

HIT THE BAR!

The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine



£1

FIXTURES 25/26

*****WARNING*****

As we have discovered, fixtures in the ENL are often re-scheduled.
VHTB! WILL PROVIDE UPDATES AS SOON AS WE HEAR OF CHANGES.

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)

PLAY-OFF DATES (tbc by ENL)

MAY

2/3 - Semi-finals
9 or 10— Final

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! 340

In August, the front cover of HTB! 337 suggested that we'd need 90 goals and 30 wins to get back into the Football League. The good news is that our form over the season to date (see below) indicates that we are on target to achieve that, **BUT** the bad news is that the resultant points total of around 93 points is most likely to leave us in the play-offs.

We all love play-offs of course, and even better if it ends in a penalty shoot out winner from a Cumbrian, but here comes the other but; **BUT** does the form

of the first choice players and the style we play give us confidence that we could rise to the challenge of beating, say FGR and then York? I think the evidence of recent weeks is, probably not.

I write this on the eve of the trip to Rochdale and ahead of the romantic Valentines Day's trip to the Cotswolds, in the fervent hope that something 'clicks' and the team storms the rest of the season. We do seem to have something of the demeanour of the Bradford team that went cautiously into the play-offs and paid a heavy price—surely someone at the club has learned lessons from that? I do think we have the quality to make that storming finish to the season and I'd love to see it happen. Try to enjoy the next few weeks whether you are at a match or watching it on TV.

John B

CUFC Form after 29 matches

Target Wins = $30/46 = 0.65$ w/g. Current wins = $18/29 = 0.62$ w/game

Target Goals = $90/46 = 1.95$ g/game Current goals = $52/29 = 1.8$ g/game

Points currently $59/29 = 2.03$ points per game which, over 46 games gives a final total of 93 points

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



A belated Happy New Year to all our members and readers. I hope that you and your family and friends have a great year.

For many of us, our mood is affected massively by the way that our beloved Carlisle United performs. In my last column I was predicting that it would be between York City and Carlisle for the championship. I was half right. York will definitely be there. By the time HTB was out we had been humbled by Woking and Borehamwood, and since then we have lost 2 more including to a 7th tier team – Chatham. The game against York showed a gulf in quality. For 70 minutes, despite the early goal against, we looked to be in the game, but York always looked capable of stepping up a gear.

Member Graeme Harker has been producing a mini-league table against the

top teams (Carlisle, York, Rochdale, Borehamwood, FGR, Scunthorpe and Southend) in his excellent “Blue Army on Manoeuvres” PDF or vlog that he produces for many of the away games. As of yesterday, this was showing a projected points total of 15 for Carlisle vs 27 for Rochdale, 22 for Scunthorpe, and 20 for York.

Still, Carlisle were 10th in January 2006 and beat Stevenage in the play offs, and Grimsby were 5th with 73 points before winning promotion last season. It is still all to play for.

I watched the York game with 9 other fans in the Civil Service Club in London. I was reminded of Neil Nixon’s comment when we lost the play offs to Leeds “It was a little bit easier to take being with friends.” Our next game at the CSC is Tuesday 10th February for our home game against Scunthorpe. Every Carlisle fan is welcome but it would be helpful if you gave me an idea in advance if you are coming chairman@carlislelondonbranch.org as so far we have had 7 to 26 people turn up and that affects the room we need to book. **Beer is less than £5 per pint and burger and chips is £10 which for a venue near Whitehall is unheard of.**



Watching the Blues at the Civil Service Club

The London Branch sponsors the Academy Goal of the Month (watch the goals on the club website they are brilliant).

We are now looking to present medals for the players to keep as they have to hand back the trophy each month.

Howard Atkinson and Mike Carruthers are beavering away organising the summer trip. It looks like we will have 40+ in Copenhagen this year. For details email summertrip@cusclb.com

For most away games, we have an option for a mascot. It is a memory for life. 8-year-old Mason loved his day at Borehamwood despite the game and the weather. It is open to Carlisle fans 5 years old to 13 years old [mas-](#)

cots@cusclb.com

A big thank you to Andy Hall and Anna Jensen who keep getting info out – from the weekly enewsletter VHTB to X, Instagram, Facebook, CUSCLB website (with away match details and loads more) and more. What I love is how reliable the info is and now and again there are blockbusters like the Paul Huntingdon interview.

