HIT THE BAR!

June 2026 £1

"I want us to play attacking, aggressive football with and without the ball. We want to win, we want the players to enjoy it and want the fans to be excited to turn up and watch a team that plays good football with an identity but more importantly gives absolutely everything for the badge"



The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine



The 2026/27 Enterprise National League season starts on Saturday 8 August 2026. The final matchday of the regular season takes place on Saturday 24 April 2027.

Editors Bleat	3
Notes from the Chair	4
Sponsorship and Funding update	5
Keep the Faith	7
CUSG: United in support	9
Following the Blues	11
Mascot Memories for Life	12
From Mascot to pitch side	14
Goodbye and Hello	20
40 Club Winner tells all	22
Brunton Park Diary 25/26	26
CUSG Prediction Competition 25/26 RESULTS!	38
Branch Committee Contacts	39

EDITORS BLEAT



Welcome to HTB! 342

In which we reflect on the departure of Mark Hughes and welcome Rob Elliot to the Brunton Park hot seat. As many have already written, the very underwhelming display against Boreham Wood fully encapsulated the frustrations of the past season. The words of Rob Elliot on his arrival do suggest a recognition that the attitude of the club on the pitch needs to be more pro-active and positive. If that ambition is to be delivered, then the make-up of the coaching team that Rob Elliot will be working with is going to be critical in achieving the raising of performance and standards of the players across the whole season.

The early season ticket sales numbers suggest that the Carlisle-based fans are again prepared to give all their support to push the club back into the Football League. The London Branch will once again be working hard to give young fans a great day out as away mascots and giving travelling fans information about away venues and meeting places. Following the feature about Joe Scott in HTB 341, this time we follow Callum Crowther and his work with the CUFC media team. He's another member of the branch football team, led by Chris Tembey, who recounts his day at Brunton Park as a winner of our 40 Club draw.

I took the picture below as I arrived at my favoured spot in the Paddock for the Boreham Wood match. It's always reassuring to see Jon Colman hard at work creating his awarding-winning prose for the News and Star. Shame he didn't have a better story to tell 120 minutes later.

John B



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



That's it then. Despite a record number of points we have another year in the National League. In the end we were found wanting and well below the level of York and Rochdale but more worryingly looked awful against Boreham-wood in front of a magnificent crowd in the play-off semi. It is hoped that the summer will be well used to ensure that we approach next season at the level needed to achieve promotion.

One area that was excellent was the fans' support – average home crowds at 7,500 second only to Southend and superb attendances at every away game. There have been 2300 season tickets already sold for next season. I also like that the Warwick youngsters have persuaded the club to let them have a singing area in section 4 of the East Stand. They are the future and also the one's that can make sure our home atmosphere lifts the team.

The London Branch had a good season with a record number of members, a major presence at away games with meeting places working well, regular viewings together on TV in London, VHTB enewsletters delivered every week without fail, HTB fanzines, lively social media, and delivering financial and promotional support to lots of great projects.

During the summer downtime, 38 of us are heading off to Copenhagen for our annual summer trip for a long weekend. We then hold our AGM on the 25th June in the Jubilee room in the House of Commons preceded by a tour courtesy of Carlisle MP Julie Minns.

Once we have the fixture list, we will be sitting down to plan next season.

Have a great summer and look forward to seeing you in our first game August 8th.

Up the blues

Dave

Chairman

BRANCH SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING

London Branch members have always been very generous and supportive of both the club and of charities in Cumbria which we thank you for.

Even when the branch provides support to someone like the Truro or Bust Cyclists that went to Truro raising money for Cancer Research and MNDA and to Graham Moss who also did the same route on his own for Prostate Cancer, I check the Justgiving pages and recognise lots of LB names on the individual donors. Our publicity, as well as our financial support, is a double whammy for good causes.

The money the London Branch has to donate is a result of; the surplus of subscriptions over what it costs to run the branch and the profit that the 40 club delivers each season plus the kind donations that many members make. The last season has seen us make a difference to many projects.

We purchased 2 season tickets for the Paddock that gives money to the club as well as providing a benefit to members that can use these at a discount to match day prices.

We sponsored Jack Ellis again as our player home and away at a cost of £750. For sponsoring Jack, we had two members attend the player sponsorship breakfast. Jack's match worn home shirt will be a prize at our AGM, and his away shirt will be a prize in the 40 club.



We were approached to donate a £1,000 to support the **Heritage Group** that is doing a brilliant job building up and displaying a collection of Carlisle United memorabilia. We asked that they also approach the Carlisle United Supporters Group and we would match their funding – **the Trust agreed to pay £500 which we matched.**

The "**First-time Supporter Scheme**" at Carlisle United is a club initiative that provides a goody bag and certificate to every young first-time visitor to the club. The branch paid £1500 for those goody bags. Our logo is printed on the bag they receive.

Mascots – The branch has always arranged mascots at away games at venues in Birmingham and below. In the last two years we have worked with former chair and now SLO, Simon Clarkson, for all away game mascots to be free (on a reciprocal agreement with the club), for Simon to arrange with the clubs, for Claire (the away SLO) to meet with the mascots and families and supply a goody bag, for the branch to pay the £25 each match (£550) for the goody bag and for Anna (LB Information team) to do the follow ups afterwards.

Academy goal of the month – the branch provided the trophy for the Academy goal of the month. Danny Grainger provides the video for the goal of the month which is selected by the committee. From next season we will also be providing a medal for each winner.

We paid £100 for a perimeter advert "Exiles – join the London Branch www.carlislelondonbranch.org" at the home game against Southend.

As usual, we purchased £50 of tickets for the very deserving Eden Hospice raffle.

We paid for wreaths to be laid at the memorial garden for ex players.



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 your alternative ideas.

Dave Brown



KEEP THE FAITH



Jon Colman was the first with the news. Last Thursday we finally read in the News & Star, almost 4 weeks after our season ended, that Mark Hughes's contract would not be renewed and that he was to be replaced as Head Coach by Rob Elliot.

My first reaction was that I thought Hughes had deserved another crack at promotion from the National League, but then soon warmed to the idea that we would have a new young, progressive coach who had shown what he could do whilst managing Gateshead, particularly in the second half of last season when he took Gateshead from bottom of the table at the turn of the year to safety with games to spare.

They were also the only team to beat York in their last 10 games.

