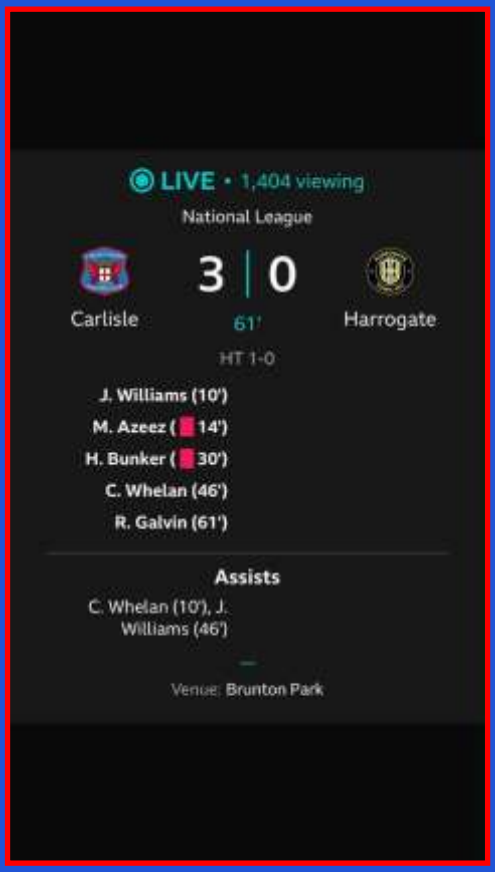
HIT THE BAR!

November 2026

THE MATHS IS THE MATHS!

11 minus 2 = 3 : 0









The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine

£1

FIXTURES 26/27

NOVEMBER

7 Salford City FA Cup (H)
14 Boston United (H)
21 Barrow (A)
24 Tamworth (H)
28 Sutton United (H)

DECEMBER

5 FC Halifax Town (A) / FAC2
8 Kidderminster Harriers (A)
12 FA Trophy 3rd Round
20 Aldershot Town (H)
26 Gateshead (A)
28 Hartlepool United (H)

JANUARY

2 Solihull Moors (H)
9 Harrogate Town (A) / FAC3
16 FA Trophy 4th Round
23 Yeovil Town (H)
26 Tamworth (A)
30 Worthing (A)

FEBRUARY

6 Barrow (H)
13 Woking (A) / FAC4
16 AFC Fylde (H)
20 Eastleigh (H)
23 Forest Green Rovers (A)
27 Hornchurch (A)

MARCH

6 Wealdstone (H) / FAC5
9 Scunthorpe United (A)
13 Boreham Wood (H)
20 Southend United (A)
26 Hartlepool United (A)
29 Gateshead (H)

APRIL

3 Altrincham (H) / FAC6
10 Boston United (A)
17 FC Halifax Town (H)
24 Sutton United (A)

The London Branch owns 2 season tickets for the Paddock terrace at Brunton Park. New this season is that members can use these tickets once each season free of charge. It's then a cost of just £10 per game for subsequent use.

To use a ticket/s, contact Linda McLoughlin seasontickets@cusclb.com 2 weeks in advance of the game you plan to attend. Preference is given to those who haven't used them ever before and then to those who haven't used them in the current season.

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From the Heritage Group archives. Wonder when our next home match with Roma will be?

EDITORS BLEAT



Welcome to HTB! 344.

A last minute reworking of the front cover was needed following the events of Wednesday 28th October. The biggest ever win by a side in the top five divisions of English football, having had two men sent off in the first 30 minutes? What a time to be alive!

The image and words below *was* the front cover until last night, reflecting the very frustrating start of the season which has felt like a repeated pattern of steps forward and then stumbles backward. Dave and Ken reflect this in their regular columns and Mike Kilner's Brunton Diary has all the grisly details. Please do read Malcolm Fawcett's excellent tribute to our founding chairman, Mike Houghton, it's important that we remember the deep roots of the London Branch and the people that created it. On the broader subject of heritage, I'm pleased to feature the work of the Heritage Group, which the branch supports with donations and perhaps more importantly, the time and experience of branch members who are now back in Carlisle having tired of the pleasures of the deep south.

UTB

John B



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



We had very sad news this month learning that the London Branch founder, Mike Houghton, had passed away in a nursing home in his hometown of Whitehaven.

Member, Malcolm Fawcett, was at the first meeting at the Finborough Arms in November 1974 and became our first treasurer. You will find elsewhere in this fanzine a eulogy that Malcolm wrote from his home in Texas. As Malcolm said, "*Mike was the true founder of the London Branch, and every member owes him a huge debt of gratitude.*" From that first meeting of 6-7 Carlisle fans, the London Branch has grown over 52 years to a thriving membership of nearly 400 exiled blues throughout the UK and across the world. We do indeed owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mike.

Malcolm also learned of the passing this month of Dave Leitch. Dave formed the Barrow National Supporters Club a couple of years after the London Branch with the help of Malcolm who also became the first treasurer of this group. You will also find the eulogy to Dave that Malcolm wrote. **RIP to two great Cumbrians that made a difference, and, also, a thanks to Malcolm Fawcett as his work over decades before moving to Texas was instrumental in our growth.**

On the pitch, results have improved in recent weeks with our win over Solihull Moors making it 3 away wins in a row and unbeaten for 5 in all competitions. It does have to be said that the performances have been very inconsistent. I couldn't make it to Solihull, but I gather from those that did that the first half was awful but, once substitutes were introduced in the second half, we thoroughly deserved the win. We play Harrogate at home on Wednesday when we will see how we perform against one of the best performing teams and hopefully break the bogey run of never having beaten them in the league. **Let's hope for the positive results to continue this season and, hopefully, performances to get more consistent.**

Up the Blues

SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING

In the last issue we provided a detailed breakdown of the sponsorships and donations committed to for this season. Here are some of the pictures that we get back as feedback.

Greg McCarragher (coach) presenting the September Goal of the Month winner, Alfie Park, with the London Branch Trophy his Medal. The medal is a new initiative this season, so that the each month's trophy winner has an award to keep. The wording on Alfie's medal is:

CUFC ACADEMY
LB GOAL OF THE MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2026
ALFIE PARK





We sponsor the Brunton Park First time visitor scheme. The CUSCLB logo is on the reverse of tote bag which includes an invitation to join the branch.

Join the 40 Club now. Every month there is a draw with a first prize of hospitality including match tickets (alternative cash of £60), a 2nd prize of £30 and a 3rd prize – normally a book on the club. There are occasional extra prizes such as a signed shirt. To join or get details contact Simon Clarkson at 40club@cusclb.com



CARLISLE UNITED PLAYER SPONSOR 26-27

Branch member John Notman with our sponsored player, Jack Ellis

CUSC LONDON BRANCH



The Jack Ellis banner on the East Stand with CUSCLB Logo and the new training kit for CUFC Ladies



KEEP THE FAITH



Our season so far has been a bit of a curate's egg; good in parts. Unfortunately, the good parts have been too infrequent. As we are only 12th after 14 matches, there is no way we're going to catch Boreham Wood who are currently on target for a record number of points. Even overhauling the likes of Harrogate and Southend is looking like a big task at the moment. Our only hope is to have a strong second half of the season, make sure of the play offs and hit form at the right time.

It's difficult to put a finger on why we've performed poorly too often. My pre-season prediction was that we'd do well because I thought we'd improved the squad with a couple of good signings. After an excellent start Bunker has slipped into mediocrity and Azeez has not shown his qualities often enough. The best acquisition has been Duru, but then we were already well covered at right back (or right wing back) with Williams and Ellis. We still have a problem on the left side and Jenks has yet to do anything noteworthy but still finds himself selected regularly.

Injuries, inevitably, have played a major part in our lack of form, especially given the number of players that returned for pre-season with injuries, thus disrupting our preparations. Armstrong, Macadam and forgotten man Embleton have yet to get back in the fold. Five centre backs out for the Eastleigh game was always going to disrupt the team massively, and so it proved as we slumped to a bad defeat.

When blame for our poor start is attributed most of the finger pointing is aimed at the manager. I think that's reasonable given that what we needed was someone to build on last season's achievements; after all we'd retained nearly all of the players that had contributed to our 3rd place finish. What

we've got though is a manager who has brought a new broom and is determined to get us playing in a different way with too little regard for how suited the players are to playing that way. Elliot said after the Tamworth game that he wants to "show the fans what they're trying to do". Surely what they should be trying to do is win matches and get promoted.



His favoured playing formation seems to be 3 5 2 with wing backs pushing forward, 3 central midfielders and two forwards. **To me that means certain players are not playing to their strengths and it leaves us more open to counter attacks.** Playing without wide forwards means that neither Linney nor Ajiboye can play in their favoured positions out wide because we have wingbacks pushing into those positions. As a result, neither player is as effective as they were last season. Playing 4 3 3 would allow for two genuine wide attacking players and keep us more solid at the back. I can't see many advantages to Carlisle, with the players we've got, of playing 3 at the back.

