we can start really judging."

CUFC: Lewis, Davies (Williams 60), Murray (Hodgson 60), Hayden (Thomas 60), Ellis (Atkinson 60), Grant (Robson 60), Lowes (Whelan 60), Scott (Embleton 60), Luamba (Linney 60), O'Donoghue (Ajiboye 60), Kelly (Armstrong 60).

**Mike Kilner.**

**Mr Kilner gives the new away shirt it's debut at the only Wimbledon ground he'll be visiting this season.**



# BRANCH XI CHAOS



## The Branch XI at the Chaos Cup

**Back Row (l-r):** Chris Tembey; Harvey Tiffen; Joseph Scott; Tom Edmondson.

**Front Row (l-r)** Lucas Tembey; Steve Batey; Gijs Hoogland; Tom Templeton; Jason Casey; James Griffiths; Dave Scott.

**Football Captain Chris Tembey reports on frustrating year for our team, but one which ended in an enjoyable day out at the annual Chaos Cup.**

Supporters teams continue to reduce in numbers which isn't helpful and is a

massive shame generally. The season was due to start with a bang in Gillingham. Their Supporters team kindly double booked and strangely opted to proceed with the alternative, rather than opt for us. The CUFC game in the afternoon certainly didn't help matters and the season instead got off to a shocking start - and continued that way through-

out! **I am however pleased to report on a successful close season where a squad of 10 embarked on our most successful outing in the Chaos Cup, organised by our friends from Leyton Orient and won by PSG (who topped our group).** A second-place finish in the Group (win, draw and defeat) meant we entered the Cup Competition for the very first time. Sadly a narrow 0-1 defeat meant we fell at the first hurdle but it was an achievement all the same.

**The last time I looked through the list of registered supporters teams, there was a healthy number across the lower divisions and into non-league.** Having checked again I'm hugely disappointed to report that numbers have dwindled. **This leaves very little options for the coming season, as far as I can tell, so we'll be looking at the likes of Leyton Orient, Dulwich Hamlet and perhaps try to revisit Gillingham** when we play Southend (who used to have a team years ago but apparently have no longer). There's other options too including the likes of Wimbledon but a lot will come down to fixtures, TV and timings...watch this space.

**Ace reporter Jason Casey waxes lyrical with all the details of the Chaos Cup games in Walthamstow on June 21st.**

It was an early Friday Night for the CUSCLB players hoping to be fresh for the next day and get Gold and win the 2025 Chaos Cup.

Veterans Jugsy and Steve both ran at different park-runs as a warm up, Jugsy the other side of E17 and Steve who has

been around the world in 2025, a fairly near Oaklands College.

**16 teams, 6-a-side with 4 groups competing. In previous years CUSCLB had finished 3rd in their group and gone on to win the 'plate'.**

First up were **Birkbeck Orient**, celebrating their 20th anniversary as a team. In a surprisingly physical game, some of the BOFC players saw Steam with their challenges. CUSCLB decided to Let It All Go and concentrate on the football. BOFC took an early lead, a break through on goal, James did well to take the power out of the shot but as it spun towards the goal, Jugsy was able to back heel it off the line, only for the on-rushing Tom to rebound it into the net. 0-1. In the searing heat, players were changed and CUSCLB got their deserved equaliser, good play by Lucas on the left, leaving BOFC Counting Clouds, found Gijs unmarked at the back post and despite his fumbled attempt the ball somehow spun into the goal. 1-1. **The game stayed this way. It's Alright, its alright, everything's gonna be alright. 1-1.**

Next up were the local **Coppermill Swifts**, out to avenge their defeat to CUSCLB last season. Captain Chris started with a differing line-up which saw the Swifts leading 1-2 at half-time. Joe scoring the blues goal. In the second half Carlisle had their Best Days play. Lucas played in dad Chris, who forced a handball to win a penalty. Having won the penalty, it was Chris who stepped up to take responsibility with a perfect one-step-back finish. Jugsy started do-



ing tricks, his back arm throw-in was genius at work, though too quick for the Swifts. **The winner was pure Lucas magic, rounding his opponent and striking cleanly from distance leaving the Coppermill's brasses off for the second year running. 3-2.**

Steve, not knackered enough from his park-run and match play (having also cleared a Swifts effort off the line!), volunteered to referee the match between BOFC and Coppermills. His leniency to tackling paid off and the game was well won by CSFC.

***This win meant Carlisle were into the last 8 for the first time and a deserved place in the 'Cup' competition.***

**The final group game was against a very impressive PSG** who were all French and fit as a Frog catchers apprentice. Captain Chris wanted to start deep, and park le-bus. Despite several good saves by James the opening soon came as a PSG break-through put them in front 0-1.

Hoping for another comeback on came the 4 changes. Jugsy's legs had gone, and PSG got their second after a dubious corner was re-taken. Hey Child, the PSG praised young Lucas as a top player, stopping many chances. (Lets hope they don't poach him like they do the fish in the channel) and Steve cleared another effort off the line. **0-2.**

Time for an hour break whilst the officials decided who was to play who and where. Don't You Feel So Good played from the speakers and there was a buzz that we might just be able to cause an

upset.

**Worthing, winners of group C, were our Quarter-Final opponents.** Captain Chris again went defensive to start, with Lucas at the back. This looked to be working but as he stopped all play down the left it was a ball across to the right that caught Carlisle napping and the Worthing player got lucky striking the post and beyond the diving James. 0-1. Harvey battled well upfront linking well with Tom B but couldn't forge a real goal chance. In the second half Carlisle stepped up the pace and everyone put in a good shift. Tom E pressed and Lucas hit the bar, **but Worthing were Worthy winners in the end. 0-1.**

**Elsewhere Coppermill went on to win the plate and PSG won the Final 4-1,** showing just how good they were and possibly how good we were too only losing 0-2 to them in the group stage.

After a scorching day, post match beers were enjoyed as God finally decided to Let It Rain, the players mused Betcha Can't Wait until next year. Steve and Jugsy went off for a sneaky burger and pool match, won spawningly 3-2 by Steve.

**It had been a great success and I was wishing I could Stay Another Day.**



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

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