Up the blues

Dave Brown, Chairman

KEEP THE FAITH



The defeat at home to York killed off any lingering hope I had of Carlisle filling the automatic promotion spot. I hope I'm wrong but it's too much to expect that both York and Rochdale will hit spells of form bad enough for us to be able to overhaul both of them.

It's notable that both York and Rochdale have secured points with late goals. York have a net gain of 7 points from goals scored after 80 minutes whilst Rochdale have 6. Carlisle on the other hand have a net loss of 3 points. It makes a big difference. It was particularly disheartening to concede in time

added on at Solihull. I don't think bringing on a centre back in place of a midfielder is the way we should be seeing out games.

Despite Mark Hughes's, let's say less adventurous, style of play, it's not a time to be calling for his replacement.

There's still a lot to play for and we're well placed to make a challenge in the play offs. I agree with the sentiments expressed in an email to the Carlisle Social which said that 'much of our fan base is readier to push down than lift up.' It's inevitable that some fans will be wanting change when big games are lost but, if looked at rationally, to change the manager every time there is a dip in results is not a sustainable way to go forward, and especially so when you're averaging more than 2 points per game. Back in our previous season in the Conference we went 10 games from Boxing Day to early March without a league win and slipped down to 10th place. I can't remember there being a sustained campaign to sack Simmo. Of course we went on to win the play offs.

Paul Newton on the Carlisle Social suggested that, with only one automatic promotion spot, there's more pressure

and greater anxiety. It's particularly evident that there's lots of anxiety amongst the supporters. After the euphoria of our play off win at Wembley followed by the sustained disappointment of successive relegations, it's not surprising that Carlisle supporters are desperate for us to go straight back up.

It's not realistic though, that after 2 seasons of abject failure, during which a large squad of mainly inadequate players on long contracts was assembled, to expect the team to be top dogs in the National League. The owners have made it clear that players have to be unloaded before players can be recruited. Given the circumstances we are doing well to be 3rd in the table at the time of writing.

As much as I like Georgie Kelly, he didn't help matters either when he did his radio interview after the Boreham Wood match and more or less said that the team should have been doing better because the players were too good for the level they are playing at. Given that we were in League 1 when he signed it's not surprising that he'd think that.

Talking of Georgie, although in no way a spectacular one, I **have his second goal at Solihull as one of Carlisle's goals of the season so far.** It was such

a great piece of ball control on his chest to put the ball where he could just prod it home with the keeper stranded. Shame his hat-trick secured us only 1 point.



Finally, it was a surprise, but a welcome surprise, to see Charlie Wyke (above) named on the bench for the game against Altrincham. He didn't hit the best of form in his second spell with the club and the horrendous injury against Cheltenham, which kept him out for 16 months, meant he couldn't contribute to our fight to stay in the Football League. It's good to have him back and maybe he can help us to push on through the play offs.

Keep the faith, Ken

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HIT THE BAR!

In HTB! 339 we reported the news that HTB has been recognised as the oldest, continuously in-print fanzine. A few of us have been with HTB from the start of the journey, but for younger and newer members, here is a brief history of Hit the Bar!

November 20th 1974	Issue 1 is sent to all those who had joined the London Branch in a meeting following the game at QPR on the 16h November. It comprised two pages of A4 paper.
1977-78	The title 'CUSC News' is adopted. With 12 A4 pages it had an exciting new hand drawn cover that featured a Carlisle player scoring a spectacular goal.
Summer 1980	Malcolm Fawcett spots a second hand Gestetner duplicator. This meant that all articles had to be re-typed onto a stencil so that it could be printed. The actual quality of nearly all this printed material was not very good and it was often very difficult to read.
1986-87	The final edition using a Gestetner machine to produce the bulk of the printed copy.
1986-87	The first edition that was produced by photocopying. This enabled much more illustration, artwork and pictures appearing in the issues and a more settled appearance. Using A4 boards to lay out the work and a tacky adhesive to hold the bits in place, it was possible to establish a familiar format from issue to issue.
April 1989	The 100 th edition
1990-1991	The first A5 edition. Ray Cuneen had it commercially printed and so chose to reduce everything from A4 to A5 to save money. The format reverted to A4 with the purchase of the London Branch photocopier for £1,800. The purchase was helped by generous donations from members, Tom Hutton and Gordon Kirkbride and loans from other members.