The prospect of free flowing attacking football dangled before the fans by Elliot at the start of the season has proved to be fools gold. In general we have failed in attack, with too many missed chances when we have managed to create, and in defence where we are quite often open and a series of mistakes have cost us goals. In too many games we've resorted to knocking the ball long from the keeper to Kelly. The first time Kelly was absent with injury, away to Aldershot, there was more evidence of the free flowing attacking play, but it had disappeared when we played the next game at home to Kidderminster. Despite the win, by all accounts the performance at Solihull, who are second from bottom, was pretty poor. Before half time Jon Colman was describing it as a "sad spectacle"!

Although we've had a little run of games unbeaten it hasn't filled me with confidence for the rest of the

season. We've won only 2 points from the last 4 league games at home. It makes you wonder if there's a bit of a psychological problem for the players when we play at home.

The discussion on a recent Carlisle Social touched on this when the question was asked as to whether Carlisle fans' expectations were too high (thus putting pressure on players when they're underperforming and potentially giving rise to personal abuse from some fans). Supporters should never stoop so low as to start abusing individuals but it's not unreasonable to show displeasure when the team has lost and underperformed.

As for expectations, it's not unreasonable either to expect us to be competing at a higher level than this. Whether the expectations should extend to a level higher than League 2 is a moot point. Presenter Paul Newton suggested that the stats show us on average near the top of League 2, but I'm not sure on what basis that is. **My own research has our average league position since the 4th Division was established around about 63rd in the pyramid, which would have us near the bottom of League 1, and based on average crowds since we entered the Football League, about 68th.**

Expectations then should be that of a League 1 club, albeit near the bottom. We must be one of the few clubs that are punching 2 levels below their weight.

Even though we weren't convincing, the win at Solihull kept our little good run going and the 2 tough games to follow, at home to bogey team Harrogate and away to an in form Altrincham, will give us an idea about our prospects of making the play-offs. There's still plenty of time left to continue our climb up the table and cement ourselves into a good play-off spot.

Keep the faith

Ken

EVERYWHERE WE GO

BE THE CARLISLE UNITED MASCOT AT AN AWAY FIXTURE!

The day includes: A goodie bag, An opportunity to meet the players for autographs and selfies, A kickabout on the pitch, Walk out with the player of your choice for the pre-match line-up, Meet the captains and officials, Your review of the day published on the London Branch website. It's a fantastic day and a never to be forgotten experience.

Register your child's interest now by emailing mascots@cusclb.com, .

Go to the Mascots section on www.carlislelondonbranch.org to see more

Taking to the pitch with a confident stride at Solihull is mascot Connie Robson, daughter of our membership secretary Paul. Connie had a great day despite the weather with United winning 2-1.



William Foster walked the team out with his favourite player David Ajiboye at Yeovil. Dad Kris said "We were brilliantly well looked after by Claire Burgess, away SLO, before it was time to go play out part in the buildup to the match. I was really proud of our players and staff, all taking time to come and talk to William and make him feel welcome. On top of that, Yeovil's players and staff were brilliantly friendly and supportive too. From our point of view, they seem like a brilliant







PRESERVING THE PAST, CONNECTING GENERATIONS

For many supporters, Carlisle United is far more than ninety minutes on a Saturday afternoon. It is a collection of memories, friendships, family traditions and shared experiences stretching back generations. **Helping to preserve and celebrate that rich history is the Carlisle United Heritage Group, a fan volunteer-led group that has become an increasingly important part of the club's community.**

How the Heritage Group Was Formed

The Heritage Group emerged from a desire among fans to ensure that the history of Carlisle United was collected, preserved and shared for future generations. Its development was supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund-backed Backing the Blues project, which enabled fans to acquire digitisation equipment, establish archive facilities and begin the task of cataloguing thousands of items connected with the club's history.

Collaborating with the club and the University of Cumbria, fans have assembled an extensive archive of photographs, programmes, newspapers, memorabilia and personal recollections. The project has safeguarded important artefacts and stories that might otherwise have been lost, creating a lasting resource for supporters, researchers and future generations of Blues fans.

Bringing History to Life

The Heritage Group's work extends far beyond archiving. While preserving the past remains a core objective, the group are equally committed to making that history accessible and engaging.

Through displays at the archive on the University of Cumbria Brampton Road campus, Brunton Park and in the community, supporters are given opportunities to explore key moments in the club's history. Match-worn shirts, historic photographs, player memorabilia and archive material regularly feature in displays that celebrate the achievements of players, managers and supporters from every era. Core objectives of the group are to ensure that the club's heritage can be shared more widely and secured for the future.

Welcoming Former Players and Their Families

One of the Heritage Group's most valuable contributions has been the way it reconnects former players and their



John Notman at work in the archive.

Former players enjoy being back on the pitch at Brunton Park



families with the football club.

The group has welcomed a steady stream of former players to its archive centre and heritage events, providing opportunities for supporters to hear first-hand recollections from those who wore the blue shirt. These stories are promoted on the Facebook page. Visiting families of former players have also donated photographs, documents and memorabilia that help fill gaps in the club's historical record. The group are regularly contacted at archives@carlisleunited.co.uk and undertake research on behalf of families of former players.

The visits become much more than social occasions. They allow personal stories to be recorded and preserved, while creating meaningful connections between different generations of supporters. Re-connecting with former players has seen several invited back as hospitality lounge guests, with Peter Garbutt having made an appearance this season and Malcolm Poskett to visit later this year.

Former striker **David Reeves**, speaking during a return visit this season, summed up the affection many former players still feel for the club:

"*I had 11 clubs, and no-one else has ever invited me back to do anything like this. The people here, you all remember. That's worth more than anything*."

Supporting Community Events

The Heritage Group has become a familiar presence at community events. The Heritage Group frequently attend supporter events to put on a display, remembrance activities and veterans' events, ensuring that the history of the football club remains connected to the wider community.

The display at the Carlisle city centre Veterans Day included historical material that helped to recognise the contribution made by servicemen and women with connections to the club and region.

These events demonstrate that the Heritage Group is not simply focused on football history. It is also helping to celebrate the broader social and community role that Carlisle United has played throughout its existence.

The Brunton Park Memory Garden

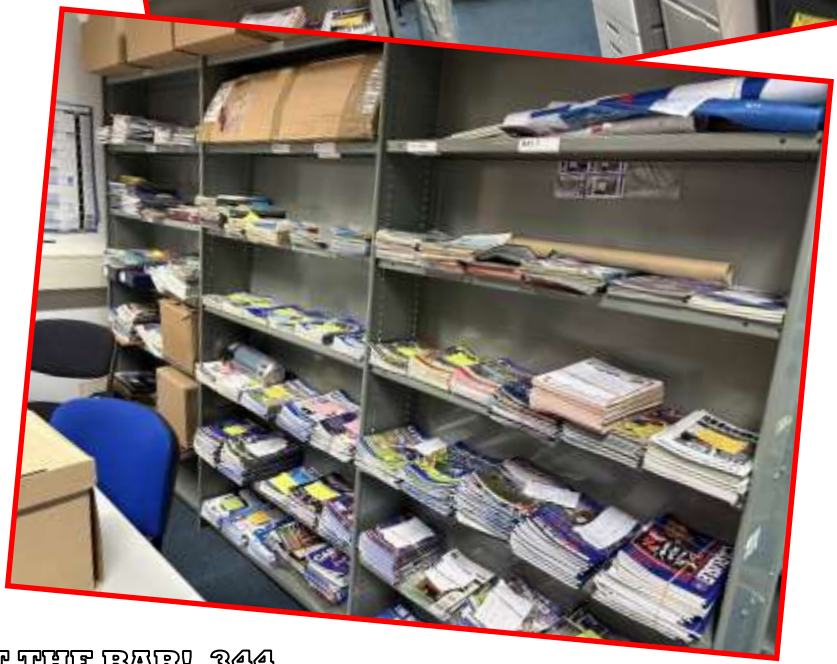
The group's strong association with the Brunton Park Memory Garden is another example of its community focus.

The Memory Garden provides a peaceful and reflective area where supporters can remember loved ones, former players and fellow fans. The close connection between the Memory Garden and the Heritage Group reflects a shared commitment to remembering those



The Heritage Group collection, safe at the Cumbria University campus on Brampton Road.





who helped shape the club's history, both on and off the pitch.

The Heritage Group will again support the remembrance initiatives linked to the garden and has helped ensure that the stories of past players and supporters remain an important part of its purpose.

United in Memories

United in Memories is a Carlisle United Community Sports Trust dementia-friendly group that uses football memories to stimulate conversation and social interaction.

The Heritage Group will play a role in supporting these sessions. Historic photographs, programmes, newspaper cuttings and memorabilia from the archive will be used to spark recollections and discussions among participants.