I hope the fans who were calling for Mark Hughes to be replaced, many as early as midway through last season, appreciate what he did for the club. He took over a shambolic outfit, overloaded with players who weren't up to the task of saving us from relegation out of the Football League. To expect us to be able to bounce straight back out of the National League was an expectation too far, especially when it's the most difficult league to win promotion from with only one automatic spot available. **Having made third place and a home playoff semi-final berth, it was hugely disappointing to watch us lose to Boreham Wood.** Despite conceding possession to Boreham Wood for most of the first half we went in at half time level and began to assert ourselves more second half. I actually thought we looked likely to go on and win it, and remain convinced that Kelly's late effort that found the net should have stood. The foolish Luamba sending off conceded the momentum back to the opposition and it was no surprise when they pressed home their advantage. Carlisle supporters were left wondering if a more

adventurous approach to start the game would have proved more fruitful. **I'm sure we'll get that more adventurous approach from Rob Elliot.**

So what are the prospects for the coming season? **The bookmakers have us early favourites to finish as champions with the usual suspects, Southend, Forest Green, Boreham Wood, Scunthorpe and Hartlepool following on.** I think we can do it this time; partly because there isn't an obvious front runner going into the season like York were last year and partly because I think the side will be improved by new signings. We have to hang on to our key players though. I was confident we could kick on even if Mark Hughes had been retained because of the opportunity to unload a lot of the dead wood and the scope it allows to make new signings. Eighteen players left the club at the end of the season including 5 loanees and 4 first year professionals. I'm usually surprised or disappointed by some of the retained or released list but this year found myself pretty much in agreement with it. I'm just disappointed we lost the opportunity, because of injury, to retain the services of Alex Gilliead. It would also be an untimely blow if our Head of Recruitment were to, as rumoured, leave us now for Port Vale. Our recruitment last season was generally good, although the key signings were made before Martin Foyle was in post. A similar level of recruitment this summer will stand us in good stead. I hope Rob Elliot's judgement of a player is as good as Mark Hughes's.

Given that the announcement of Rob Elliot came very soon after the announcement that Mark Hughes was leaving it would appear that the Piataks have learnt something about the dark arts of football ownership. I could be wrong but it appears to me that they had secured their new manager before parting company with the old one. Whatever, it's a bit of a gamble because Rob Elliot hasn't really been tested at the top end of the table. He gives the impression of being a good motivator though, which could be crucial when it comes to those big games.

I think we could be in for a roller coaster ride next season. Elliot says his approach will be to attack and be aggressive. I'm up for that . I'm up for anything that means we end the season back in the Football League though. I think the main thing needed to get there is to sign a few more players who are better than some of the ones we had to call upon last season.

Keep the faith! Ken

CUSG: UNITED IN SUPPORT



The London Branch is a member of the Carlisle United Supporters Groups, which is generally known by its acronym CUSG. **That `S' on Groups is important**. CUSG isn't a membership organisation – it's a collaboration between CUFC and the various supporter groups.

We've been an enthusiastic member since CUSG was set up in 2017 following conversations between and among the supporters groups and staff from Carlisle United about ways to improve communication and collaboration between fans and the club.

CUSG has a simple purpose: to provide a forum for supporters and CUFC to work together and get things done. It's a place for supporters groups to engage with CUFC to give feedback, raise concerns and share ideas. For CUFC it's a place to give regular updates, consult and seek opinions, communicate plans and implement supporter focused initiatives.

Membership is open to all supporters groups and each group normally sends one or two representatives. **London branch are represented by a committee member, usually Chair Dave Brown or Vice-chair John Bowman.** Supporters Liaison Officers, Simon Clarkson (Home) and Claire Burgess (Away) attend each meeting. CUFC are represented by senior management team members, typically the CEO and the Head of Marketing & Media.

Membership is open to any supporters group and in addition fans who are non-affiliated to a specific supporters' group, may be invited to be members of the Group by agreement of the existing CUSG members or request to join. A maximum of 4 such fans can attend any one meeting.

A key role of CUSG is to spot synergy between activities and identify shared priorities, because the constituent groups are all busy with their own fundraising and activities. The recent funding of £500 each given to the Heritage Group by CUST and London Branch re-

spectively resulted directly from discussion at CUSG.

Meetings take place every 6 weeks or so and are virtual, making it easier for London Branch and the South Lakes Group to attend. The current chair is John Kukuc, having been elected by the group. Prior to every meeting each group shares a short update of their activities since the last meeting and raise issues for the agenda. This means that each meeting focuses on current issues of concern to fans and ways in which opportunities and initiatives can be taken forward. Action minutes are taken and these are published on the CUFC website soon after each meeting.

The groups and individuals currently working as CUSG are: Carlisle United Supporters' Trust, South Cumbria Supporters Club, CUSC London Branch, Carlisle United Supporters Away Travel, Heritage Group, Warwick Road End, David Gale (Disabled Supporters' Rep), Supporter Liaison Officer, Keith Ward (Scottish Supporters' rep), Teresa Mulholland (CUFC EDI & Mental Health Officer).



FOLLOWING THE BLUES



Pictured above is Essex-based Branch member Neill Collins attending the 1-0 defeat at Chatham in the FA Trophy match in January. Branch membership secretary Peter Smithson spoke to Neill about his passion for sport and Carlisle United.

Neill joined the branch in 2021 and if you saw him at that match or perhaps at another game in the South, you probably didn't realise that Neill had a fine career as a young middle distance and cross country runner in the 2000's.

Neill is a T20 athlete as he is classified as having learning disability and competed at several World and European Championships organised by INAS – the International Federation for Athletes with Learning Disability.

The highlight of his career was winning a bronze medal at the inaugural INAS European Cross Country Championships in 2003 with a time of 11 minutes and 10 seconds over 2,500m.

Since retiring, Neill has been able to focus on his other passions in life which include coaching at Havering and Thurrock Athletics Clubs in Essex, charity work and hospital radio where he commentates on cricket, football and ice hockey for 12 hospitals in Essex and London.

He follows three (men's) teams in particular; Southend, Carlisle and Blackpool. Southend because he comes from Rainham, and the other two because of watching them when on holidays as a youngster.

He tries to make at least one trip a year to Carlisle and Blackpool as well as some of the South East away games. In addition to watching Southend, he also regularly sees other local non-league teams such as Dagenham Romford and Tower Hamlets plus many Women's games up to and including the top-flight. At Southend, In addition to being a supporter, he does the hospital radio commentary, and he is passionate about football statistics.

MASCOT MEMORIES FOR LIFE



We're delighted to confirm that London Branch will be sponsoring the away day mascot experience again next season, helping to make lasting memories for those young fans who are lucky enough to get selected.

The aim is to have a Carlisle United mascot at every away fixture, and we'll start the process of filling the slots as soon as the fixtures have been released, so keep an eye out for that. The day includes:

+ A goodie bag, presented shortly after arrival at the start of the experience
+ An opportunity to meet the players for autographs and selfies
+ A kickabout on the pitch
+ Walk out with the player of choice for the pre-match line-up
+ Meet the captains and officials ahead of kick off
+ Get your review of the day published on the London Branch website

Some clubs include a dressing room and behind-the-scenes experience - this will be confirmed ahead of each fixture. It's a fantastic day for our junior fans, a never to be forgotten experience, highly recommended by everyone who has taken part so far. **You can register your interest for your child now by emailing mascots@cusclb.com**, Specific slots will be allocated once the fixtures are confirmed.