November 1993	The title "Carlisle United Supporters Club London Branch News-letter" was finally ditched. The credit goes to Alistair Blackett who quietly announced at a Committee meeting, "Why not call it 'Hit the Bar?' There was little further discussion as it seemed perfect. The first to use the title, 'Hit the Bar' was issue 129.
1993 -94	Jason Casey started to contribute both cartoons and articles and created a front page logo that was used for many years
1994 -95	Howard Atkinson handed over the job of Editor to Nick Dawson, but the photocopier remained in his Dorking house and the Editor would arrive, with his copy, every few weeks. Nick's first issue (HTB 135) proclaimed it "Stands, Proud, Erect, and PINK!" He had obtained some unwanted A4 pink copier paper where he was working and used it as a front cover. That was last in A4, with the next issue in A5, the format that has continued ever since.
1995-96	The first issue of the new season contains two magazines. As well as 'Hit the Bar' there is a guide to all the grounds in the 2nd Division called 'Seconds Out' created by Steve Kilner and Ian Jardine. It also features a new style 'Brunton Beat', using an idea from Kevin Jones; a diary format and a chronological account of the previous few weeks.
1996-97	The photocopier, bought in 1990, was no longer able to cope with the volume of printing. Enter Paul Hollingshead and Blueprint. Based in South Wales, Issue 145 was his first and he's still printing HTB for us. The issues were assembled at Steve's house and then it was all photocopied before being sent to Wales. This precaution came after one issue was lost in the post and Steve had to start again from the beginning!





Hit the Bar!

Newsletter of the
Carlisle United
Supporters' Club
London Branch

October 2004

Issue 212



In this Issue!

All the News
The Fixtures
Your Views
Match Reports
Photos

A possible projection of the future...



Hit the Bar!

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Supporters' Club
London Branch

October 2006

Issue 239



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Your Views
Speculation
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Iss. 2
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CARLISLE UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB (LONDON BRANCH) NEWSLETTER



Les Misérable

HIT THE BAR!

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Collected in Anniversary 322

1997-98	Christmas saw a massive 88 page issue that had 26 different contributors and a comment that less than ten years before, an editor had proudly boasted that the whole season had produced 17 different contributors.
2001 -02	The Christmas issue is 120 pages. That season Kate Dale produced copies with 84, 88, 120, 100, 92 and finally 72 (the usually thin end of season issue) pages.
2003-04	Regular e-mails to members called 'Virtual Hit the Bar' or very quickly VHTB, become a staple part of the London Branch service. Issue 200 had only 16 pages, reflecting the bleak mood in the final days of Roddy Collins.
2004-05	Issue 210 proclaimed "Now we are thirty," as the London Branch celebrated their Thirtieth Anniversary - with a season in the Conference. Issue 212 saw a full colour picture on the glossy front page, to start a new development for the rest of the season and young Alun Hulloock posed with the Premiership Trophy.
2005-06	'Hit the Bar' had settled into a regular pattern and layout by this time. The November issue, (HTB 222), started with an Editor's page inside the front cover and then had 10 pages of the 'Brunton Beat'. This was followed by 4 pages of match reports although one was a reprinted article, by Hunter Davies, from the 'New Statesman'. 32 pages in total.
2009	Issue 250
2018	Issue 300
October 2019	Issue 308 is the first full colour edition.
June 2022	Issue 322 The Roma Special marked the 50 th anniversary of our Anglo-Italian Cup appearance
2024-25	London Branch celebrate their 50 th Anniversary in HTB 335
2025-26	HTB starts its second season as a non-league fanzine.

EDITORS & CONTRIBUTORS

With thanks to all those who went before me, below is I hope, an accurate record of the people who have edited **Hit the Bar!** As the previous pages indicate, the task of production and printing has become easier since 1974

1974	Chris Wilkinson
1974-79	Dave Leigh
1979- 83	Malcolm Fawcett
1983-84	Dave Griffiths
1984-86	John Heslop
1986-89	Ian Jardine
1989-90	Jez Garratt
1990-92	Ray Cuneen
1992-94	Howard Atkinson
1994-95	Nick Dawson
1995- 98	Steve Kilner
1998-2000	Malcolm Fawcett
2001-03	Kate Dale / Nick Crowther
2003-08	Malcolm Fawcett
2008 -10	Dave Brown
2011 -14	Geoff Graham
2014 – 18	Lee Rooney
2018 - date	John Bowman
??	Your name here??

with ICT and printing technology replacing leaky Gestetner machines and manual laying out of pages, so a particular thanks to the amazing efforts of editors in the 1970's and 1980's. **What hasn't changed is the importance of those who contribute regular and occasional columns and articles.** In the current generation, special mention goes to **Mike Kilner**, whose Brunton Diary is the core of each edition, to the **CUFC media team** who share the photos taken by the photographers who are always credited on the back cover and to **Jason Casey ('Jugsy')** for his many cartoons.