For many attendees, football memories provide an important link to their past, and the Heritage Group's extensive collection offers a valuable resource that helps make these sessions so successful.

Celebrating Retro Shirt Day

The Heritage Group supported the Carlisle United Supporters Trust popular Retro Shirt Day in September. The display in the fan zone of classic Carlisle United shirts from different generations complemented the supporters who wore their own treasured replicas and allowed fans to celebrate personal memories connected with following the Blues.

The display prompted conversations between supporters of different ages, creating opportunities for older fans to share stories of promotion campaigns, cup runs and favourite players with younger generations. It perfectly reflects the Heritage Group's wider mission: using football history to bring people together.



Taking Fans Behind the Scenes

Ground tours have become another popular part of the Heritage Group's activities.

Combining access to areas of Brunton

Park not normally seen by supporters with fascinating stories from the club's past, these tours provide a unique perspective on the stadium and its history.

Visitors can learn about key moments from the club's development while gaining a deeper appreciation of the people, events and achievements that have shaped Carlisle United over the decades.

Looking Ahead

Despite the completion of the original lottery-funded project, volunteers remain active in collecting material, recording memories, hosting visitors and promoting the club's history. Supporters Groups have also recognised the importance of the archive through ongoing practical and financial support.

As the collection continues to grow and new stories emerge, the Heritage Group is ensuring that Carlisle United's heritage remains accessible, relevant and alive.

They are strengthening the bond between past and present, ensuring that the stories, achievements and people that built Carlisle United will continue to inspire future generations of Blues supporters.

How Supporters Can Get Involved

The success of the Carlisle United Heritage Group depends entirely on the enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers. Whether helping to catalogue archive material, scanning photographs, researching former players, assisting with exhibitions, supporting stadium tours or representing the group at community events, volunteers play a vital role in preserving the history of the Blues.

Supporters who have memorabilia tucked away at home can also make an important contribution. Old programmes, photographs, tickets, newspapers, shirts, letters and other items can all provide valuable pieces of Carlisle United's story. The Heritage Group welcomes donations and, where appropriate, can arrange for items to be digitally preserved so that club history remains accessible to future generations.

Anyone interested in volunteering, sharing memories or donating items is encouraged to contact the Heritage Group through its social media channels, club events or supporter group meetings, where members are always keen to hear from fellow Blues fans.

You can contact the Carlisle United Heritage Group on Facebook or at archives@carlisleunited.co.uk

MIKE HOUGHTON

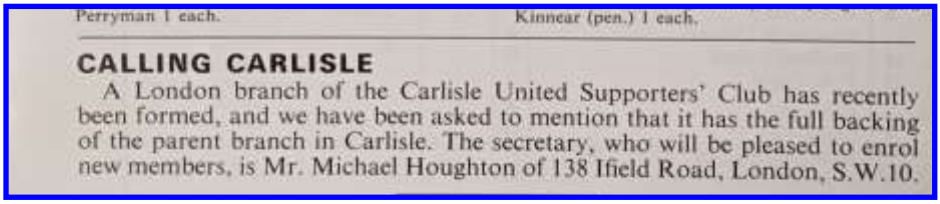


On 19th October 2026, almost exactly 52 years after placing the first advert (see below 'Calling Carlisle') in the Tottenham Hotspur v. Carlisle United programme, Mike Houghton sadly passed away in a care home in his home town of Whitehaven.

Mike was the true founder of the London Branch, and every member owes him a huge debt of gratitude. While others thought of the possibility of starting a branch, Mike acted and was its early driving force becoming the first Chairman. Before the Spurs advert, he contacted Colin Barton, who ran the Supporters' Club in Carlisle, who gave him the blessing to use the name, as it added gravitas to the parent supporters' club in their long-standing push to get a representative on the board of the club.

Mike used his own money, without any thought of being able to recoup it off a bunch of tight Cumbrians, to hire the upstairs room of the **Finborough Arms** (just round the corner from Ifield Road where he was living in those days - not far from Stamford Bridge) for the inaugural meeting of the London Branch. It would be harder to find a more apt place to start a Carlisle United London Branch, as Finborough Road turns into Warwick Road a few hundred yards further north.

Mike was pretty much oblivious to the



Perryman 1 each. Kinnear (pen.) 1 each.

CALLING CARLISLE

A London branch of the Carlisle United Supporters' Club has recently been formed, and we have been asked to mention that it has the full backing of the parent branch in Carlisle. The secretary, who will be pleased to enrol new members, is Mr. Michael Houghton of 138 Ifield Road, London, S.W.10.

politics of the club in Carlisle, and his main motivation was to show his Geordie flat mates that Carlisle had fans who could rival the Toon Army in their loyalty, fervour and crack. **Our first committee was made up of Mike (Chairman - from Whitehaven, Chris Wilkinson (Secretary - from Barrow), myself (Treasurer - from Seascale) and David Steele (Transport – from Carlisle**). Our one committee member from Carlisle transported himself off after being ap-



pointed and we never heard from him again! However, those Geordie flat mates became great friends to all of us, and we used to have some pretty epic darts/drinking matches whenever Carlisle played Newcastle in the APFSCIL darts league.

Our first meetings were social affairs. We met ***every*** Thursday night along with the Newcastle supporters for an evening of drinking and chat rounded off with curry in Tottenham Court Road, where Mike would always have egg and chips. Not for him this fancy foreign food. Getting through a Friday at work was always a difficult task, battling a hangover and the taste of vindaloo.

Mike's main impetus was to get Cumbrians together and provide a focal point in London for those leaving Carlisle to seek work in the South. Mike rarely traveled to watch the Blues on a Saturday afternoon, in fact I'm not convinced that he was that keen on football, but he a feeling that Cumbrians are somehow more fun, and more worthy than any other mortals and he was just more comfortable mixing with them than Southerners.

His reign as Chairman was not to last long. As the committee expanded the workload and ideas increased, and while Mike tolerated all of the suggestions, his natural conservatism held him back from actually endorsing or executing any of them – he just wanted to meet chat and have a few pints.

Mike had a great sense of humour, he was always laughing and cracking jokes, usually at someone else's expense, but he did it in a way that was non-threatening, non-confrontational and often self-deprecating. He was someone you could have an argument with one minute and then be laughing with a minute later. I learned a lot from Mike, he had a way of making you realise how

stupid you were being (when you were being stupid – and in those days most of us were experts at it) without putting you down in front of everyone else. He also understood that the committee were giving their time without any recompense and while you could ask someone to do something you should never expect them to do it, or be surprised when they hadn't done it – you should just be happy when unexpectedly someone actually managed to do what they said they were going to do!

He eventually left London and went back to his beloved Cumbria, returning to Whitehaven.

Now back in his hometown, he re-engaged in his backing of Cumbrian sport by becoming a director, sponsor, benefactor and would be shareholder of Whitehaven RLFC - campaigning for a change of board that would eventually come towards the end of 2025, but sadly too late to see Haven avoid losing their Championship status.

It was in Whitehaven that we contacted him when we celebrated one of our major London Branch anniversaries by booking a table in Foxy's Restaurant and inviting Mike as our special guest. He was taken aback by way in which he was treated by the members who were there, most of whom were slightly in awe of him.

Then at the end of the meal, the Chairman of Carlisle United came over to make a special presentation to Mike to thank him for creating the London Branch. Mike was genuinely choked and there were tears in his eyes as he thanked Carlisle United and those that had made the day a special one for him.

That was the last time that I saw him, as I moved to Houston shortly afterwards, but I often think of him and the legacy he left that we all still enjoy. **It's sad that most of the current members never had the chance to meet him or learn who he was and how he laid the foundation on which the London Branch has been built and expanded over the years. The world is a slightly duller place without him.**

Malcolm Fawcett

DAVID LEITCH

Macolm Fawcett recalls David Leitch (pictured below) who formed the Barrow National Supporters Club .



Many of you know that I started out as a Barrow supporter, after a friend from Seascale bought me a ticket to see Barrow play Southampton in the FA Cup 3rd round back in 1967. The game ended 2 – 2 and Barrow were promoted to the 3rd Division at the end of the season. As a young teenager I used to get frustrated that the people of Barrow were not supporting the club as well as I felt they should and I used to write into the programme to let my feelings be known. I noticed that my letters were often echoed in sentiment by those of a certain **David Leitch** from London. Crowds fell, revenue fell, the standard of players fell and the inevitable happened in 1972 when Barrow were voted out of the league, just as I moved down to London. When I left for London, I made a note of David Leitch's name and address and looked him up in the phone book when I arrived.

We eventually collaborated after the CUSC London Branch was up and running. Dave decided he was going to try and form a London Branch of the Barrow Supporters' Club, and I gave him what advice I could to help him execute his plan. The first problem he encountered was that there was no Barrow Supporters' Club! This meant that he was now creating the Barrow National Supporters' Club based in London! I joined the first committee as Treasurer, designed and printed some of the early copies of the newsletter, was a frequent contributor of articles and traveled with David to some of the games.