Go to the Mascots section on www.carlislelondonbranch.org to see more of our mascots in action.


AWAY









FROM MASCOT TO PITCHSIDE



It's been a whirlwind few years for London Branch member Callum Crowther (above), culminating in being assigned to film Mark Hughes exiting the tunnel in front of a packed Bank Holiday Brunton Park crowd v Gateshead, before taking up position to film pitch side. Callum's dad, Nick, a branch member for many years proudly tells the story.

It wasn't the result that any of us wanted, and a goal would have been nice, but I'm assured that the media experience was as good as anything he's experienced anywhere, and he only hopes it can be the start of a closer working relationship with the club going forward.

Callum wasn't born in Carlisle (Hertfordshire) and has never lived there but has been following Carlisle his whole life. His dad first went to Brunton Park in the early 70s, was a season ticket holder in the resurgent mid-80s and has attended away games since moving south after that, so it was only natural that he was tagging along as soon as he was old enough.

Callum's introduction to football was at St Albans City, where his dad is still Match Secretary, and he's been going to Clarence Park for over 15 years now. In the early days he played for St Albans City Youth FC as well, the highlight being a hat-trick in a 3-0 Cup Final win played out at Barnet FC's Hive complex. Although now away at university, he's still part of the St Albans City FC Media team set-up, attending games whenever back from Uni. He's been active in

pitch side filming, gantry filming, match day Twitter updates, player interviews (including with Magnus Norman – remember him – didn't make it to the end of the season…) and local radio commentary there over the past few years.

Tony Craig for a foul on David Amoo. By a quirk of fate, Callum was filming at Dorking Wanderers at the end of the season just completed, just a few weeks ago, and part of the day included a tribute to retiring Dorking stalwart, the very



2013: Brentford v Carlisle Utd

Back to the earlier days, though, and what self-respecting parent wouldn't want his 7-year-old son leading out the Blues? With thanks to Jugsy for making it happen, Callum got to mix with the lads in the dressing room and walk out with Lee Miller for Carlisle at Brentford back in August 2013 (he was on the front of HTB holding up Lee's shirt at the time if anyone has a copy going back that far!). It was a proper day to remember, and Brentford couldn't have been more friendly. The game ended goal-less, the only real incident of note being the dismissal of home captain same Tony Craig… small world and all that. Callum quickly followed the excitement of Brentford with a first ever trip to Brunton Park on Boxing Day that year. We lost 1-0 to Preston. But it was the day out at Griffin Park that probably stands out from back then, and the mascot party recalls Greg Abbott being particularly engaging even though his days were clearly numbered, and he left the club just a few days later.

2016: St Albans City v Carlisle Utd

Despite the fact that both clubs had made appearances in what's now the National League, from different direc-

tions, for a single (different) year each, we always sort of justified following St Albans and supporting Carlisle in this way on the grounds that they didn't move in the same league or regional circles, so there wasn't really any chance they'd ever meet. **So being drawn together, at St Albans, in the 2016/17 FA Cup Round 1 draw came as a bit of welcome shock.** Dream tie at the time really. Ok, he'd been a mascot already, but this was too good an opportunity to pass up. He lined up, Carlisle's only mascot (just in case there was any doubt about where the family's allegiance ultimately rested), alongside Danny Grainger and a fleet of St Albans



mascots. Again, the team, and Keith on this occasion, were fantastic, getting him into the dressing room, (above) posing for photos, making him a part of everything. And a cracking game, in the torrential rain. We went behind early on, and were pegged back to 2-2, before eventually emerging as 5-3 winners.

Sporting the colours…

There's probably no greater honour than pulling on the shirt and Callum has graced the fields of Hackney Marshes, along with a couple of other rather less iconic or glamorous south-eastern venues, on a few occasions, representing the London Branch. Never found the net, but memorably hit they bar after being put through by his dad against AFC Wimbledon supporters. One of the great "if only" moments. And let's face it, if you haven't been left stranded in some part of south or east London, with trains cancelled, knackered after playing against another side's supporters' team, and trying to get to the ground with kick-off looming, then you really haven't lived. **Thanks to Chris Tembey for all his (on-going) work on that front.**



Introduction to Sports Media

Callum went to school in St Albans, and then Harpenden, but when it came to post-GCSEs he chose to do an Extended Diploma in Creative Media at Bedford College, closer to Flitwick where the family had moved to in the meantime. It was a decision that has shaped everything since. The Diploma covered a range of film and production competencies and sectors, but Callum's focus was inevitably on football. He followed up a Year One project film covering a St Albans City v Cheshunt evening league game with work experience wherever he could get it, including with YouTube legends Bunch of Amateurs at Dorking Wanderers, and then with an altogether more ambitious final project chronicling St Albans' 2021 FA Cup Rd 1 victory over (then top of League Two) Forest Green Rovers (they lost at Boreham Wood in Rd 2…). The documentary interspersed BBC Match of the Day footage with interviews with the manager (former Arsenal player, and father of new Dagenham manager Lee, Ian Allinson), along with key players and supporters from the time. It earned him a top grade and entry, with bursary, to what was at the time the country's first degree course focusing specifically on Sports Media and Production, at Bath Spa University.

Bath City FC

Alongside the formal studies, which have included filming at Bath Rugby Club and interviewing the Team GB competitors ahead of their bringing home the Winter Olympic medals, **Callum joined up with local National League South side Bath City and has since established himself as lead pitch side videographer for the club.** He's spent the last two years filming home games and travelling on the team bus to the away games, weekends and midweek, stepping in to provide gantry filming cover where needed, and carrying out the manager's post-match interviews as required. He's become one of the lads with the players, invited out to the post-season festivities with them a few weeks ago, and getting a couple in to feature in a course production video. High points have included filming some great goals and great saves, although there's been a few downs as well, including a rather bizarre incident when he was pushed off his stool by a petulant player at Slough. And then there was the unfortunate altercation with the keeper who misinterpreted his celebrating an away win and gave him some verbal stick for it, only for (small world



again…) the same keeper to turn up in goal for Gateshead at Brunton Park a few weeks ago – there's a great social media post of the two of them chatting and laughing on the pitch post-game and clearing the air. Ultimately, it was a disappointing end to the 25/26 season for Bath, who waited just too long to dismiss their manager (not the only side guilty of that). They were relegated from the National South but go again next season in the Southern League Premier and Callum will be back pitch side and wherever else he's needed.