John B



Brunton Park Diary

2025/26

6th Dec (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 3 BLACKPOOL YTH (1) 3

No home information again. United came back from 0-1 and 1-2 down to take the lead going into the last half hour. The side held on until the 82nd minute when we tipped their header onto the crossbar, but the Lasher following in was able to tap home to level the game.

BLACKPOOL (3) 4 CUFC (0) 1 – FA CUP 2ND ROUND

Alas no repeat of the previous round's FA Cup Magic™, the Lashers slamming the door shut with a clinical lesson in finishing with dreams of a Man Utd, Liverpool or an Arsenal evaporating and

replaced with thoughts of how to deal with Gateshead and Wealdstone. The Blues undoubtedly missed the presence of skipper Feeney at the back, who was lost to illness just before kick-off, three first-half goals bringing back memories of our previous visit. United came out fighting at the start of the second; Hayden somehow missed a sitter, **Armstrong** finished well for 3-1 from Ajiboye's cross and only the home keeper prevented the winger making it 3-2 to set up a grandstand finish. Cruelly, the Lashers promptly went back up the pitch and snuffed out the last embers of hope with a slick move too good for the Blues.



CUFC*: Lewis 5, Williams 6, Harper 5, Hayden 5, Ellis 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 5, Ajiboye 6, Conn-Clarke 6, Linney 5, **Armstrong 7**. Subs: Whelan 6, Atkinson 6, Luamba 6, Wearne 6, Jones 6

10th Dec (Wed)

CUFC (1) 1 WOKING (2) 3

United blew their audition for the top spot, the visitor's taking rapidly improving away form into the game and ultimately blowing the Blues aside with their pace, work rate and finishing.

groin knock. The Cumbrians defensive frailties reared their ugly head with Woking capitalising twice in the final three minutes of the first half. A bright start to the second period brought no reward and an increasingly toiling Blues were finally put to bed as the 90 rolled up.

CUFC*: Breeze 5, **Williams 6**, Harper 4, Feeney 5, Hayden 4, Gilliead 5, Macadam 5, Luamba 6, Conn-Clarke 5, Linney 4, G Kelly 4. Subs: Armstrong 5, Ajiboye 4, Wearne 5



To make matters worse, **Luamba (above) hobbled off with hamstring-gah almost immediately after latching onto Ajiboye's pass to take the lead** and Conn-Clarke, who had earlier struck the post, withdrawn later due to



13th Dec (Sat)

CUFC YTH 4 STOCKPORT COUNTY YTH 2

No coverage from the club, one fan posted "Rafferty got the first, although it might already have been over the line, Towers got two and number 8 scored a beezer of a free kick."

**HARBOROUGH TOWN (0) 1 CUFC (1) 2
– FA TROPHY THIRD ROUND**

The makeshift Blues made heavy weather defeating a side keen to show why they were still unbeaten in the league all season. It was all a bit pedestrian and safe with a sideways or backwards pass preferred to a marauding run or defence-splitting pass. Lewis' penalty save saved some early embarrassment, Gilliead did his best to keep things tick-

ing along, 17-year-old Hayden Atkinson had some good moments, and **Murray** (below)) finally had a reason to bring a smile to his face, the volleyed opener being his first goal for the club. Although quiet overall, it was also good to see **Linney break his goal drought with a smart finish from close range that temporarily extended the lead.**

CUFC*: Lewis 6, Davies 5, Murray 6, Ellis 6, Atkinson 6, **Gilliead 7**, Hetherington 6, Whelan 5, Wearne 5, Linney 6, Armstrong 5. Subs: Harper 6, Feeney 6

20th Dec (Sat)

BOLTON W YTH 3 CUFC YTH 2

No club report again. The Trotters social feed noted we were 2-1 up with 10



minutes left only to concede two late goals. We're also prioritising getting the brightest of the under 16's on in the second half rather than grinding out results so nothing to be disheartened about.

ing the opener on a plate in the first 10 seconds, two goals for the Wood in the space of six first-half minutes effectively ended the contest; the highly rated Abdulmalik by then running the show.