Dave was a calm, patient and serious individual who never waned in his support for Barrow despite the dark days they frequently endured. He was Chairman of the Club for many years, AP-

FSCIL representative and supported all of the club's social events. **He shared a lot of attributes with Mike Houghton, generally conservative in outlook, gregarious without being domineering, always happy and smiling despite no matter what the situation** and I think that, like Mike, he was a civil servant – there must be something in the training!

The last communication I had from Dave was in the Barrow newsletter (The National Zigger Issue 382 - 10th October 2026) in which he explained that he was unable to play in the Quarter Final of the Pool Summer Cup against Southampton due to a fall. He was still membership secretary, APFSCIL rep and social event supporter right to the end.

The saddest thing is that Dave passed away just days before he was due to be presented with an award from Barrow AFC marking the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Barrow National Supporters' Club and while no member could ever underestimate the time and effort he made in keeping the Supporters' Club and Football Club afloat, I'm not sure whether those living in Barrow necessarily had the same appreciation of Dave's hard work.

One of my favourite authors, Jack Kerouac, reflected on travel, transience and the pull of home by saying, 'Everyone goes home in October', Jack, Mike Houghton and Dave Leitch share the sad fact that each died within days of each other in the month of October.

Branch treasurer and noted Parkrunner, Steve Batey completed an ascent of Mt Kilimanjaro in September this year. Good training for the path to and from the away end at Aldershot.



Brunton Park Diary 2026/27



THE MIRACLE OF BRUNTON PARK

2nd Aug (Sun)

Northern Premier League East side Matlock Town throw a lifebuoy to former loan keeper **Marcus Dewhurst**, not long after his release from Aldershot Town.

Ex midfield mini-me **Danny Butterworth** signs a five-month contract with Swindon as part of his extended recuperation from long-term hamstring knack.

4th Aug (Tue)

GRETNA FC 2008 YTH XI (1) 4 CUFC YTH XI (1) 4 - PSF

Boertien, Towers, Wheatley and Tonge were all on target in the youngster's final pre-season game, fighting back from 3-1 down to lead 4-3 before a late equaliser. Robinson had earlier saved brilliant from the penalty spot in the first half.

Shot shy former loan man **Hugh Parker** joins Scunthorpe United from Hull City on a six-month loan.

5th Aug (Wed)

Midfield old boy **Dylan 'McOuch'** is appointed head of youth at Gretna FC 2008 while continuing to occasionally trot out for them.

6th Aug (Thu)

Veteran former defender **Tom Aldred** rejoins A-League side Brisbane Roar down under for a second spell after his two years in the Indian Super League.

7th Aug (Fri)

Recently released stopper **Thomas Randall** links up with Madison College in Wisconsin, USA! USA! His new Wolfpack men's soccer team is presently tearing up their regional division, enjoying a current eight-game winning run with clean sheets all round for Mr Randall and a 9-0 away rout in their last game.

8th Aug (Sat)

CUFC YTH (0) 2 MANSFIELD T YTH (0 1

Second-half goals from Wheatley and McDonough help Birch's Bairns to a perfect start to the season.

CUFC (1) 2 WORTHING T (0) 3

Despite a lengthy and concerning injury list, it was all going to script for a while with United giving the visitors a school-

ing in everything apart from finishing in the first half, Linney being the main culprit on at least four occasions. Duru was tormenting Worthing`s left, Bunker was winning his challenges and hitting some neat passes including the one for Kelly's headed opener, Azeez was pulling the strings in midfield and Kelly was looking sharp and a handful for any defence let alone that in the sixth-tier last season.

The potential folly of emptying the tank in the first 50-55 minutes on the back of a limited pre-season came back to roost, a well-organised Worthing team harrying the Blues into sloppy second half mistakes and capitalising at almost every opportunity.

Kelly stabbed home a late second to set up some excitement in the finale yet not enough to prevent the defeat and several boos at the final whistle albeit, perhaps not as loud as the mid-half hydration breaks.

CUFC*: Mair 6, Mullarkey 5, Galvin 5, Bunker 6, Duru 6, Harper 5, Azeez 5, Whelan 5, Ajiboye 6, Linney 5, **Kelly 7**. Subs: Wearne 5

Experienced former Blues winger **Brennan Dickenson** signs a two-year deal with Workington Reds after featuring for the Jameaters through pre-season.

10th Aug (Mon)

Transfer gossiper Pete O'Rourke reports that United have agreed a deal for the sale of **Gabe Breeze** to League One Cambridge United following the rejection of two previous bids. Speculation increases that Elliot will again be raiding Gateshead for **Adam Desbois** as a direct replacement.

John-Kymani Gordon is the latest former player to join the PFA pre-season camp having been released by Colchester United at the end of last season.

11th Aug (Tue)

Second-year under-18s keeper **Sam Worth** links up with Carlisle City on a one-month work experience loan. Worth made a brief substitute appearance in the 2-0 pre-season defeat to Salford City.

Bohemian FC bring in (very) old boy **Paddy Madden** and his creaking knees until the end of the season, more than 15 years after leaving them for the Blues in early 2011.

12th Aug (Wed)

A sad day for many with it confirmed that **Feel the Breeze** has been shipped off to Cambridge United for an undisclosed fee, while noting the CUFC pretenders don't normally have the deep-

est pockets. The 22-year-old made 85 appearances for the Blues, starting all but one game in last season's National League campaign and keeping 17 clean sheets.

25-year-old **Adam Desbois** is quickly confirmed on a two-year deal for an undisclosed fee as the replacement. Desbois came through Reading and the Seagulls academy systems before spells at Hartley Wintney, Cheshunt, Hampton & Richmond, Eastbourne Borough, Slough Town and more recently, United feeder club Gateshead.

United left-back misfit **Sam Murray** signs for NLN side Spennymoor Town on a one-year deal.

13th Aug (Thu)

The Blues are linked with a bid for Boston United's **Tom Cursons**, the 24-year-old forward bagging 14 goals in 33 appearances in a struggling team last season.

14th Aug (Fri)

18-year-old newbie pro striker **Seb Mason** joins Scottish League 2 side Stranraer on a half season loan deal. Mason spent the second half of last season on loan with Queen of the South, helping the club reach the Championship Playoffs.

The **Tom Lawrence** appointment box is ticked after receiving the required regulatory approval to take on the club's chief executive role.



15th Aug (Sat)

Promising 17-year-old winger **Amaru Smith** joins NLN side Darlo on a one-month work experience deal.

A further fitness set-back for the Hairy Viking sees United diving into the young striker lottery basket and returning with forward **Luke Skinner** from Bristol City on an initial one-month loan. The 18-year-old has had previous loan spells at Weston-super-Mare, Eastleigh and Bath City, and despite his young years, has shown himself on each occasion to be a direct runner with pace to burn and an eye for goal. Wait until we get hold of him!

CUFC YTH (1) 1 BURTON ALBION YTH (1) 2

Rafferty was denied by a last-gasp tackle when through on goal to prevent a deserved point for the Blues, the goal coming from a Wheatley penalty after a foul on McDonough.

YEOVIL TOWN (1) 1 CUFC - GATESHEAD XI (0) 1

United's duty-free trip to Somerset to stock up on farm cider had left a few fans wondering if they had started on the loony juice early, relying on Bunker's header from Nicholson's cross in the final seconds of added time to rescue a point. Galvin's shaky start to the season continued, his mis-control allowing Walker to slip past and give Yeovil an early lead. The Blues rarely threatened until oppo centre-half Gubbins decided to haul down Kelly just after the hour when both chasing a long ball and was rightly given an early bath. Skinner came on and while lively, missed a couple of presentable opportunities and when Azeez skied a shot over the bar, it looked like a long journey back with nothing to show.

CUFC (no ratings): Desbois, Galvin (Skinner 62), Mullarkey (Richardson 73), Nicholson, Duru, Bunker, Harper (Williams 73), Azeez (Lowes 83), Ajiboye (Ellis 62), Linney, Kelly.

16th Aug (Sun)

Youngster **Oliver Grainger** is called up to the next international training camp with Scotland.

17th Aug (Mon)

Forward **Manny Mampala** is the latest ex Blue import to Matlock Town.

19th Aug (Wed)

The latest Think! Fan Engagement Index for 2026 puts the Blues top of the NL pile for fan engagement but down the charts to 7th from last year's 2nd for transparency.

EPPP strikes again with the club confirming that former academy player **James Trafford's** £40m plus add-ons summer move from Manchester City to Leeds United won't earn them any additional lucre.