The Bath City third kit…



Earlier this season, Bath City FC and Bath Spa University ran a joint competition to design a third kit, with half an eye on the leisure shirt market. **Callum's design, black and gold, with Roman sleeve design and outline map of the city on the front, was chosen from more than 25 entries.** It was subsequently produced by Macron and worn by the team in a league game v Enfield Town. **He even helped model the final product.** Over 300 had been sold at the last count and it won a Creative Bath (Marketing Campaign) award last month.

And into the National and Football League, and a chance to film Carlisle…

As well as filming and travelling with Bath, Callum has looked to expand his client base.

Over the 25/26 season he's reached out and filmed at MK Dons (including v Barrow) as well as forging close relations with Swindon Town, who he's filmed several times, including on the final day of the season v Chesterfield when the visitors overtook the Robins for the final play-off spot with a 2-1 win. He also filmed St Albans' 6-0 drubbing at League One Burton Albion in the FA Cup First Round.

But through all this, and going back over years, Carlisle has always been there. He's travelled to away games whenever he could (including of course our own play off final at Wembley) and to actually film Carlisle has been high on his wish-list since he got into the whole filming football thing. **Boreham Wood away**, just down the road from his old St Albans home, was scheduled for the Sunday before last Christmas – it looked like a fixture that might not be the most attractive for travelling media so seemed worth a call to the club. And, fair play to them, they came back with



media accreditation. **We all know it turned out to be a terrible day – outplayed and soaked to the skin.** But he stuck it out pitch side and could at least finally boast about playing an active part in the media operations of the club that had played such a central part in his footballing upbringing.

Not prepared to leave it at that, he was back in touch, media accreditation was again granted, and he and his dad were on the 7am Good Friday train from Milton Keynes to **Carlisle for the Gateshead game.** No goals, but a pretty decent video angle of Linney's shot off the post. And a chance to say hi to Bevis Mugabe, who's a good friend of Callum's Bath-playing friend Alex Fisher, after the final whistle. Then it was on to a train back, to be picked up in Milton Keynes close to midnight the same day, and getting ready for filming St Albans v Farnborough the next day. **A hectic 48 hours, but filming at Brunton Park achieved, hopefully the first of many.**

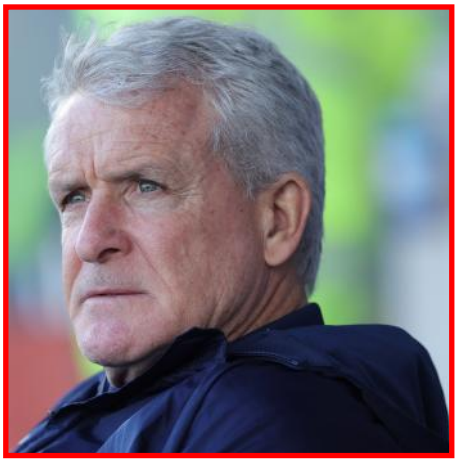
Callum's social media pages (**Stu_Media_** Instagram, same name for TikTok – there's Carlisle stuff on there too – check it out!) are gaining followers all the time with one post, a close up of a red card tackle at Aldershot v Bath in the FA Cup, being picked up by a number of wider football sites, resulting in it being forwarded and viewed millions of times. Gabe Breeze is just one of a number of players from various clubs who've come across and liked one or more of his posts.

It's a tough industry to break into, but he's giving it his best. He's really grateful to the Carlisle United Media Team for giving him the opportunities over the last season and, to whoever may be reading this, he promises to be back in touch soon with a view covering more Carlisle games next season!



GOODBYE & HELLO

Howard 'Grumpy old blue' Atkinson, a long-time branch member is now back in Carlisle and a regular at Brunton Park. In response to my request for views on the departure of Mark Hughes and the arrival of Rob Elliot, Howard shared his thoughts.



"To be honest I was never a fan of Hughes the manager. He was pretty much a failure at Bradford in terms of getting them promoted and his defensive approach to the playoff decider at Brunton Park was telling. But after the Williamson debacle he at least brought vast experience to a relegation fight. A test of course he ultimately failed.

Despite my misgivings I thought the owners were right to retain him last season. We needed to steady the ship after two successive relegations and the last thing we needed was a search for a new manager as well. But the season started underwhelmingly at home and I can remember a couple of post match inquests in the Milbourne where I stated he would be gone by Xmas unless results improved. Results did improve and we settled into a comfy 3rd place. But playoffs were inevitable as Hughes failed to find a way to get any kind of a result against admittedly the 2 best teams in the league.

Clinging on to a belief that we might play Rochdale at Wembley whom we had at least a small chance of beating in a one off cup tie. Sadly we had overlooked Boreham Wood a team like York & Rochdale we had failed to beat. **In front of 13000 fans we put on an insipid display in the first half that reminded me of how defensive Hughes could be.** Yes we lost to a better team but that ended it for me as far as Hughes was concerned.

Those of us who have turned up at BP every game will have seen mostly wins. But the truth is it was turgid stuff not

pretty on the eye. All of which might have been forgiven if we had been promoted. Sadly I'm afraid Hughes failed to meet that objective. **So he was given 2 objectives over a season and a bit & has failed to achieve either!**

Had we retained him for another season my fear was the football would remain very hard to watch with no guarantee of promotion. Time to thank him for all the good stuff he did turning round a sinking ship but say goodbye. **Go well Sparky**.

I don't know much about Rob Elliott but I did see his reborn Gateshead at Brunton Park and was very impressed. Having been at Gateshead on Boxing day for the stroll in the park that was our 3-0 victory, it was like watching chalk & cheese.

He has performed miracles on zero money there. I know he is tarred by a closeness to Williamson. But the difference seems to be he is a pragmatist with more than a Plan A. **Which already puts him ahead of both Williamson & Hughes.**

He is using all the buzzwords of aggressive front foot football that makes me excited for August. But like with players it's a gamble. Let's hope it pays off."



40 CLUB WINNER TELLS ALL



I've said it before & I'll say it again; the 40 Club is without doubt the best £5 I spend each month! My latest win offered Brunton Park Hospitality in a place of my choosing. Having not experienced the now finished East Stand, **I opted for the Cumbria Lounge and then extended the party to include Mam and Dad, to help celebrate Mam's 70th Birthday.**

Given that Lucas finished the season playing for Arlesey Town, Saturdays were a non-starter, so Gateshead on **Friday 3rd April** was a perfect fit, meaning we could be back down South on the following day for Arlesey's final home game of the season (1-2 defeat, don't ask!).

Jasmine was a super contact from the Hospitality end at the club, ensuring everything pre-date was smooth and clear, with match tickets delivered safely and in good time.

Simon Clarkson was, as ever, on hand to offer his time in providing a tour of the East Stand on the day. Prior to the tour, Simon managed to work some additional magic; changing our meeting location to the Main Reception, so our meet-up matched that of the arrival of Mark Hughes: Photo of the day number one! We snuck into the new home changing room (don't tell anyone) which was stunning and quite the upgrade, then walked round the ground via a meet with **Georgie Kelly**, beautiful Memory Garden and finally into the wonder that was the East "Andrew Jenkins" Stand.