BOREHAM WOOD (2) 2 CUFC (0) 0

The Blues served up the annual Christmas turkey five days early, an inert showing rightly punished with the expected festive, promotion-chasing ding-dong never materialising. The team was largely bereft of ideas; if there were tactics or a strategy to deliver three points from Herts, they clearly weren't on show and they played like they had walked the 278 miles to get down there instead of taking the team coach. Not heeding the warning after almost hand-

CUFC*: Breeze 5, Ellis 4, Harper 4, Feeney 5, Hayden 4, Gilliead 4, Macadam 5, Williams 5, Wearne 4, Linney 4, Kelly 4. Subs: Jones 5, Embleton 5

26th Dec (Fri)

GATESHEAD (0) 0 CUFC (1) 3

For the travelling 3,500 members of the Blue Army, never mind the performance, feel the points. The freefalling Heed have one foot in the Conference North next season and one from Embleton, a Linney penalty and a late third from Armstrong nudged them closer to

that reality. The attacking intent was more turkey sandwiches than the finest pheasant but good enough, the returning Embleton finishing adroitly after picking the pocket of the last defender following a Sunday park-football stumble. Half chances for Hayden and Macadam came and went before the Blues benefitted from a slightly soft penalty decision to extend the lead. Breeze was a spectator for most of the game bar one good move at 0-2 ending with them striking the underside of the woodwork.

Williams 7, Jones 6, **Embleton 7**, Linney 6. Subs: Armstrong 7, Whelan 6

Never mind Doctor Who, what about Charlie Who? After a shattering 14 months out of the game, **Charlie Wyke** takes part in the pre-match warm-up.

27th Dec (Sat)

Running their very own public version of the Hokey Cokey, former midfielder **Adam Clayton** is sacked by Northern Premier League East side Matlock Town



There was probably a weary “Thanks a lot Son” when Luke scored a late third against the team that his old man manages for the time being.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Ellis 6, Harper 6, Feeney 6, Hayden 6, Gilliead 6, Macadam 7,

FC, despite them being third in the table.

30th Dec (Tue)

CUFC (1) 1 MORECAMBE (0) 0

The first half’s one moment of rare quality with Armstrong burying home



the chance from Linney's fine run and cross, made it back-to-back wins against bogey side Morecambe. There could have been more, Armstrong having one chalked off harshly after being whistled



for a foul and then seeing a header well saved. Substitute Wearne then came on and struck the crossbar from distance.

CUFC (no ratings): Breeze, Ellis, Feeney, Hayden, Gilliead, Macadam, Williams, Jones, Embleton, Armstrong, Linney. Subs: Whelan, Kelly, Wearne

Adam Clayton will hope the club skip hasn't been collected, the ex-Blue reinstated as manager of Matlock Town just a few days after being told to sling it.

31st Dec (Wed)

Scottish Gossip site Hoots Mon! (or something like that) believes former United loan forward **Joe Bevan** is all set for a move from Burnley to **Steven Pressley's** Dundee in the Scottish Premiership.

2nd Jan (Fri)

Perhaps on the back of an earlier loan spell with Albion (14 goals in 42 games) than surely anything with United, the **Bevan** move to Dundee comes true as his Mr 15% secures a two-and-a-half-year deal.

3rd Jan (Sat)

CUFC (1) 2 WEALDSTONE (0) 0

The performance pick of the Crimbo trio, which isn't saying much, United were far too strong for a very limited



Harper (above) and Williams (below) in home action against Wealdstone



Stones side seemingly only intent on keeping the goal tally down rather than troubling Breeze and co. It took a while to get going and with the crowd on the cusp of the usual grumbling and twinning, they were given a lift with Whelan's clipped chip to the back stick slotted home by the unmarked Armstrong. A more confident United pressed almost relentlessly, Hayden's close finish from a Linney corner being the only reward in a second half where several chances came and went, the most obvious one being Kelly's late missed sitter.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Williams 6, Harper 6, Hayden 6, Feeney 6, Gilliead 6, Macadam 6, Ellis 6, Whelan 7, Linney 6, **Armstrong 7**. Subs: Embleton 6

4th Jan (Sun)

It doesn't get any better for Gateshead as former big lump **Mark Beck** is on his way back for a second spell on loan until the end of the season while ex-Blue **Harrison Biggins** will be looking to make it a hat-trick of club relegations as Shrewsbury Town finally change the locks resulting in a loan move to Newport County AFC for the rest of the season.

5th Jan (Mon)

After three goals in 20 games, 18-year-old United forward **Freddie O'Dono-**

ghue returns to the Blues after the end of his Queen of the South loan spell while it's confirmed that fellow youngsters **Jake Allan** and **Dan Hopper** will spend the rest of the season with the Jameaters.

