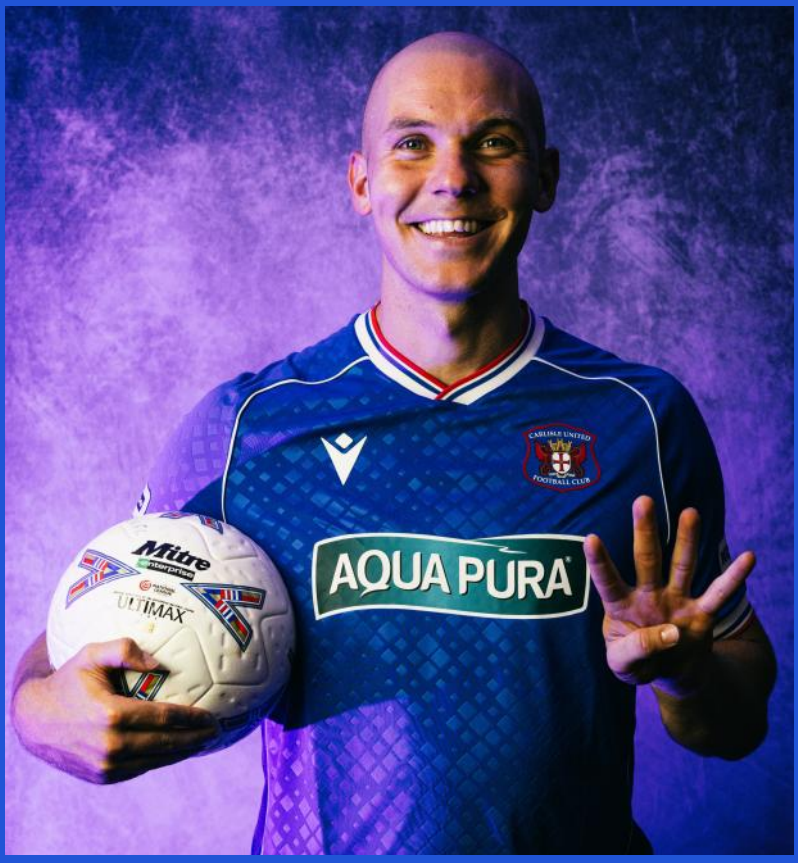
HIT THE BAR!

August 2026 £1

SO, HOW MANY GAMES CAN WE AFFORD TO LOSE THIS SEASON?



The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine

FIXTURES 26/27

AUGUST

8 Worthing (H)
15 Yeovil Town (A)
22 Hornchurch (H)
28 Wealdstone (A)
31 Scunthorpe United (H)

SEPTEMBER

5 Boreham Wood (A)
12 Southend United (H)
15 Forest Green Rovers (H)
19 Eastleigh (A)
26 Woking (H)
29 AFC Fylde (A)

OCTOBER

3 Aldershot Town (A)
10 Kidderminster Harriers (H)
17 FA Cup 4th Round Qualifying
24 Solihull Moors (A)
28 Harrogate Town (H)
31 Altrincham (A)

NOVEMBER

7 FA Cup 1st Round
14 Boston United (H)
21 Barrow (A)
24 Tamworth (H)
28 Sutton United (H)

DECEMBER

5 FC Halifax Town (A) / FA Cup 2nd Round
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) / FA Cup 3rd Round
16 FA Trophy 4th Round
23 Yeovil Town (H)
26 Tamworth (A)
30 Worthing (A)

FEBRUARY

6 Barrow (H) / FA Trophy 5th Round
13 Woking (A) / FA Cup 4th Round
16 AFC Fylde (H)
20 Eastleigh (H)
23 Forest Green Rovers (A)
27 Hornchurch (A)

MARCH

6 Wealdstone (H) / FA Cup 5th Round / FA Trophy 6th Round
9 Scunthorpe United (A)
13 Boreham Wood (H)
20 Southend United (A)
26 Hartlepool United (A)
29 Gateshead (H)