Mark Hughes meets Chris' Mam, while Georgie Kelly gets some tips on finishing from Lucas

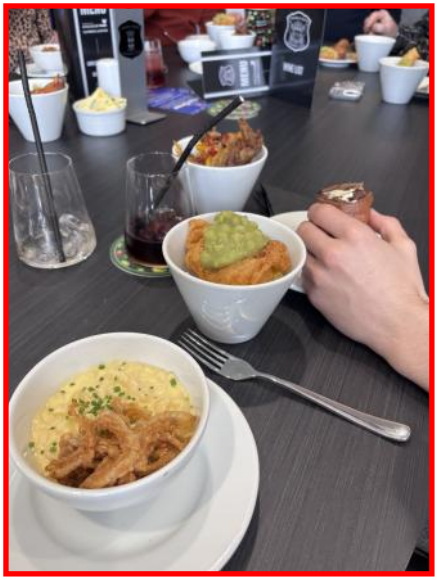


Surreal I think is the best way to describe the following 20 minutes. Grateful for the multiple reminders that we were in fact at Brunton Park, Carlisle, nothing of the like I'd seen before - this felt like we were having a Stadium Tour elsewhere! **We all shared a great pride that such a facility was in fact our Home of Football.**

The lift with its multiple opening doors caused endless confusion but took us up and down the levels, Simon lead us through the multiple lounges on the second level and then up a level to one of the Directors boxes. This was awesome and we were so grateful for the opportunity to experience so much. Simon left us to enjoy the hospitality and enjoy we did!

The Kingmoor Park Cumbria Lounge offers a continuous supply of small food bowls, all of which were great. The 'fish, chips and mushy peas' option was by far the most popular but also the least in supply, so after multiple declines of 'another mac n cheese' the entire table en masse demanded to know when the fish would be back! **The fish appeared along with Luke Armstrong, who dished out some birthday gifts (including something for Mam).**

Gateshead brought healthy travelling numbers and as 0-0 games go it wasn't bad. Atmosphere was lacking but per-





Plenty to eat in the Kingmoor Lounge

Luke Armstong says hello

Chris gets team management tips from Roddy Collins.

The Tembey family







haps the cold wind and goalless game both had an impact. That said both teams had goals ruled out for offside, both hit the woodwork and although we had better/more chances, a Feeney clearance off the line immediately after the restart was the true key moment.

The half-time retreat to Hospitality allowed escape from the wind and a drink and the full-time retreat allowed another drink and the best pies in the world! **Roddy Collins** came along to dish out prizes for the quiz winners and was more than happy to stay for photos, which I accepted. Roddy assured us that we had the players and manager to achieve promotion. On the showing this afternoon I can't see we'd beat York or Rochdale - whoever ends up in the Play-Offs - but it was another point towards securing that third place and a home game, so you never know and Wembley again would be lovely. A chance meeting with **Gabe Breeze** on our departure was a great way to finish the day. Roddy Collins then appeared and offered Lucas and I a shared Taxi ride to the station. For fear he'd make us get the tab, we declined and instead opted for a guaranteed free lift from Dad!

Brilliant day, great experience and what a wonderful thing the Piatak's have done in completing something a certain Mr Knighton started so many years ago. A modern stand to be very proud of. Well worth giving the 40 Club a go if you haven't already!

Chris Tembey

Brunton Park Diary 2025/26



BRUNTON PARK DIARY – THE ROAD TO ~~WEMBLEY~~ HORNCHURCH

24th Mar (Tue)

SHREWSBURY YTH (0) 2 CUFC YTH (0) 1

The Blues defended likes giants against a strong Shrews team looking to go top of the table. Both teams exchanged penalties and a draw seemed likely until a 90th-minute heartbreak for the youngsters.

HALIFAX TOWN (0) 0 CUFC (0) 1

Who doesn't love a controversial matchwinner, Town and United exchanging fouls (by any reason) in the home side's half, Ellis quickly spotting **Linney's** run on the edge of the box and the 20-goal hitman doing the rest with a fine finish. The weather was more like typical Yorkshire for January, which was never going to make for flowing football, both teams and particularly United's midfield enjoying the battle. Macadam went just wide with a header from Linney's cross while Wearne nearly added a second later on as the Shaymen became more desperate. Their best effort saw Breeze saving well from a powerful Jay Turner-Cooke effort.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 7, Ellis 7, Galvin 7, Feeney 7, Thomas 8, **Gilliead 8**, Macadam 7, Wearne 7, Ajiboye 7, Linney 8, Armstrong 7.

Former Blue Oh **Tobi Sho-Silva** Oh Tobi Sho-Silva steps up to join Solihull Moors on loan from Kidderminster Harriers until the end of the season.

26th Mar (Thu)

19-year-old **Ephraim Yeboah** arrives on loan from Bristol City until the end of the season. The Italian born fleet-footed forward progressed from their academy to sign pro terms in 2023, making his senior debut that August in a 5-1 EFL Cup victory over Oxford United. Loan spells at Bath City and Braintree Town then followed.

27th Mar (Fri)

Now already onto club number six, one-time Blue **JK Gordon** joins Rochdale from Colchester United on loan until the end of the season. **Adam Clayton** is shooed through the Matlock Town managerial revolving door for the second time this season. The ex-Blue has taken them to third in the table.

Former nipper **Ryan Carr** features for the Sweaties' Under-21s in Euro qualifying games against the Czech Republic and Portugal, starting in the latter and playing 80 minutes in a 3-0 defeat before being substituted.

28th Mar (Sat)

WREXHAM YTH (1) 2 CUFC YTH (1) 1

Loans out and injuries have left the Blues having to field very young sides in the competition, this game featuring an under 14 on the bench. Despite that, United took a shock lead midway through the first half through an own goal. Robinson made some excellent saves in between the sticks and Tai Bell had the chance for 1v1 glory ten minutes from the end, the keeper reading his move well and saving. Just like on Tuesday, it was stoppage time heartbreak for the youngsters, their #7 reacting to an effort driven against the crossbar and tapping home.

BRAINTREE (1) 1 CUFC (1) 2

Third place here we come, an unlikely hero coming to United's rescue in this far-flung backwater of Essex. Without being anywhere near their best, the Blues had the better of the game against their Conference South bound hosts. The Ellis and **Linney** show combined again for the latter's curling shot to give the lead and it should have been two when the scorer was clearly upended moments later in the box, Ms Burgin not having the greatest of games. That frustration only intensified when the Essex boys scored from a rare foray into the Blues' final third, son-of-Des Lewis Walker given space to finish smartly from a cross. It was a better second half; Wearne hit the bar and CCC's introduction for the last 30 brought some moments of class to open up the hosts. After banging on the door for most of the half and hampered by Armstrong's loss to injury, it was the unlikely source of recalled left-back **Harper** to shoot home with the aid of a slight deflection from just outside the box as the game entered its last knockings.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Ellis 7, Harper 6, Feeney 7, Thomas 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 6, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 7, **Linney 7**, Parker 5. Subs: Davies 6, Conn-Clarke 7, Armstrong 6, Yeboah 6

30th Mar (Mon)

Let's hope Tom and the family don't get bored anytime soon with their soccer plaything.