The first activity of the transfer window sees midfielder **Will Patching** going out permanently to Coleraine on a two-and-a-half-year deal following his successful loan spell in Norn Iron.

6th Jan (Tue)

Midfield misfit **Josh Grant** is allowed to go out on loan to fellow National League club Altrincham for the rest of the season. Unfortunately Grant, whose last game was a brief sub appearance in Saaafend, will not be permitted to play for them at Brunton Park.

The Blues are heavily linked with a move for 24-year-old Barnet left back (or left CH) **Ryan Galvin** following his recall from a loan spell at Rochdale. Galvin came through the ranks at Wigan Athletic, had spells at Sheffield Wednesday, Gloucester City and Maidstone United, and has spent the previous two seasons with FC Halifax Town. His biggest asset is described as his pace and ball carrying ability from the back.



7th Jan (Wed)

Ryan Galvin's (above) move to United is confirmed, the defender going for an undisclosed fee on a two-and-a-half-year deal with an option for a further year while the Blues persuade Posh and the Shrews respectively to allow **CCC** and **Gilliead** to stay on loan for the rest of the campaign. One recently linked man not moving to Cumbria is Bradford City's **Alex Pattison** with the attacking midfielder being snapped up by Walsall FC on an 18-month contract.

9th Jan (Fri)

The rumour mill spits out Barnet centre-back **Ollie Kensdale** as a target for United with Boreham Wood and Rochdale the main competition while former Blue **Dynel Simeu** extends his stay with Old-

ham until the end of the season after impressing in his short time there.

Fan favourite **Peter Murphy** is named Scottish League One manager of the month with Queen of the South with fellow ex-Blue **Matty Douglas** named as the division's player of the month.

10th Jan (Sat)

CHATHAM TOWN (1) 1 CUFC (0) 0 – FA TROPHY FOURTH ROUND

Some would say mission accomplished, a run out for some of the youngsters and first XI fringe players, a return from injury for CCC and an exit that allows the side to concentrate completely on trying to return to the EFL. Others might call it one of the Blues most embarrassing results in their history that highlights the lack of depth in their squad. The introduction of Conn-Clarke and Williams after the break made it a proper contest but even so, the hosts were probably deserved winners overall even if Lewis' skewed positioning from the free-kick winner was questionable.

CUFC (no ratings): Lewis, Davies, Murray, Mugabi (Harper 46), Atkinson, Ellis, Whelan, Hetherington (Williams 46), Ajiboye (A Smith 70), Embleton (Conn-Clarke 46), Kelly (Mason 70).

12th Jan (Mon)

Former shirt-filling target man **Andy Cook** is loaned out to Grimsby Town from Bradford City for the rest of the season while north of the wall, ex-youth **Josh Todd** joins Dumbarton from fellow League Two side Annan Athletic.

14th Jan (Wed)

Jude ‘did you know he was still here’ Smith has his contract terminated by the Blues after an injury-plagued stay since joining in the summer of 2024. The keeper nails his colours to the mast of future CUFC quizzes for decades to come after being overtaken in the goal-keeping pecking order by teenager Thomas Randall, long-serving Head Groundsman Dave Mitchell and Doris the tea lady. We can honestly say we never once saw him put in a bad performance in a Carlisle shirt.

Three old boys are on the move. **Jack Bonham** signs for Bolton Wanderers from Stoke City with the gloveman going on an 18-month deal and reuniting with another ex-Blue, manager **Steven Schumacher**. After a fruitless, frustrating loan spell at Barnet, striker **Joe Hugill** is recalled by parent club Manchester United while **Zach Clough** signs for Aussie A-League club Newcastle Jets on a two-and-a-half-year deal from Malaysian Super League side Selangor.

16th Jan (Fri)

Former Blue **Jack Stretton** will be looking to rebuild his career with fellow out-post Truro City (he must love travelling) after a spell with League of Ireland club Drogheda United.

Williamsonball is back, National League North side South Shields allowing magic Mike to join the coaching team on a voluntary basis. If he’s only putting the cones out, what can go wrong?

17th Jan (Sat)

OLDHAM ATHLETIC YTH (0) 2 CUFC YTH (0) 2

No details from United’s end, the goals coming from the Blues #16 and #10. The Latics had led through a soft penalty but needed an injury-time strike from a tight angle to steal a point.