APRIL

3 Altrincham (H) / FA Cup 6th Round / FA Trophy semi-final
10 Boston United (A)
17 FC Halifax Town (H)
24 Sutton United (A) / FA Cup semi-final

CONTENTS

Editors Bleat	**4**
Notes from the Chair	**5**
Sponsorship and Funding	**8**
Keep the Faith	**10**
Wonderful Copenhagen	**12**
Mascot Memories for Life	**16**
Chaos in the Heat	**17**
Brunton Park Diary 25/26	**26**
Branch Committee Contacts	**39**

Don't forget to enter the CUSG prediction competition using the form in the centre pages of this HTB!. - The winners take home over 50% of the entrance fee with an equal amount also donated to Carlisle United. It costs just £3 to enter, or £5 for two entries for one person, so what are you waiting for? Grab a pen and get predicting!

Entry closes midnight on Sunday 13 September 2026.

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.

EDITORS BLEAT



Welcome to HTB! 343 and to another season of non-league football. Still hurts doesn't it.

My usual pre-season nerves have been sharpened in recent weeks by the growing but seemingly inevitable crop of injuries. It's pretty obvious that the defensive combinations on show in the friendly matches are not the ones that Rob Elliot had hoped to have prepared, drilled and ready to face Worthing.

If you are bemused by the cover photo, a recent News & Star column by Jon Colman reminded us that if we learned only one thing from last season, it's that losing what seemed a paltry nine games across the season could be fatal to title hopes. A couple of early defeats with an unbalanced team and the pressure will be on. The other path to points accrual is to win games rather than draw them and here Rob Elliots 'front foot football' ambitions give us hope, but then again Mark Hughes 'back foot football' only racked up eight draws, so not too much scope for improvement there. A couple of good performances and wins against Worthing and then at Yeovil and I promise to cheer up!

Other reasons to be cheerful are that branch membership is at record levels, the summer trip was a great success and we have committed over £8,000 in sponsorship and funding for the 26/27 season. Details are in the pages that follow and demonstrate our clear focus on youth players and young supporters.

Enjoy this HTB and enjoy the rest of the season.
John B

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



As I have said before, I am ridiculously optimistic every pre-season – certain that this will be our season and then hugely disappointed if we perform poorly in the first few games and even more so if our position at the end of October is less than perfect.

Yet again, it has been hard for fans to use pre-season to get an idea of how we will do with only a single home friendly. Even more so when so many of what we expect to be our first team are injured. **Watching our game against Salford gave some encouragement in terms of the front foot approach. Most fans I have spoken to are in favour of Rob Elliott taking over from Mark Hughes.**

We will find out on August 8th and again on my first match away at Yeovil on August 15th.

We have a lot of "local" games early in the season with Yeovil, Wealdstone, Boreham Wood, Eastleigh and Aldershot. We also have a lot of opportunities to watch the football on TV together at the Civil Service Club which certainly beats watching at home on your own. **Make sure that you mark your membership record on Membermojo as "Interested in Travel and Tickets".**

Why not join us for the **London Branch trip to Carlisle on 14th November** for the Boston game. Quite a few of us are travelling up on Friday 13th so that we can attend the Dean Walling/Michael Bridges evening. We will then head down to Brunton Park on the 14th for time in the fanzone, a tour of the ground, a meal in the 74-75 lounge with competitions, meeting with legends, and tickets in the Main Stand. Afterwards, a number of us will be heading to the Milbourne pub to dissect the game. It is priced at £50 and season ticketholders get £10 off and can bank their tickets. Contact Terry McCarthy tickets@cusclb.com to book your place.

Remember that the branch owns two season tickets in the paddock. We have changed the system this year so every

member can use these tickets once in the season free of charge which almost covers the membership fee. Its available to full and student members by emailing seasontickets@cusclb.com.