21st Aug (Fri)

Blues old boy star **Nicky Adams** steps into a caretaker manager role with NLN side Radcliffe while in a shock move to many Blues fans, argument-in-a-box **Roddy Collins** is named as a football advisor to NLS side Ebbsfleet United following a recent takeover by Dublin-based businessman John O'Leary. Who isn't looking forward to hearing how the former plasterer pronounces "Kent".

22nd Aug (Sat)

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

Two more for Wheatley gave the kids a deserved win, the first from a brilliant team move, the second after being played through on goal by Aaron and rounding the despairing grasp of their gloveman. Rafferty (below) caught the eye with his display and was a constant thorn in the Shrews side.



CUFC (1) 4 HORNCHURCH (0) 1

This had all the expected hallmarks of 'Elliotball', a bit too open and wobbly at the back by recent standards but undoubtedly front-footed with a self-belief to score at least one more than the opposition. If watching United under Hughes was like a night-in on the sofa with a blanket and a nice cup of cocoa, the early signs indicate Elliot's Blues may be like a youngster watching Dr Who or Alien for the very first time, from behind the same sofa. Bringing Ellis into midfield alongside the imperious Azeez, who opened his account shooting in from the edge of the box to give a first-half lead, helped allowed Bunker to put on a Lampard-like performance, typified when the former academy Swiss army knife set up Bunker to smash in the second high into the net. Hornchurch defended well and almost scored an equalising goal just before the break, a curled shot arrowing into the far top corner only for Desbois to produce a stunning save to tip the ball out from just under his crossbar. They did eventually score by poking home from a half-cleared corner and after Worthing, it was important to keep going and make a statement by this time closing the game out. To their credit after a couple more scary moments avoided by Desbois, they did, Duru overlapped down the right his well-placed cross was skilfully guided into the corner of the net by an onrushing Bunker who took the ball of Kelly's toe. Linney then cut inside from the wing to crash home a fourth from the underside of the bar to help put the cherry on the

top with a few more sprinkles added in the form of Feeney's return from injury for the last 15.

CUFC*: Desbois 8, Mullarkey 6, Nicholson 7, Galvin 6, Duru 7, **Bunker 9**, Ellis 7, Azeez 8, Ajiboye 6, Linney 7, Kelly 6. Subs: Feeney 6, Williams 6, Harper 6, Skinner 6, Wearne 6

27th Aug (Thu)

Blackpool pick up former loan Blue **Jerry Yates** on a season-long loan from Luton Town.

28th Aug (Fri)

PNE YTH (2) 3 CUFC YTH (1) 1 – U18 PROFESSIOAL DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE (PDL) CUP

Living up to his name, Sam Worth had to pull of several saves for the Blues to keep the scoreline level. United came back well, Rafferty smashing Miller's deep cross onto the crossbar just before McDonough got on the end of a well-worked set-piece again from Miller, to head into the top left corner. It unfortunately became the Ayodele show thereafter, the hosts highly rated towering striker grabbing a hat-trick including his first when he took on and beat several Blues before picking out the top corner.

WEALDSTONE (0) 1 CUFC (1) 1

A disappointing performance and result, a sloppily given away free kick expertly finished to snatch away two of the three points on offer. We're rapidly turning the squandering of clear-cut chances into a fine art, Wearne and Kelly (again) this week's worst culprits. The main positives were Ajiboye's well-taken breakaway goal from Kelly's fine Kane-like pass, and a strong cameo appearance from Luamba on his return from suspension.

CUFC*: **Desbois 7**, Mullarkey 6, Nicholson 6, Galvin 6, Duru 6, Ellis 6, Azeez 5, Bunker 5, Ajiboye 6, Linney 5, Kelly 5. Subs: Feeney 7, Williams 7, Luamba 6, Wearne 5

No return right now for He's-One-of-Our-**Ow(e)n Moxon**, staying in League One after agreeing to a season-long loan move from Stockport County to Cambridge United.

Former gaffer **Mervyn Day** confirms he'll be ending his scouting role with Rangers after seven years.

31st Aug (Mon)

CUFC (3) 4 SCUNTHORPE UTD (1) 2

Bank Holiday Elliot ball! United could and should have scored seven or eight and yet still needed Desbois at key moments while remaining indecisive at set pieces, conceding from two corners.

These flaws, however, were papered or thickly plastered over by another vibrant attacking display, the goals coming from an Azeez piledriver into the bottom corner, Linney slipping the ball underneath the advancing stopper for 2 -1, Williams driving home after good build-up work from Kelly and Wearne, and subs Duru and Luamba combining for Luamba to shoot home in front of the Warwick for the fourth. The returning loanee Hugh Parker was well-shackled and largely anonymous, Nicholson having his best game in a blue shirt. A quiz question for years to come, the honour of United's first red of the season went to keeper coach Jack Cudworth, who was dismissed for having a barney over the officials' handling of the new rule over goalkeeper injuries.

United: Desbois 7, Ellis 7, Nicholson 7, Galvin 6, **Williams 8**, Azeez 7, Bunker 6, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 7, Linney 7, Kelly 6. Subs: Duru 7, Feeney 6, Luamba 7

24-year-old former England U16 and U17 international **Teddy Jenks** is announced as joining the Blues on a two-year deal with the option of a further year for an undisclosed fee. The former Brighton & Hove Albion, Crawley Town and Forest Green Rovers attacking midfielder was with Worthing and played a significant part in last season's promotion-winning NLS campaign, scoring 16 goals in 45 appearances.

The post-match injury update isn't great; **Macadam** will miss several more weeks just a few days after returning to training from his pre-season thigh knack. The big man picked up hamstring gah while backheeling a ball to try and keep it on the pitch and overstretching. **Mullarkey**, who went off early doors at Wealdstone, needs a scan on a calf injury while **Armstrong** is a minimum of four weeks away.

1st Sep (Tue)
CUFC YTH (0) 2 BOLTON YTH (1) 4 – U17s PDL CUP
Made up mostly of U16 players, the Blues went down bravely with their goals coming from Stuart and Wheatley.

Various rumours on X including from Rochdale fans, link 31-year-old 6'5" target man **Emmanuel Dieseruvwe** with a move to CUFC, fresh from his 27-goal NL haul last season. There were similar jungle drums last October with a supposed approach and offer to sign him for £175K on a 2-year deal.

Former Elvis-era Blues loan star **Callum O'Hare** joins Wrexham from Sheffield United, the diminutive attacking midfielder moving for an undisclosed fee on

a three-year contract.

5th Sep (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 2 DONCASTER ROV YTH (0) 2

Goals from Miller and Wheatley, fresh from being named the Player of the Month for August, had looked to seal the points before a late fightback from Rovers helped by Rafferty being sent off for delaying play.

BOREHAM WOOD (0) 2 CUFC (0) 1

In an excellent advert for the league, the fighting Cumbrians ran out of steam in the final quarter and were undeservedly in the end, even denied a point for their efforts. With Feeney starting to help add some steel to the backline and Azeez commanding in the middle, that scenario looked unlikely going into the closing stages. The much-vaunted Brunt and White in the hosts' midfield were by then, throwing their arms in the air as pass after pass out from their defence was either intercepted or went astray. Kelly emptied the tank up front, Luamba and an out-of-sorts, virus-hit Linney not offering the same threat or means to get United back up the pitch when they came on. The lead came on the hour when Azeez's shot was deflected into the path of Wearne, who guided the ball expertly across the keeper into the corner of the net. In a sliding doors moment, Jenks had a great chance to make it two and probably kill the game but blew it, his near-range shot too close to the keeper. As bodies understandably tired, Brunt was given too much space in the box to whip in a simple ball onto the head of loan striker Bird in space, who glanced a well-executed header into the far corner of the goal. Oh well after last year, a point's not too bad we all thought. Disaster. A Wood corner routine left Ellis finding his own net instead of clearing as he attempted to cover a near post run.

CUFC*: Desbois 6, Feeney 6, Nicholson 5, Galvin 5, Williams 6, Ellis 5, Bunker 5, **Azeez 7**, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 6, Kelly 6. Subs: Duru 5, Luamba 6, Jenks 5

6th Sep (Sun)

Recently departed No2, which does sound rather unkind, **Frankie McAvoy** is placed in joint temporary charge of Livingston after the sacking of their management team.

A definite No2 of sorts on the move sees **Jordan 'ATM Cashpoint' Jones** return to the welcoming bosom of Mike Williamson as he signs for South Shields. For SS sake, hopefully the footballing equivalent of a large BMX handle grip shook hands on a pay-as-you-play

deal following his recent stay at the PFA camp.

7th Sep (Mon)

Rumours of a new attacker coming in begin with news that **Luke Skinner** has returned to parent club Bristol City following the conclusion of his one-month loan spell, his time on the pitch increasingly marginal since his debut at Yeovil. Wealdstone fans link top scorer and former Blue **Micah Obiero** as the object of United's affections, the 25-year-old Kenyan international already in good form.