The sobering 'highlights' from the annual bean counters' report for 2024/5 include an overall loss of £5.1m, a wage bill soaring to £7m, player trading income down by £1.4m with overall club turnover falling by £1.7m to £6.6m. Player costs jumped from £2.8m to

£3.8m with overall staff costs at £7m, up from £4.4m.

31st Mar (Tue)

LINCOLN CITY YTH (2) 4 CUFC YTH (0) 2

The Imps dominated the first half and but for Worth making several brilliant saves to keep United in the game, could have had a hatful. The half-time oranges saw a brief improvement, Towers beating multiple Lincoln players before smashing the ball into the net. Two more quick home goals then followed before Bell's close-range finish for Birch's Bairns following a defensive mix up.

Transfer guru Pete O'Rourke reports that Liverpool, Manchester City, Everton and Burnley are amongst clubs keeping tabs on 15-year-old Carlisle United academy goalkeeper **William Atherton**. Jamie Devitt fires back with the reply "Would love to know where you get your information from as this is absolutely false." Ooh, snap.

1st Apr (Wed)

Negotiations open with **Jordan Jones** to extend his current deal with the club until 2030. "I would love to finish my career with the club, it means so much to me" reports the former Rangers and Wigan man.

3rd Apr (Fri)

CUFC (0) 0 GATESHEAD (0) 0

An entertaining Good Friday game against a rapidly improving Heed will probably be remembered for young loan forward **Parker** repeatedly fluffing his lines. His positioning and work rate however couldn't be questioned and having had defenders all over him in the first half, he was unlucky to get a referee offering no protection whatsoever. A more streetwise forward such as the missing Kelly and Joey Garner back in his heyday, would have highlighted every single contact out on the park. There's enough there to say he'll probably be thrashing them in for fun at L1 or L2 level in a couple of seasons' time à la Madden and Wells. It wasn't just the youngster, Ajiboye and Linney both striking the upright that on another day, might have seen the game finish 4 or 5-1; the visitors also striking the crossbar early doors.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 7, Ellis 6, Harper 6, **Feeney 7**, Thomas 6, Gilliead 7, Macadam 7, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 7, Linney 7, Parker 6. Subs: Davies 6, Yeboah 6, Wyke 6

4th Apr (Sat)

CUFC YTH (0) 1 SHREWSBURY YTH (2) 5

The young Blues made too many uncharacteristic errors against their strong opponents, who completed a 11-day

double. At least they managed the goal of the game, Bell scoring with a brilliant chip over the keeper after being played through by Jack Hodgson.

6th Apr (Mon)

WALSALL YTH 1 CUFC YTH 2

Not many details about this game other than after bagging a brace, 16-year-old winger **Josh Wade** has now registered an applause-worthy 47 goal (33) and assist (14) contributions this season while playing a mix of U17s and U18s since the beginning of the season. No wonder United's media department match coverage had gone very quiet to the point of non-existence over the last few months!

MORECAMBE (1) 2 CUFC (0) 2

A handy point after rivals Boreham Wood lost and with Morecambe fighting for their NL lives coming off the back of a shock away win at Rochdale, but at what cost with Gilliead goosed with a season-ending injury.

That capped a poor first half for the Blues, going behind to a long throw into the box not being cleared and the loose ball being struck past Breeze. United zipped out of the second half blocks with intent, Ellis again setting up **Linney** to drill past Boney and then Breeze's raking long pass finding **Ajiboye** to race through, jink past the keeper and give the lead. The unfortunate Macadam back-headed in an almost comedic own goal to set up a crazy, basketball-like final ten minutes. With Shrimpers having to go all out for three points, Hughes must have torn whatever's left of his perm out with United's wasteful finishing failing to exploit the huge gaps at the back, Wyke amongst the worst offenders.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Ellis 7, Galvin 5, Feeney 6, Thomas 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 5, Wearne 6, **Ajiboye 7**, Linney 7, Kelly 5. Subs: Davies 6, Wyke 5

9th Apr (Thu)

O'Rourke reports that the Blues are one of several clubs including Walsall, Colchester, Barnet and Rochdale, chasing Dartford defender **Sam Odaudu**, who is out of contract this summer.

Move over Melvyn Bragg, **Williamson** is promoted to Director of Performance and Culture at South Shields FC.

11th Apr (Sat)

MORECAMBE YTH 3 CUFC YTH 5

No report other than there were two goals from Towers with Bell, J Hodgson and Wade with the others.

CUFC (3) 3 SUTTON UTD (0) 0

A rapid return to winning ways, the Blues far too strong against a side playing with maybe one eye on their summer holibobs. Good ball-winning work by Whelan found Wearne, who in turn set up **Macadam** to curve his shot into the bottom corner with just ten on the clock. The next one didn't take long to come, Whelan curling a free-kick on to **Macadam's** nut who did the rest. Ajiboye drew a full-length stop from the keeper and then Galvin underlapped onto **Linney's** pass to blast in number three. Kelly somehow hit the post for the rampant Blues with the remainder of the game largely a job in energy conservation ahead of the play-off campaign.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Ellis 8, Galvin 7, Feeney 7, Thomas 6, **Macadam 8**, Whelan 8, Wearne 7, Ajiboye 7, Linney 7, Kelly 6. Subs: Williams 6, Yeboah 6, Wyke 6

14th Apr (Tue)

Following strong support from the WRE regulars, the club agree to trial a 'singing Section' for the Brackley game with Section 3 of the East Stand selected.

16th Apr (Thu)

Knee-knacked **Gilliead** will be on his X-Box for the next eight to nine months after undergoing surgery.

Tranmere apparently near the start of the year, blocked a third move back to Brunton Park for **Omari Patrick** according to comments made by Thomas on his Twitch stream.

18th Apr (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 4 OLDHAM YTH (0) 0

Wade raises his virtual bat towards the dug outs after completing his half century of goals and assists, brilliantly setting up the first for Towers, scoring two himself and then Towers also completing his brace with an outrageous finish from a tight angle after robbing the ball off Oldham 'keeper. Towers also hit the woodwork twice in a strong display to make it three wins on the bounce.