Do you have young children or grandchildren between the ages of 5 and 13? Then why not give them a **"Memory for Life" as a mascot** at an away game. When a child has walked out on the pitch with their heroes to the cheers of the fans and then had their picture taken with the captains and officials in the centre circle, they will be a Carlisle fan for life. This season the London Branch is organising mascots for all away games in conjunction with Simon Clarkson SLO and Claire Burgess the Away SLO. We provide a goody bag for every mascot and the LBs Anna Jensen coordinates from our side. Book your "Memory for Life" mascots@cusclb.com. Be quick, these matches go quickly.

Other benefits that you should look to use this season are:

Tickets for games especially the big ones – Contact Terry McCarthy tickets@cusclb.com.

Love playing football? Why not play for the London Branch team – Jimmy Glass has – several times. Contact Chris Tembey – football captain football@cusclb.com

Social events in London – shows, quizzes, comedy contact Amanda Caddy social@cusclb.com

Travelling to games with other fans from London or Bristol, often with group discounts, contact Dave Brown London chairman@cusclb.com Kris Foster Bristol swgroup@cusclb.com

10% Discount in the Blues Store – show your membership card (available on https://membermojo.co.uk/cusclb/yourmembership/cards) in the store. Online use the email you have with the branch, and you should automatically get the 10% discount.

Fundraising – There is a page in this HTB covering the sponsorships and donations that we will be providing this season but we have looked to support as many good causes as possible including Jack Ellis, The Carlisle Ladies Team, The Carlisle United Community Sports Trust schools and SEND programme, the Heritage Group, The Academy, and local charities.

We are very close to 400 members which is a record for the branch. I would love to see this grow even more this season. If you meet a fellow Carlisle fan locally, get them to google Carlisle London Branch to visit our website.

My role as Chair would be impossible, (and the London Branch would be able

to deliver a lot less) without the huge support that I get from a large, dedicated team of very committed and talented individuals.

I want to thank Peter Smithson who has stepped down after 13 years being the Membership Secretary (supported by his wife Carolyn) and to welcome Paul Robson who has taken over this critical area.

Finally, thank you all for being members. I am proud of this group of ours that sets high expectations and then delivers above them. I am also keenly aware that our membership in the UK, Europe, Asia, Oceania and the Americas is growing and I will look hard to ensure that every member, everywhere gets value from their membership.

Here's to a great season – full of fun and success.

Up the Blues, Dave.



SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING

As most of you will know, strong membership growth, proceeds from the 40 club and many kind donations from members, has enabled the London Branch to build up strong cash reserves. This enables us to support many projects and that continues this season.

Recently we provided further support of £300 to the **Heritage Group** to enable them to purchase branded USB sticks for visitors to take away the historical photos and documents they will have seen on their visit. Most of these visitors are ex-players or families of ex-players and lots of the documents have never been seen by them before. The Heritage Group do a great job collating and protecting our club history. Visit https://www.facebook.com/carlisleunitedheritage/

We have been sponsoring Jack Ellis since he first joined the first team squad. We receive his match worn home and away shirts as sponsors. Martin Broad was delighted to receive the away shirt in the draw held for attendees at our recent agm which he will be getting signed at our opening game. This sponsorship is £900 including the branch logo appearing on Jack's banner at the ground.

For the second season, we are sponsoring the First Time Visitor scheme at Brunton Park. This scheme provides a certificate and goody bag for youngsters attending their first Carlisle match. The branch is covering the estimated £1800 cost of the goody bags.



Simon Clarkson, Supporters Liaison Officer (SLO), Claire Burgess – Away SLO and Anna Jensen – LB Committee member arrange for youngsters to "make a memory for life" by being a mascot at

away games. The London Branch pay for the goody bag which Claire gives to each mascot. This will be around £450 for the season.



We have agreed to pay the £1750 cost of cold weather jackets for the substitutes for age groups 9-16 of the Academy.