8th Sep (Mon)

18-year-old defensive prospect **Hayden Atkinson** joins NLN strugglers Darlington on an initial one-month loan in a bid for pitch time.

Sixty-two-year-old veteran defender **Simon Grand** is back on the move, linking up with NWCFL side Charnock Richard after leaving Lancaster City.

9th Sep (Tue)

If you can't beat them, buy them. After six seasons away, old boy **Micah Obiero** is, as expected, back through the gates of Brunton Park in exchange for an undisclosed fee to the Stones on a two-year deal. The former Huddersfield Town academy striker went on to also play for FC Halifax Town, Boston United and more prolifically Wealdstone, where he scored 17 goals in all competitions last campaign to earn Wealdstone's Players' Player of the Season.

12th Sep (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 2 CHESTERFIELD YTH (1) 2

An Aaron volley from a Wade free kick and McDonough's late poke home from a scramble helped earn a point the nippers probably should have won.

CUFC (1) 2 SOUTHEND UTD (0) 2

You have got to worry when the overall performance is probably as good as anything served up in the last few years and the team still only comes away with a point. The same failings haunt the team, wasteful and skittish at the two ends of the pitch that really matter. The game should have been tied up in a bow by the break, Ajiboye's cut back swept home by **Kelly** after Nicholson's incisive pass giving an early lead and the striker and others missing chances. The Shrimpers were there for the taking although there was the customary warning sign, which required Desbois to pull off an outstanding double save. Further squandered opportunities were inevitably punished, two from Obiero being memorable hands-on-head moments. Sure enough, a comedy mix-up between Duru and Feeney allowed their









striker to approach goal and fire calmly past Desbois and then their travelling fans entered dreamland when McAdam curled an unstoppable volley into the top bins from a partially cleared corner. A second late rescue act of the season at least choked the home boos; Nicholson's long punt headed into the path of **Kelly** by the marauding skipper with the Irishman steering home.

CUFC*: Desbois 7, Feeney 6, Nicholson 6, Duru 5, Williams 7, Ellis 7, Bunker 6, **Azeez 6**, Jenks 7, Ajiboye 6, **Kelly 7**. Subs: Luamba 6, Obiero 5, Wearne 5

Weston-Super-Mare take another turn borrowing United's recent loanee **Luke Skinner**.

15th Sep (Tue)

ROCHDALE YTH (1) 3 CUFC YTH (1) 3 – U17 PDL CUP

A Harabasz back post tap-in from Wade's low ball, Wheatley's fine finish from Tonge's long ball over the top and then the provider smashing home Wade's ball late on helped United fight back from two goals down.

CUFC (1) 1 FOREST GREEN (1) 1

Despite starting well with Kelly firing just wide from a Jenks cross, the same set-piece failings soon returned, their own Kelly given the freedom of Brunton Park at the near post to head an in-swinging corner home with Desbois's positioning questionable. The vegan's remained the better team with Obiero's drilled equaliser from 15 yards out after an excellent interception and run from Jenks slightly against the run of play. The returning Patrick comically missed two good opportunities to close the half. Two open teams turned the next 45 into a basketball match in the search of three points. With Green sitting back towards the end, Kelly headed a free kick just over and in a dramatic denouement, United's increasing pressure was almost rewarded when Nicholson's cross was headed onto the bar by Feeney, Luamba's follow-up header somehow tipped just over by the visitor keeper.

CUFC*: Desbois 6, Ellis 5, Feeney 7, Nicholson 7, Galvin 5, Azeez 6, Bunker 5, Jenks 6, Ajiboye 6, **Obiero 7**, Kelly 6. Subs: Duru 7, Wearne 6, Harper 6, Luamba 5, Linney 6

18th Sep (Fri)

Obiero is called up by Kenya for their two upcoming Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers against Eritrea and Guinea on September 26 and October 1, which will spare him facing Woking and AFC Fylde.

Birch's Bairns are handed an away game

at Newcastle Blue Star in the FA Youth Cup second qualifying round.

19th Sep (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 1 FLEETWOOD TOWN YTH (0) 1 – PDL CUP

Wade benefitted from a defensive mix-up to put the Blues one up and Towers should have made it two when through on the keeper and again in the second half from a tight angle. They paid for those missed chances with a late equaliser from a goalmouth scramble.

EASTLEIGH (1) 1 CUFC (0) 0

Generally described as gutless and clueless by those present, the injury and illness-hit Blues ended up with square pegs in round holes and were miles off it. Eastleigh are a poor football team but just wanted it more on the day. With Feeney, Nicolson, and Linney missing, we only had two attacks of note; Obiero almost fashioned himself a goalscoring opportunity with some quick feet early doors, and Junior Luamba scuffed an excellent opportunity wide of the far post towards the end. A well-worked break was recycled after the first attack was parried, a clinical finish enough for the hosts to claim the points.

CUFC*: Desbois 6, Ellis 5, Galvin 4, Bunker 5, Duru 5, Harper 4, Azeez 4, Jenks 4, Ajiboye 5, Obiero 5, Kelly 4. Subs: Williams 6, Wearne 6, Luamba 4

21st Sep (Mon)

Not too many talking points in the evening's CUSG meeting. The brightness of LED advertising boards will be dialled down during future night games. The club have also begun a crackdown on a "small but significant" number of young fans in the new singing area they say have been abusing "elderly and vulnerable" supporters at Brunton Park. Sometimes there's a fine line between passionate and Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Lee Clark's resignation at the Monkey Hangers leaves former Blues **Adam Clayton** and **Gary Liddle** holding the caretaker reigns for now.

22nd Sep (Tue)

STOCKPORT COUNTY YTH (0) 3 CUFC YTH (0) 2

So near but so far, Wheatley taking a through ball and rounding the keeper for the first and then a well-struck penalty into the top bins from Towers hauling back County back. Just as a draw looked certain, a midfielder was allowed space to strike into the bottom corner from the edge of the area to make it five wins out of five for the hosts. The Blues threatened throughout





Lots of goals and action, but a dreadful result at home to Woking





and almost scored in the first half when the fleet-footed Smith broke from the edge of the area, feeding Wheatley in support on the left. His angled drive beat the keeper but crashed into the right-hand post.

23rd Sep (Wed)

Nicholson gets the all-clear after a health scare that required a heart scan after picking up a lung infection while **Linney** is recovering from a severe bout of tonsilitis that required an abscess cut out and even worse, a spell of hospital food.

Whelan's efforts in the community are rewarded with being shortlisted for the Northwest Football PFA National League Community Champion 2025/26 award.

25th Sep (Fri)

Young winger **Amaru Smith** ends his loan spell with Darlo while former defender and Bambi-on-ice impersonator **Josh Emmanuel** joins NLS strugglers Walton & Hersham as a free agent. Another PFA Stalag Camp survivor **Alfie McCalmont** signs for NLN-bound Gateshead on a deal until the end of the season.

26th Sep (Sat)

CUFC (1) 2 WOKING (1) 5

The Blues fell apart in an abysmal second half, conceding four and if blatantly culpable for the first of those, at least Debois stopped them hitting double figures. The hopes of a clean sheet lasted just seven minutes, Ogie heading in a cross largely unchallenged. At least it didn't take long to expose the visitor's own weaknesses, Nicholson's long throw causing a bit of chaos with **Okoli's comedically heading into his own net**. Bunker and Kelly four times between them, coughed up good opportunities to give United the lead before the break. "**Throw the towel in" seemed to be the gist of the HT team talk,** the wheels falling off once Desbois had waved in an early shot followed almost immediately by Marquis firing in on his way to keeping the match ball. Azeez's brain fart to give away a needless penalty increased the humiliation for the increasingly disjointed Blues. A harsh handball on Harper made it 1-5 before the returning **Linney** climbed off the bench to beat the offside trap and score a consolation in front of a rapidly emptying Brunton Park.

CUFC*: Desbois 3, Nicholson 4, Feeney 4, Galvin 3, Duru 5, Bunker 3, Azeez 3, Jenks 3, Wearne 3, Ajiboye 4, G Kelly 3. Subs: Williams 4, Harper 4, Ellis 5, Whelan 4, **Linney 6**

Former fleet-footed forward **Ephraim Yeboah** joins Southend United on an initial 28-day loan from Bristol City.

29th Sep (Tue)
AFC FYLDE (0) 0 CUFC (1) 2
Another heavy defeat may have seen the evening end with a corner flag posted by the media team so credit for the expected reaction materialising in a strong display against high-flying Fylde. Excellent work from Ellis led to the first, harrying the experienced Danny Mayor into an error, stealing the ball as Mayor slipped and sending the keeper into the wrong post code with utmost composure. The sides then exchanged half-chances with United's returning confidence on show, creating and scoring an excellent second with David Ajiboye streaking down the right and his low cross tapped in by Linney to give additional daylight.