TRURO CITY (0) 0 CUFC (0) 1

Not much action or value for those making the 900-mile footballing pilgrimage to the other end of the country but at least the comfort of three points and a confirmed 3rd place brought home along with their swag bag of Cornish souvenirs. Kelly's saved shot, Whelan's skied chance and Ajiboye's fluffed header served notice before the game hit a bit of a lull with Truro gaining confidence. **Linney** decided to stop that bit of fun by picking up the ball from

Ajiboye and rifling home after a trademark cut inside the last defender. They just never learn. Back came the hosts, Galvin having to clear off the line and Breeze earning his plane ticket with some fine saves. United held on to take the points and could even afford Ajiboye to miss an absolute sitter.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 6, Williams 6, Galvin 6, Feeney 6, Thomas 7, Macadam 5, Whelan 5, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 6, **Linney 7**, Kelly 5. Subs: Davies 6, Ellis 6, Armstrong 6

19th Apr (Sun)

Season ticket pricing is frozen for the 2026/27 campaign with renewals again receiving a six-game saving if purchased by 24 May.

21st Apr (Tue)

CUFC YTH (0) 0 MORECAMBE YTH (0) 1

Some brilliant saves from Worth kept it to 0-0 until a close-range Shrimpers finish on the hour mark holed the Blues.

25th Apr (Sat)

PORT VALE YTH (1) 2 CUFC YTH (0) 0

The Blues went behind to an early penalty only to have one of their own saved moments after falling behind 2-0. The Vale keeper apparently had a blinder according to the home reporter.

CUFC (2) 3 BRACKLEY TOWN (0) 0

An almost perfunctory, no dramas win achieved despite several key players rested and with the bonus of Luamba making a welcome return to action (what could go wrong). Archie Mair finally made his goalkeeping debut, a generally assured one in the rare occasions he was called into action. Half a dozen gone and Williams to Ajiboye combined to cross, the returning **Armstrong** gobbling up the half-chance with a fine near-post finish. The game was then as good as over with Ellis reacting quickly to chest home the rebound from Galvin's piledriver from outside the box. CCC came on to help United's forward intent and it wasn't long before he was setting up Kelly to nod home the third to cap a season where the 95-point haul and 29 victories was comfortably a CUFC record for a league campaign.

Player Ratings*: Mair 6, Williams 6, Galvin 7, Hayden 6, Mugabi 6, Ellis 7, **Whelan 7**, Wearne 7, Ajiboye 6, Yeboah 6, Armstrong 7. Subs: Atkinson 6, Conn-Clarke, Wyke 6, Luamba 6

28th Apr (Tue)

Highly rated 18-year-old academy midfielder **Jonah Lowes** signs a two-year pro contract with United following his fine loan spell with Darlington.

30th Apr (Thu)

The long overdue fans' forum doesn't reveal too much in the way of headlines, the biggest perhaps Uncle Tom's reveal on the departure of **Nigel Clibbens** and after nine years at the club, the need for a new "skill set" for a fresh "growth phase" of the club. A consultancy firm, the Executives In Sports Group, was now leading the process of finding his successor.

2nd May (Sat)

GRIMSBY YTH (0) 0 CUFC YTH (2) 2

A dominant Blues display boosted by the return of Lowes with Rafferty's brilliant ball into the box setting up Wade for the first and Towers doubling the lead after spinning a defender and finding the bottom corner.

On the field the future looks good for the Blues with U16s also seeing off Grimsby 2-1 to claim the EFL Youth Alliance North title.



3rd May (Sun)

CUFC (1) 1 BOREHAM WOOD FC (1) 2
PLAY-OFF SEMI FINAL AET

United's Wembley and promotion dreams sadly crushed for another day, the script controversially torn up by **Kelly's** debatably penalised for handball after Brunton Park had erupted to celebrate what seemed a late lead. Replays clearly showed most of the ball striking in the shoulder and chest area, not even one single Wood player appealing for handball. Luamba's straight red not long after was less controversial although Brunt made the most of minimal con-

tact, perfectly fine to carry and score the winner only minutes later. Hughes' critics were given ammunition by the Cumbrians' lacklustre start, standing off and allowing a team just coming off the back of a tough playoff win against Forest Green to gather themselves and pass their way into the game. The lively **Abdulmalik** gave them a deserved lead, his low, deflected shot confounding Breeze. Man of the match by a country mile, **Feeney** took it upon himself to one-two with Ajiboye down the right before lashing in from a tight angle to send Brunton Park rocking.

The half-time whistle denied United a head of steam with the better chances in the second period still falling to the Wood until a better last 20 for the Blues brought the moment when **Kelly's** strike was ruled out. Conn-Clarke almost gave United an early extra-time lead with an excellent curling effort just tipped over before Luamba's brain fart effectively ended their chances once **Brunt** scored.

Player Ratings*: Breeze 5, Williams 6, Galvin 6, **Feeney 7**, Hayden 6, Macadam 5, Whelan 5, Wearne 5, Ajiboye 5, Linney 6, Armstrong 5. Subs: Kelly 6, Ellis 6, Conn-Clarke 6, Luamba 4

4th May (Mon)

Parent club Peterborough United cut their losses and make **Jumbo Corn-Clarke** available for transfer.

9th May (Sat)

There are no shocks with the retain list, only Harvey Macadam remaining for another crack at the title out of those who might have been offered a deal. One eyebrow raise amongst the exodus is the club managing to offload Jones a year before his deal was up. The complete list is **Terell Thomas, Aaron Hayden, Archie Davies, Charlie Wyke, Ethan Robson, Josh Grant, Sam Murray** and **Jordan Jones** alongside young pros **Jake Allan, Dan Hopper, Freddie O'Donoghue** and **Thomas Randall. Sam Hetherington** is invited back for pre-season.

The other players remaining under contract are **Luke Armstrong, Josh Williams, Morgan Feeney, Cameron Harper, Bevis Mugabi, Junior Luamba, Stephen Wearne, Georgie Kelly, Gabe Breeze, Callum Whelan, David Ajiboye, Jack Ellis, Hayden Atkinson, Regan Linney, Elliot Embleton, Ryan Galvin and Jonah Lowes.**

Unannounced new pro **Amaru Smith** is confirmed with young keeper **Casey Sillitoe** also offered an extension to his deal.

Captain Morgan, so good they named a rum after him in his honour, is named in the National League team of the season while 23-goal Linney misses out in the face of tough competition. Former Blue, **Angelo Balanta**, earns a place in the National League South team of the season after a prolific campaign with promotion bound Hornchurch.

12th May (Tue)

Former Blues midfielder **Adam Murray** takes the cash and jumps ship from newly promoted Kidderminster Harriers to helm relegated, managerial merry-go-rounders Barrow AFC on a two-year deal.

13th May (Wed)

Old boy **George Glendon** joins Bury FC for the new season following his release from Radcliffe.