Backing youngsters in both participation and support is a key element of our fundraising strategy so the FTV scheme, Away Mascots and the Academy all fit very well.

I have written before about my respect for the activities of the Carlisle United Community Sports Trust. We have just agreed a £2,000 donation to cover the purchase of vital equipment for their schools and SEND programme. **Do have a look at what the CUCST get up to https://www.facebook.com/cufccst/**

We have supported the **Carlise Ladies** team for many seasons, but this season have agreed a major one-off contribution to enable the team to purchase new training kits.

Do consider joining the 40 club. 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 40club@cusclb.com

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.



KEEP THE FAITH



During the World Cup Howard Atkinson repeated the question from the Carlisle Social on the WhatsApp group which went something like **"if you had to choose, which would you prefer, England to win the World Cup or Carlisle to win promotion"?**

I was one of the few to say England to win the World Cup. It's difficult to explain the rationale for my choice because I desperately want Carlisle to win promotion. Another season languishing below Football League level doesn't bear thinking about, but it is a real possibility. The only way I can rationalise it is to say I'm not getting any younger and I'd love to see England win it again. It would also give the country a boost when it is badly needed. Of course, Carlisle will get back to the Football League sometime soon even if it isn't this coming season. Fingers crossed.

It's all or nothing for Rob Elliott and Carlisle United this season. After parting company with Mark Hughes because we didn't win promotion, nothing short of a return to the Football League this season will be acceptable for the Head Coach and his backroom staff. There can't be many occasions when a football club have stripped as many of the personnel from another club as Carlisle did with Gateshead this summer – 5 backroom staff and 2 players.

As well as the coaching staff who left to make way for the new, the club also parted company with **Physio Sophie Birnie**. I had some sympathy for Sophie because she couldn't be held responsible for the performances of the team, she said she enjoyed working for Carlisle, had been praised for her work and wanted to stay. It's a ruthless world working for a professional football club.

The Club has also appointed a new Chief Executive and our Head of Recruitment has departed, yet to be re-

placed. Hopefully the main changes will help the team kick on from last season.

I'd say that normally you can't really say how a team is likely to perform when the serious stuff starts on the basis of performances in pre-season friendlies. It's particularly pertinent to Carlisle this season given the number of injuries to players there were, including something like 8 players injured when returning from the close season for the first day of training. For the final pre-season friendly we had 7 players out, with 4 centre backs all unavailable. This necessitated the late signing on loan, until January, of **Toby Mullarkey** from Fleetwood as cover. Rob Elliot was optimistic that some of his walking wounded would be available come kick off on August 8th.



Despite the injuries I'm optimistic about the coming season. I think we've made some decent signings, particularly **Azeez and Bunker**, and if Feeney is back fit soon after the start of the season, and there are not too many long term injuries in the squad, we should be challenging at the top of the league again.

I don't think any team will pull away from the rest like York and Rochdale did last season. If any team does I'm hopeful it will be us. I **think our nearest challengers will be Boreham Wood**, although there are one or two other teams with ambitions that could upset the odds. The bookies have us as firm favourites.

Well, there you go. I've gone and put the kiss of death on us!

Keep the faith

Ken

CARLISLE UNITED SUPPORTERS' CLUB
LONDON BRANCH

WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN



Copenhagen was a surprise choice for our 2026 trip has we haven't previously been to such an expensive part of Europe.

Despite that, the weekend was a roaring success with 36 travellers heading to Denmark's capital (it would have been 38 but unfortunately Harold and Kathleen who were traveling there by train weren't able to make it at the last minute).

The hotel that most of us stayed at was the Scandic Webers 200 yards from the Station and 500 yards from the famous Tivoli Gardens. The hotel had poor rooms but a brilliant breakfast, bar, location and staff. At £200 it was nearly a snip ☺.