CUFC*: Desbois 7, Feeney 7, Nicholson 7, **Ellis 8**, Duru 6, Williams 6, Azeez 6, Bunker 6, Jenks 6, Linney 7, Kelly 6. Subs: Galvin 6, Richardson 6, Ajiboye 7, Wearne 6

Fresh from Obiero, United take another swim in the past loan player pool and surface with 33-year-old grizzled centre-half **Tom Anderson**, who signs until the end of December. Aside from the Junior Blues, fans will remember him as a fresh-faced Burnley youngster who made nine appearances in a loan spell with Carlisle back in 2014/15 under the newly minted management of Mysterious Curle. A seven-year spell with Donny then followed, helping them to win the League Two crown before agreeing a move to Shrewsbury. Some of the comments from DRFC fans when he turned down a new deal in summer 2025 to move to the Shrews hopefully indicate his potential value:
"Can only thank and wish Tom all the very best with his next move. Superb professional on and off the field! Thank you for your great service."
"Absolutely brilliant servant to the club! Many Thanks Tom, leaving as a champion"
"Thought he would have stayed, this guy was all rovers. Best of luck Tom. #salop fans have bagged themselves a brick wall"
"Big shame but good luck to him, so underappreciated"
"Good luck Tom it's a shame your form was immense back end of the season"
"Sad to see Tom go. Proper rock. Totally committed. Delighted he left with a champions medal"

There's terribly sad news with the announcement of former United defender **Courtney Meppen-Walter** passing at

the age of just 32. CMW featured 42 times for the Blues from 2013 to 2015 after being signed by Graham Kavanagh.

30th Sep (Wed)

NEWCASTLE BLUE STAR YTH (1) 2 CUFC YTH (0) 2 – FA YOUTH CUP SECOND QUALIFYING ROUND (Blue Star won on penalties)

Ten-man United suffered a hugely disappointing early exit, Boertien Junior getting a straight red in the sixth minute for bringing down a Blue Star player. Despite the disadvantage and trailing to the Northern Leaguers at the break, they fought back well to lead thanks to a header from Murphy and McDonough, holding on until just five minutes left on the clock. The unfortunate Blues inevitably lost the shoot out

CUFC XI: Worth, Bell, Moynan (Murphy 55), Aaron, McDonough, Boertien, Towers, Rafferty (Hatton 80), Wheatley (Hodgson 85), Smith, Wade.

The Vegans are linked with a shock move for **Sparky** after the widely reported departure of media whore Savage to Peterborough United. Sparky has previously worked with Forest Green sporting director Mark Bowen at a number of his previous clubs and with the Wales national side.

1st Oct (Thu)

Former Blues **Michael O'Halloran** and **Gary Miller** are placed in caretaker charge of Scottish Championship basement dwellers Greenock Morton.

3rd Oct (Sat)

ROTHERHAM YTH 0 CUFC YTH 3

The young Blues bounce back impressively, dismantling their hosts thanks to a Cumersky brace and a strike from Nathan Wheatley.

ALDERSHOT TOWN (0) 1 CUFC (2) 3

No Kelly, no problem, the Blues new-look forward line and team outclassing a poor Shots side. What a difference a week makes, in a performance full of energy and new-found conviction, United were quickly out of the traps with Linney's raking ball to Williams on the wing headed into the path of the underlapping Azeez and **Ajiboye** applying the finishing touch to his perfectly judged low cross. The pressure continued and a fine pass from Jenks released Williams on the left, cheat code slipping easily past the full-back for **Ajiboye** to poach a near identical second. For those who can remember the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, you almost expected the commentators to shout "Lineker!!". Linney then missed a great chance to make it 3 -zip, pouncing on a loose pass, rounding the keeper but failing through a heavy



The leafy paradise that is Aldershot. Meet in the Crimea, watch the match, climb the scary hill from the away end and then back down to the railway station in good spirits







touch. A few nerves might have when a fine volley from the edge of the box past an unsighted Desbois gave the hosts a lifeline, those soon calmed by the arrival of Anderson to add some level-headed experience. The game was sawn up when Obiero, just back from his adventures with Kenya, emphatically finishing off a well-worked move involving Azeez and Galvin.

CUFC*: Desbois 6, Nicholson 7, Feeney 7, Ellis 7, Duru 7, Williams 8, Azeez 7, Bunker 7, Jenks 7, **Ajiboye 8**, Linney 6. Subs: Wearne 6, Obiero 7

4th Oct (Sun)

Tears flow down Warwick Road with **Harry McKirdy** (29; age and IQ) announcing his retirement from the game, which follows his summer release from Crawley Town at the end of last season. Several torsos were probably aching to.

6th Oct (Tue)

ROCHDALE (0) 0 CUFC (4) 5 – YOUTH ALLIANCE CUP

Dale were as roundly battered as their famous fish and chips, the rampant Blues on the beach by the break to progress to the next round. Smith opened the scoring after a lovely ball from Towers, then grabbing a second on the breakaway from an opposition corner to smash home. Wheatley danced through the Rochdale defence to a third and Towers poked home the fourth. Smith completed his hat-trick after the break, picking up the rebound from Bell's shot and rifling home.

Atkinson's loan deal with Darlo is extended for another month.

Without a club since his summer release by Colchester United, ex Blues promotion-winning forward **John-Kymani Gordon** earns a deal with Australia's A-League side Central Coast Mariners, becoming the third Wembley PO Final winner to play for the club in the footsteps of Edmondson and McCalmont.

Local lads and knee-capping dream team **Danny Grainger** and Richard **Prokas** take temporary charge at Penrith AFC after the resignation of manager Jim Nichols. Grainger is still running his Cumbria Football Academy in Penrith and Prokas is still scaring strangers in the street.

It took Cambridge United longer than expected but they finally ship off former United lamppost **Ryan Loft** to Hornchurch on a three-month loan.

7th Oct (Wed)

Elliot is given a two-match touchline ban after questioning the referee's parentage at Eastleigh while it's a fat raspberry from United's fans to the Prime Minister's suggestion that the ban on drinking in the stands at football should be lifted.

9th Oct (Fri)

Academy player **Tai Bell** joins Penrith AFC on a one-month work experience loan. Several strikers rethink their retirement plans with news that **Terell Thomas** has signed a deal with NLS basement dwellers Slough Town after his summer release from United.

10th Oct (Sat)

CUFC (0) 0 KIDDERMINSTER H (0) 0

A defensive masterclass from Kiddy in combination with over-fussy officiating led to a frustrating autumnal afternoon capped off by Linney's last-minute, wholly unconvincing penalty blooper. Perhaps still mindful of the previous home collapse against Woking, the crowd spent an afternoon largely watching the ball being slowly rolled sideways and backwards either in our own half or just over in a largely futile attempt to find a gap to threaten the visitor's goal. With the threat of Williams missing through injury, the Blues relied on Duru's enterprise down the right, which was unfortunately usually capped off by no final end product. Until the penalty awarded for Anderson being dragged down, the only memorable chance of note was Feeney heading an Azeez corner across goal and agonisingly hitting the far post before being scrambled away to safety.

United: Desbois 6, Ellis 6, Feeney 6, Nicholson 5, Galvin 5, **Duru 7**, Bunker 5, Azeez 5, Jenks 5, Ajiboye 5, Linney 5. Subs: Anderson 6, Obiero 5, Wearne 5, Whelan 5

11th Oct (Sun)

United kitman and chief jockstrap washer **Dean Scholey** announces his departure after more than three years with the club.

12th Oct (Mon)

Lurch lookalike and former trialist **Kyle Hudlin** joins RTG FC in the six-a-side Baller League, which also features **Josh Emmanuel** and **Terell Thomas**.

13th Oct (Tue)

Just when supporting the Monkey Hangers can't get any worse, former mishap waiting to happen **Sam Lavelle** joins them from Grimsby on an initial 28 -day loan.









14th Oct (Wed)

United's new chief executive and gatekeeper of the purse strings **Tom Lawrence** finally speaks! In an extended interview, Merry Christmas goes into the running of the club, fan engagement, the owners' commitment, Elliot's lower playing budget compared to last season and recruitment, the overall five-year strategy, the potential future for the academy and its funding, the Sheepmount training ground scheme, and the DAZN broadcasting deal.

17th Oct (Sat)

CUFC YTH (1) 2 CREWE ALEX YTH (2) 5

The youngsters suffer their personal version 'Woking' moment, taking a very early lead through a Towers penalty after he was brought down and almost immediately having a Wheatley effort ruled out for a foul in the build-up. Everything Crewe touched up front thereafter turned to gold, scoring five without reply in the space in an hour before Boertien pulled a goal back in the dying seconds. One positive at least was the return of Olly Penney following nine months out with a serious injury, brought on for the last 15 minutes.