SOLIHULL MOORS (2) 3 CUFC (1) 3

Time to talk to the mis-sold lawyers again, not an Iberian Peninsula-dwelling Arab or Berber in sight, just another disappointing shoe box hovering near the city limits. A game that swung more ways than a Jimmy Anderson opening over had looked victory bound only for it to be cruelly snatched away in the final seconds as Breeze’s misjudged attempt at a punch allowed their man to find the top corner. The opening peri-



od was all United. Their keeper parried Kelly's header from a Macadam cross, CCC recycled across the box only for the hapless defender to set up a grateful **Kelly (still on the deck from this header) who can't believe his luck and hooks it into the onion bag.** Kelly then nearly makes it two at the far post from a Linney cross and then their stopper earns his corn after CCC's lovely clip into the box is nudded towards the net by Macadam.



United's work rate then slacked off with two sorry moments at the back leaving them trailing at the break. Embleton lost his man just inside the box with Hayden compounding by making little attempt to block his shot across Breeze and then a dead ball goal kick is somehow missed completely by Hayden allowing the same scorer to nip in between a flat-footed Feeney and new boy Galvin to shot low into the same corner. **If that was soft then at least so was the space afforded to Kelly to complete a deserved hat-trick as the Blues scored twice in four barmy second-half minutes.** Macadam curled a ball over from the right and the Irish-

man was allowed to control it with his chest and drill the ball home and then a CCC corner found Kelly's head just a few yards from the goal's centre without him even having to jump. Sensible game management took over with it looking like three points coming home until Breeze's unfortunate brain fart.

CUFC*: Breeze 5, Williams 7, Galvin 5, Feeney 6, Hayden 5, Gilliead 5, Macadam 6, Conn-Clarke 7, Embleton 5, Linney 6, **Kelly 9**. Subs: Harper 6, Ellis 6

Second year scholar **Simon Rigby** heads out on a one-month work experience deal, the midfielder joining hometown club Kendal in Northern League Division One.

19th Jan (Mon)

Former Abbott and Ward-era midfield magician **Marc Bridge-Wilkinson**, who had been first-team assistant coach, is part of a senior coaching team clear out at Huddersfield Town. The backroom staff refresh brings in ex-Blues left-back **James Krause**.

20th Jan (Tue)

STOCKPORT COUNTY YTH 3 CUFC YTH 2 – U17 PREMIER LEAGUE PDL CUP QUARTER FINAL

No details on the game, which was at U17 level.

Roll up and store the "Welcome Home" banners and *Terminator* meme-based posters from around the city just for the time being. Home boy **Owen Moxon** joins fellow third-tier club Wigan Athletic on loan from Stockport County for the remainder of the season.

21st Jan (Wed)

CUFC (0) 0 YORK CITY (1) 3

One week's a long time in football and the high-flying Minstermen didn't look back once recent hero Kelly decided to gift them a 75th minute penalty by putting his arm up like an eager student. Even after surrendering their customary early goal, United had stayed in the game up until that point, the unfortunate Kelly somehow picking out the keeper instead of the gaping spaces either side of him when clean through and then both sides largely kept to half-chances with Harper shooting over. That unfortunate second shut the door with a third added near the end despite Breeze's best efforts, the momentum by now entirely with the visitors.

CUFC*: Breeze 5, Ellis 5, Harper 5, Feeney 5, Hayden 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 5, Williams 5, **Conn-Clarke 6**, Linney 5, Kelly 5. Subs: Galvin 6, Mugabi 6

The rumour of the week has the recently minted Monkey Hangers interested in



No luck for Linney against York

Wearne to help fill in the attacking midfielder shaped hole in their line-up.

22nd Jan (Thu)

Ex-Blue **Gary Dicker** is promoted to first team assistant coach with MLS side Charlotte FC under Dean Smith having lead Crown Legacy FC, Charlotte's reserve team.

23rd Jan (Fri)

Aldershot's soaking this week postpones the weekend's fun down in Hampshire.

Left-back second-year scholar **Jamie Hodgson** joins Northern League Division One side Penrith on a one-month work experience deal while **Ethan Robson** leaves Spennymoor Town for local rivals and NL North leaders South Shields.

Does he know William-zzzzzon is in the building?

The Blond Beanpole aka ex-loan defender **Charlie McArthur** moves to Scottish Championship side Airdrie from the Barcodes on loan until the end of the season.

24th Jan (Sat)

CUFC YTH 5 PORT VALE 1

A smashing performance from the young Blues with Mason scoring two and both Lowes and Atkinson once more garnering rave reviews.

26th Jan (Mon)

Old boy **Ryan Edmondson** departs A-League side Central Coast Mariners.