The Hyttefadet Restaurant on the Friday was on the front at Nyhavn – located on the beautiful multi-coloured canal side. I panicked when I arrived there at 6.30pm to find that inside and out was fully occupied with diners. I was told to come back at 7.30pm and it would be fine. It was better than that, the food was excellent, the service was superb, a



good time was had by all. We sat with the manager enjoying a complimentary "Gammel Dansk" at the end of the night – it's a herbal liqueur that makes Jägermeister taste nice, but the company was lovely.

As usual lots of us met up in the hotel bar at the end of the day to compare notes.

Next day we arrived at the main square to meet our guides – the night before had been "Constitution Day". The square was wrecked, but was getting tidied up and we headed off in two groups for a superb tour around Copenhagen including walking through the



Seeing the sights in central Copenhagen







Royal Palace (maybe we can walk through Buckingham Palace and the gardens once it is official that King Charles won't be living there). Copenhagen is a delight to walk around and the history is fascinating. I had not realised that Copenhagen and Malmo were built at the same time by the Danish King to charge ships for heading through the straits. (Like Hormuz?).

Maggie and I went off with Fiona and Johan to meet their Danish friends in a local "Brown Bar". Smoking is still allowed and beer is really cheap. We met 86 year old "Dave" from the British Army who drove Montgomery, 4 US Presidents and 14 US ambassadors to Denmark. The guy was fascinating.

Lots took boat tours of the canals and the harbour including the Little Mermaid. Others visited castles, museums, art galleries of amazing quality. Quite a few watched a fantastic firework display at the **Tivoli Gardens (below)** on the Saturday night. On the Sunday and Monday people headed home, went to Malmo across the water, and, in Ken and Jean's case, headed to Stockholm which I gather they found beautiful.

Where to in 2027?



MASCOT MEMORIES FOR LIFE



We're delighted to confirm that London Branch is sponsoring the away day mascot experience this 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. 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.

CHAOS IN THE HEAT



Heroes all round – your class of 2026:
***(back row)* Amary Djialeu, Lucas Tembey, Harvey Tiffen (GK), Joseph Scott, Dave Scott *(front row)* Chris Tembey, Tom Templeton, Jason Casey, Steve Batey.**

London Branch FC Suffer Semi-Final Heartache!

13th June, Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, Walthamstow

Our annual pilgrimage to E17 and the 2026 edition of the fabulous Chaos Cup, a 6-a-side tournament at the Douglas Eyre organised by our friends from Orient, with Macmillan Cancer Research this year's chosen Charity. The Chaos places 16 teams across 4 groups of 4, where the group winners and runners-up advance to participate in the "Cup" and those finishing 3rd and 4th enter the knock-out phases to fight for the right to take home the "Plate". Having won the Plate twice but fallen at the first hurdle in the Cup last year the decision

we had to make was which route did we want to take this time round! **Dave Scott** arrived with a couple of bottles of beer, ready to enjoy a relaxing day in the sun watching the action unfold. Thankfully he'd also packed boots in the car and off he went for a much-needed swap! **Harvey** was nursing an injury from earlier in the year but having passed a fitness test in goal on the Wednesday before, offered his services and although running late the fruit-salad-decked-stopper arrived just in time for kick-off. **The class of 2026 was complete; Harvey in goal, Dave & Joseph, Chris & Lucas, Steve, Tom, Jugsy (would arrive later after a Charity Walk) and we were joined this time by Amary, a school friend of Lucas.** Suzanne, an experienced supporter of the event, came complete with cool box and an eye for capturing goals on film.

Donning our new kit in the June sun, we found ourselves in Group C along with Leyton Orient 'A', Dulwich Hamlet 'B' & Worthing.

Game One: Won 4-1 v Orientear FC 'A' – We dominated possession for much of the first half and chances came and went but were mainly blasted high over the bar as we got used to the small goals. It was against the run of play therefore that Orient took the lead. Some confusion over a foul/back pass/ had play stopped(?) resulted in the ball at Harvey's feet. As he was about to pick it up, an Orient player nipped in and tucked the ball away. Two hands on the ball? The goal stood and we found ourselves behind at half-time. Dave and Chris came on for the second half and the change gave some added composure which spread through the team. Amary smashed home from distance with a fine drive when played through. Lucas found Joseph with a lovely through ball and the finish was neat from close range. Lucas added 2 for himself with fine left and right foot finishes and the turnaround was complete, resulting in a fine opening game victory.