14th May (Thu)

United are linked with 25-year-old Partick Thistle wide man **Aidan Fitzpatrick**, who is out of contract this summer with Doncaster Rovers seen as the main rivals. Fitzpatrick, who also had spells at Norwich City and Queen of the South, made 46 appearances this season, scoring five goals.

Chris Beech is back in the game after being appointed head of recruitment at newly minted Monkey Hangers. Could the Kayode and Patrick gang be back in town? The familiar figure of **Gary Liddle** is also confirmed as their first team coach.

16th May (Sat)

CUFC U16 XI (3) 6 MORECAMBE U16 XI (0) 0 – U16 FRIENDLY

In the record given the special occasion for the all-conquering U16's, who were presented with the EFL Youth Alliance North trophy after the game. A brace from Wheatley and further goals from that man Wade, Cumersky, Stuart and Jack Hodgson completed a comfortable win that was played on the hallowed turf.

17th May (Sun)

Less than seven years after leaving Leeds United, former nipper **Josh Galloway** joins Lowland League Gretna 2008 following his departure from the Jameaters.

18th May (Mon)

The evening's CUSG meeting confirms to the joy of many retired LB members currently resident in the East Stand, that the "Blue Army" (TBC) singing section will be available again next season following positive feedback. Provided nobody stands on seats or blocks access routes, the CSO has cleared that fans

can stand at the very back of this area - in other words, anywhere you like as long as you're not blocking someone's view of our 7th goal against Hornchurch next season. There were several issues for improvement raised at the recent Fans' Forum around the ticket allocation process (over complicated and time consuming), the QR code for question submission (provide it before the forum), the audio quality (awful), the room layout (difficult to move), the delayed start, and the timing of the forum (very late and just two days before the biggest game of the season). Incredibly, nobody mentions the silent, threatening, mystery figure at the left end of the speakers' table visible for the first part of the stream. Next season could see the inclusion of a youth fans forum and/or forums on focused topics as well as a regular cadence around two per season, one in the autumn and one in the spring.

22nd May (Fri)

David Ajiboye's jaw-dropping stunner at Vegan FC is one of five contenders nominated for the Enterprise National League Goal of the Season. The winner is expected to be announced in the first week of June.

United announce **Macron** as their new kit supp…sorry, "technical partner" on a multi-year deal. I'm surprised he has the time, what with dealing with Trump and Putin, running France and so on.

A Vale fan site posts that legend **Martin Foyle** is set to quit the bright lights of United and his senior recruitment position to become their new Director of Football.

23rd May (Sat)

One-time Blue **Max Hunt** is off again, linking up with Andy Preece's National League North club Chorley. The 27-year-old defender had spells with Buxton and Alfreton Town last season.

Sam Cosgrove wins the Australian A-League title with Auckland, who beat Sydney 1-0. Auckland FFS.

24th May (Sun)

Former star **Kyle Dempsey's** departure from Bolton following their Wembley PO Final win sets a few tongues wagging over a potential return to Cumbria. Calm down, not yet.

25th May (Mon)

United issue a 'hands-off, he's going nowhere' statement as they play down the **Martin Foyle** rumour.

27th May (Wed)

The feeling is that the sign of blue

smoke over Brunton Park could happen any day now with Gateshead announcing that their current manager **Rob Elliot** has left the club after failing to reach agreement over "budgets and immediate infrastructure.". Elliott had taken the Heed from NL basket cases - 12 points from safety after a 15-game winless run - to survival after only losing two of their next 15 games. Worthing boss Adam Hinshelwood is another name in the frame while Southend United have also been linked with both managers following Maher's unceremonial boot through the door marked Do One following their recent FA Trophy win at Wembley.

Greenwich-born Elliot had a long and successful career between the sticks, making his Football League debut with Notts County in 2005 before further spells at Accrington Stanley, Charlton, a long stint at Newcastle United and finally Watford. He also won four Republic of Ireland caps between 2014 and 2016. He moved to Gateshead in 2022, taking on first-team coaching duties under manager Mike Williamson (shudder), guiding them as caretaker boss to a very credible 6th place in the NL once Mikey and the rest had cleared off to MK Dons. He was then given the permanent reins in the summer of 2024 and remained in charge until October that year, before being approached to take charge at Crawley Town in League One. He left Gateshead fifth in the table. His brief stint in Sussex was a bit of a car crash not entirely of his making, the cash-strapped Red Devils losing several players and without a transfer window to fix it. His Red Adair act at Gateshead after replacing Luke's old man has by most observers, significantly re-floated his stock.



28th May (Thu)

Play-off king **Mark Hughes'** reign as head coach is over after being mutually consented out of Brunton Park together with first-team coach Frankie McAvoy. Sparky leaves having overseen 64 league games with a not too shabby 53

per cent win percentage (W34 D14 L16). Views over the news are predictably mixed with valid arguments each side for staying and a change in the dugout. For every FGR there was a York, Rochdale or Boreham Wood, a feeling that he couldn't adapt and find a plan B, plan C etc. when decent sides changed their tactics to try and overcome CUFC. Fans sometimes love a bit of passion on the touchline and strangely for someone who always showed that when he wore the shirt of Man Utd, Wales and so on, you rarely in those 64 games saw that from either him or his teams; even some of our largest victories were characterized by a lack lustre start to the game instead of coming out all guns blazing.

Rob Elliot is confirmed as the new head coach just a few hours after the Hughes announcement, the 40-year-old on a similar rolling contract to Hughes. He arrives with a promise to bring drive and intensity, develop a tactically flexible, front-foot, attacking team that plays with purpose, creates chances and connects with supporters have the team playing attacking, aggressive football with and without the ball. Is that it? Elliot will report to Marc Tierney, whose title is now sporting director from previously head of football operations.

Season ticket sales sweep past 3,000 as they hunt down last season's total of around 3,400.

30th May (Sat)

Former coach **Ian Watson** emerges as the lead candidate for the Southend United Head Coach position. Watson recently led his South Shields side to the NLN promotion play-off final, going down 2-0 to Kidderminster Harriers.

*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.

Mike Kilner



CUSG PREDICTION COMPETITION
FINAL TABLE SEASON 25/26

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

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SIMON CLARKSON ASSESSES THE 25/26 PREDICTION COMPETITION

A low scoring season. In the Premier League, 14 had Arsenal as champions and 13 had Wolves finishing bottom. 10 had City to win the FA cup but none of them had Chelsea as runners up. In the championship 20 had Leicester to be promoted and only Dave Brown had Leicester to go down. No one had Lincoln to be promoted from League 1. Only 3 had Bromley to be promoted (all guessed 3rd place). Nobody had York and Rochdale finishing top 2.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR 26/27 ENTRY FORM IN THE NEXT HTB

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







Matchday picture credits to Richard Parkes, Mark Fuller, Jordan McGrath and the CUFC Media Team.

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