27th Jan (Tue)

CUFC YTH (1) 3 OLDHAM YTH (0) 0 – ALLIANCE YOUTH CUP NORTHERN SEMI-FINAL

Blackpool in the final awaits after goals from Lambert, Mason and Porter gave Birch's Babes a comfortable afternoon at the Sheepmount. A strong Blues side, who were watched from the touchline by Sparky and his assistants, totally dominated and played some lovely football by all accounts.

CUFC XI: Worth (Grainger 90), Hatton (McDonough 78), Hodgson, Atkinson, Porter, Rigby, Rafferty (Tonge 70), Lowes, Lambert (Bell 78), Mason, Smith (Stewart 90)

29th Jan (Thu)

Fresh from his A-League departure, **Ryan Edmondson** moves to Premier Division side St Patrick's Athletic ahead of the new League of Ireland season.

30th Jan (Fri)

Highly likeable, professional but unfortunately, calamitous gloveman **Harry Lewis'** stay in Cumbria is finally over after he completes a move to League One club Mansfield Town on an 18-month deal for (rubs eyes) an undisclosed fee. Which way has that gone? As someone said, they may have signed him to give their forwards additional confidence in their shooting abilities

during training. Lewis made 41 appearances for United after joining from Bradford for a rumoured £175,000 in January 2024.



His replacement is 24-year-old Shrimpers goalkeeper **Archie Mair** (above) on loan until the end of the season. The former Scotland Under-21 international was on Aberdeen's youth books before a move to Norwich City, from where he had loan stints with King's Lynn Town, Lincoln City, Dartford, Notts County, Gateshead, Morecambe and Motherwell, before returning to Morecambe permanently last summer. Mair came off the Notts County bench in the final minute of extra-time in the 22/23 National League play-off final against Chesterfield, saving two penalties in the

shoot-out to help the Magpies to victory.

Former frontman **Jerry Yates**, already up to nine clubs on his CV, joins League One bound Sheffield Wednesday on loan from Luton Town for the rest of the season. Another on the move is **Joe Hugill**, who finally leaves Man Utd for good with a move to Scottish Premiership side Kilmarnock on a one-and-a-half-year deal. Midfield old boy **Joe McKee** departs the coaching team at Scottish Championship side Greenock Morton.

31st Jan (Sat)

CUFC (3) 3 ALTRINCHAM (0) 1

After a frustrating season, the Brunton faithful finally saw some of the **Ajiboye**

that in June 2022, earned a three-year deal when going from Sutton to Peterborough for a reported fee of around £200,000. The winger scored the first, set up the second and was a constant thorn in the Robins' side, even if the end product wasn't always perfection. He wasn't the only returnee to be satisfied with their afternoon's work.

Galvin's performance showed what we had hoped all for, a left-back willing to run at and beat his man while being composed and solid at the back. Armstrong's intelligent run across the defender led to an excellent second as a reward for his non-stop endeavours, Embleton improved after a somnambulist team start including the corner that led to the own goal, and it was



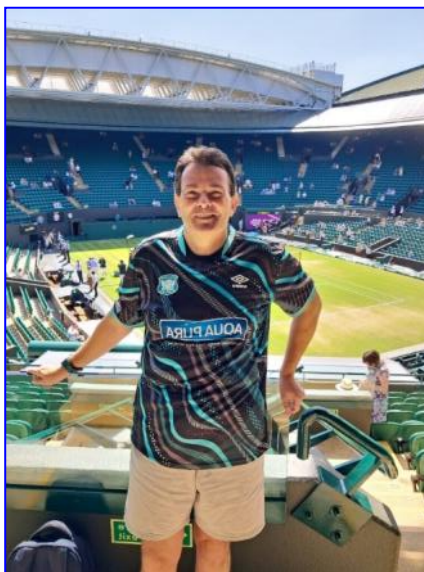


good to see the calm presence of big Bevis back in partnership with Feeney. A late cameo from **Charlie Wyke-Wyke-Wyke**, 462 days after his last appearance in a Carlisle shirt, was the cherry on top.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Williams 6, Galvin 7, Feeney 7, Mugabi 6, Gilliead 7, Macadam 6, Embleton 7, **Ajiboye 8**, Linney 6, Armstrong 8. Subs: Ellis 6, Wearne 6, Kelly 6

*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.

COYB, Mike Kilner



CUSG PREDICTION COMPETITION @ 30/1/26

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

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2025/26



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Cartoons by Jugsy

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