Game Two: Won 4-0 v Dulwich Hamlet 'B' – Too strong for this Dulwich B Team, it was all pretty much one-way traffic. Amary's corner from the right found the onrushing Tom beautifully and he smashed it first time past the 'keeper to give the Blues a half-time advantage. In the second half Joseph added a brace, the second of which was a stunning lob from a narrow angle and Lucas completed the route, finishing through bodies after a nice back heel from Dad Chris following a super move.

Game Three: Won 1-0 v Worthing - The toughest game and we knew that avoiding defeat would see us group winners for the first time ever. A tight game where Worthing were tidy but lacked that killer instinct up front. Chances came and went for both teams but Captain Tembey's solo strike in the second half was the difference. Great work by Joseph on the right, his cut back was beautifully dummied by Amary who'd heard the shout and Chris smashed home from the edge of the box with a sweet right foot drive. The group won, we could set our sights on the Cup.









Quarter Final: Won 3-0 v Dulwich Hamlet 'A' - This the "Lucas Tembey Game"; three fine first-half finishes resulted in a Lucas hat-trick and a Semi Final place all but sealed by Half-Time! A lovely solo effort, a clinical finish from close range and smart finish following a great one-two with Amary were his three left foot strikes in this one. Jugsy had a golden chance in the second half to make it 4 but placed wide when through 1v1. The damage had already been served and into the Semi-Final we went, already our finest Chaos Cup achievement.

Semi-Final: Drew 1-1 v Coppermill Swifts (Lost 2-4 on penalties) - This was one of those heartbreak stories that still hurts today, as any England fan can vouch for! Injuries started to creep in leaving Jugsy and then Steve sidelined. A tight game as everyone tired and the heat increased but a near-perfect Semi-Final display saw Coppermill, who we'd beaten in the 11-a-side version back in November, comfortably kept at bay. In the second half a great run from Amary, who was fouled twice along the way, took himself into the box and he somehow managed to square for Lucas to drill home through a defender on the line for the all-important breakthrough. With 1 minute left on the clock, the blues lost possession on the left and Coppermill drove forward. A hopeful but decent strike could only be parried into the side netting by Harvey and Coppermill had stolen an equaliser. Amary had a last gasp chance to win the game but blazed just over the bar and onto penalties we went. Joseph was up first, finishing expertly. Coppermill went to Harvey's left; 1-1. Lucas then dispatched brilliantly, Coppermill went to Harvey's left; 2-2. Chris next up and did something never done before; changed routine and his mind at the last second and screwed the ball wide in what was an horrendous moment for the team. Coppermill went to Harvey's left; 2-3. Amary was next up in what was effectively 'must score' territory. He went down the middle and the 'keeper parried easily to safety. Premature celebrations started for the Swifts but then all realised there was still one more goal required. Coppermill went to Harvey's left; 2-4. *(Yes, the Swifts by now had seen Harvey favoured diving to his right!)* Celebrations returned for those in green and black and it was a subdued team in blue that headed for the bar.

PSG went on to beat Coppermill 1-0 in the Final to retain the Cup.

Heartbreak for the blues then but on reflection it was a SUPERB team effort and great day, resulting in our best-ever showing: Unbeaten in normal time, 13 goals scored and just 2 conceded is beyond impressive and (deserved) group winners was a first! Just 60 seconds from the Final....that's how close we came. Some huge performances from the group of players and Lucas, with 7 goals, comfortably finished our leading goal scorer. The day also offered some excellent networking for potential fixtures in the future.