CUFC (2) 2 TAMWORTH (0) 1 – FA CUP 4TH QUALIFYING ROUND

Banana skin avoided with a Linney brace for the first time since his hat-trick against Reading in last season's FA Cup First Round, the first by deflecting in Obiero's early shot, the second by slamming in a sweet volley after Richardson's cross was only partially headed clear. Tamworth's game plan out of the window, it would have been more but for four well-executed goal-bound clearances by their defence with the keeper beaten, Obiero twice, Whelan, and Linney the unlucky parties. The Lambs didn't lie down entirely with a couple of efforts that struck the outside of the woodwork. There was time for Billy Rafferty's grandson Will to make a late and promising cameo with some bright movement and cleared effort on goal.

CUFC*: Mair 6, Richardson 7, Nicholson 6, Anderson 6, Bunker 6, Duru 8, Whelan 7, Jenks 6, Wearne 6, **Linney 8**, Obiero 7. Subs: Ajiboye 6, Mullarkey 6, Williams 6

19th Oct (Mon)

The FA Cup first round draw sees a quick return to fortress Brunton for Salford City, the current League Two leaders having visited for a pre-season friendly.

22nd Oct (Thu)

On two different paths to hopefully renew acquaintances again next season, former oil tanker turning circle

Byron Webster is placed in caretaker charge of League One strugglers Bromley.

Attacking midfielder **Lucas De Bolle**, who briefly trained with the Cumbrians over the summer, rejoins South Shields on a short-term deal.

24th Oct (Sat)

SOLIHULL MOORS (1) 1 CUFC (0) 2

The prevailing weather conditions almost ended up the only winner, yet the Blues stormed back in a better second half - the arrivals of Azeez, Ajiboye and Galvin changing the game - to take a vital three points against the lowly Moors. Almost nothing happened until they last few minutes of a dreadful first half, Whelan lobbing a shot from outside the box onto their post almost immediately followed by a softly conceded free kick being punished by Wodskou's excellent finish from a tight angle even though a distracted, arm-waving Desbois should have done better. A good half of the 585 away following didn't even see it, long retreated into the relative warmth of their large away fan refreshment hut. Second period and with the wind and rain now slightly at their backs, United's patience to avoid going long was rewarded when an Azeez shot from the edge of the area was deflected upwards into the path of Captain Fantastic to volley through the keeper as the ball dropped near the spot. As he said on the RC interview, he'll be telling his absent family that it was from 30 yards on the phone later. Self-belief ebbed from the home side and coursed through the Cumbrians,



Duru finding an overlapping Whelan down the right wing and his excellent pinpoint cross volleyed joyfully into the net by the onrushing Ajiboye to make it three away wins on the spin for the first time since Simmo's wins at Leyton Orient, Oldham Athletic and Barrow in February/March 2022. The next target will be the four-on-the-spin under Micky Tash between October and December 1994 when the title-bound Blues managed five by defeating Fulham, Hereford United, Scarborough, Hartlepool United and Gillingham.

United: Desbois 6, **Feeney 7**, Nicholson 5, Anderson 6, Duru 6, Williams 5, Bunker 6, Whelan 6, Jenks 5, Linney 5, Obiero 6. Subs: Galvin 6, Richardson 6, Ajiboye 7, Azeez 6, Wearne 6

27th Oct (Tue)

In preparation for his usual winter hibernation, old boy **Omari Patrick** tricks Southend United into a loan move from Forest Green Rovers (one goal in ten outings) for the rest of the season. Recent former Blues **Josh Grant** and **Charlie McArthur** get deals from United's recent nemesis Woking. Grant was a free agent and signs a short-term deal while defender former Barcode McArthur joins on a short-term loan from York City having struggled to get minutes. Another ex-Blue, keeper **Jude Smith**, signs for Scottish League Two side Clyde.

28th Oct (Wed)

Match day begins with the excellent news that Captain Fantastic Morgan Feeney has signed a two-year contract extension keeping him at Brunton Park until the summer of 2029.

The good news keeps coming with experienced Stockport County midfielder Callum Camps joining on a two-month loan deal as he sharpens his skills following last season's back injury. The 30-year-old former Rochdale and Fleetwood Town midfielder has played a key part in the Hatters climb from League Two to the upper reaches of League One and featured for them in our 2023 League Two play-off final victory at Wembley.



CUFC (1) 3 HARROGATE TOWN (0) 0

How many sore vocal cords were there in Cumbria the next morning, close to 6,000 you would have to imagine as the Miracle of Brunton Park and the accompanying BP Roar helped to get the side over the line.

The basics boiled down to holding onto a 1-0 lead for 16 minutes a man down and then playing a further 70 minutes (including stoppage time) with only 9 men on the park. If you had written the plot for a football bestseller, every publisher and every editor would have laughed you at the room.

When Galvin merrily ran from his own half up the field to make it 3-0 and



started waving imaginary cards to the BP crowd, it felt like you were watching one of the most surreal experiences of all time. Harrogate, United's league jinx side incarnate, played their part, arriving second on the table on the back of five straight wins and being absolute rubbish.



Whelan fed **Williams** in midfield early doors with the flying wing back only having one thing on his mind, drive down the left and then when in shooting range, cut inside and use the right peg to curl a lovely finish across the keeper into the bottom corner. Job done. Referee Jamie Robinson then felt he had to be the star of his own show, determining Azeez's clean, ball-winning challenge for a 50:50 loose ball endangered the man dressed as a custard tart and about as solid as one, his flourished red sending the crowd and backroom

team apoplectic in anger and disbelief.

The Blues stayed firm and so after a quick check of his football accumulator, Robinson doubled down with Bunker's innocuous-looking challenge on another custard pastry taking the Blues down to 9 men. With trench lines dug, barbed wire in place and new boy Camps on for the sacrificed Ajiboye, the Cumbrians bravely saw the half out, even managing to bring out an excellent tip over the bar from a Feeney header.



Some fresh air back into their lungs, United and the terrific Williams went straight up the park on the whistle, Cheat Code teeing up **Whelan** to stroke home an incredulous second, not long before Galvin sent the home crowd into further rapture with the third. All the time **Desbois** and the backline per-



formed heroics, repelling wave after wave of desperate attack that apart from a couple of near things and Nicholson's excellent goal line clearance, rarely troubled them.

CUFC*: Desbois 9, Richardson 8, **Feeney 9**, Nicholson 8, Duru 9, J Williams 9, Bunker 6, Azeez 6, Whelan 9, Ajiboye 7, Obiero 8. Subs: Camps 8, Jenks 7, Wearne 7, Mullarkey 7, Galvin 9

Mike Kilner

CUSG PREDICTION COMPETITION SEASON 26/27

UPDATE AT 23RD OCTOBER 2026

Simon Clarkson comments:

"In the **Premier League**, 33 entries have Arsenal and only 7 have Man City as champions. Only 1 entrant has Sunderland to finish bottom.

In the **Championship** there are 10 different teams fancied to win the league and 13 currently correct with Preston to finish bottom.

In **League 1,** only 2 have Stockport to be champions and no one has Barnsley to go down.

In **League 2,** no one backed Salford to turn around their early season poor form and be champions.

23 entries looked to have called it right in the **National League** with Boreham Wood for the title and 13 are confident that Gateshead will finish bottom of the pile. Early days yet though!



Pos	Name	Pts	Pos	Name	Pts
1	Robert Calvert B	29	27	Keith Blair	18
2	Martin Lundie	29	28	Bob Lindsay B	17
3	Sandro Scapin	29	29	Andrew Brecken	17
4	Iain Davidson A	26	30	Simon Clarkson A	16
5	Peter Edwards	26	31	Simon Clarkson B	16
6	Sarah Edwards	25	32	Alex McGeorge	16
7	John Kukuc	25	33	Mike Kilner A	16
8	Chris Holmes B	24	34	Martin Thomas	15
9	Ken Hullock B	24	35	Jason Casey B	15
10	Mike Temple	23	36	Rick Wilkes B	12
11	Iain Davidson B	23	37	Lucas Tembey	12
12	Ken Hullock A	23	38	Kev McGeorge LD	12
13	Richard Coughlan	22	39	Neill Collins	11
14	Kev McGeorge A	21	40	Martin Broad A	11
15	John Kukuc LD	21	41	Ian Kellitt B	11
16	Robert Calvert A	20	42	Jason Casey A	11
17	Ian Kellitt A	20	43	Mark Scott	11
18	Bob Lindsay A	19	44	Bryan Hemingway	10
19	Mark Temple	19	45	Neil Nixon A	10
20	Marley Vamadevan	19	46	Neil Nixon B	10
21	Chris Tembey	19	47	Blake Vamadevan	8
22	Martin Coughlan	18	48	Chris Clapham	6
23	Dan Coughlan	18	49	Rick Wilkes A	5
24	Dave Brown A	18	50	Martin Broad B	5
25	Chris Holmes A	18	51	Dave Brown B	0
26	Mike Kilner B	18			

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