Chris Tembey

Brunton Park Diary 2026/27



YOUR SUPER SOARAWAY SUMMER BRUNTON PARK DIARY !

1st Jun (Mon)

First-team analyst **Glenn Boden** becomes ex-analyst with Elliott's, sorry, Gateshead's **Josh Lucas** confirmed as his replacement. Boden had joined from Scunny to work under Simmo in February 2024.

2nd Jun (Tue)

Another day, another departure with local legend **Danny Grainger** deciding to leave his role as an academy coach leading United's youth development phase (under 12 to under-16) last season.

3rd Jun (Wed)

Former all-over-the-place defender **Mike Edwards** joins newly promoted Kidderminster Harriers as their new assistant manager.

6th Jun (Sat)

Ajiboye's breathtaking run and finish against Forest Green Rovers deservedly tops the voting for National League goal of the season. The freshly-appointed **Elliot** is pipped to National League manager of the season by York City's Stuart Maynard – let's see if that ends well!

9th Jun (Tue)

His agent has done it again, ex-w(h)inger **Jordan Gibson** pens a three–year deal with Crewe Alexandra while former midfield wide man **Jack Bridge** turns down reduced terms to stay at Southend to sign a multi-year deal with Chelmsford City, who appear to have a bit of coin in their pockets.

Fresh from leading South Shields to second in the National League North last season, former first-team coach **Ian Watson** is given the vacated gaffer gig at Rochdale following McNulty's appointment at Stockport County.

10th Jun (Wed)

As expected, recently released unit **Jake Allan** joins the Jameaters on a permanent deal.

11th Jun (Thu)

Head coach Elliot smuggles colleague **Louis Storey** into his Heed moving van, appointing the former centre half as

United's new assistant head coach.

It could be a rapid reacquaintance with **Archie Davies** after he signs a two-year contract with Yeovil Town following his exit. Further down the pyramid is ex-striker and Sussex-loving **Ashley Nadesan**, who signs for local National League South side Horsham FC.

14th Jun (Sun)

Former youngster **Matty Douglas**, now 28 and most recently at Queen of the South, rejoins Barr's Jameaters on a two -year deal.

Old boy **Adam Clayton** is the new Assistant First Team Head Coach with the recently minted Monkey Hangers.

15th Jun (Mon)

Newport County fans look set for another season of trapdoor circling with news that ex-loanee **Harrison Biggins** is making a permanent return to Rodney Parade.

16th Jun (Tue)

Transfer-listed **CCC** bombs out social media rumours that the Blues have tabled a club record fee of £200k to re-sign the former loan midfielder from Posh with a sharp "Where do they make these things up from."



17th Jun (Wed)

From Premier League to Northern Premier (well – almost). Elevated eyebrows all round as Macclesfield FC announce the appointment of Blues' former head honcho **Keith Curle** as their new Chief Executive Officer. The mysterious one's last role had been in a forlorn attempt to keep the Monkey Hangers out of the League Two relegation mire, which ended back in February 2023.

18th Jun (Thu)

As night follows day, former United first -team coach **Carl Magnay** is whistled up from South Shields to join Ian Watson at Rochdale AFC as the club's new first team assistant head coach.

Darlington bring in former Brunton Bairn **Max Kilsby** on a one-year deal following his two seasons with Annan Athletic.

19th Jun (Fri)

Elliott's first signing is style guru **Miguel Azeez** (below) with the 23-year-old midfield number 6 joining United on a two-year deal from Morecambe for an undisclosed fee. The former Gunner U23's skipper almost linked up last season and had loan spells with Portsmouth, Wigan Athletic, and Spanish side UD Ibiza before permanent deals with CD Atlético Baleares and Greek side PAS Giannina.

20th Jun (Sat)

Joining Zoolander at United is the returning **Archie Mair**, the 25-year-old shot-stopper scribbling on a one-year contract with the option of a further year. Elliot had previously worked with Mair at Gateshead.

22nd Jun (Mon)

23-year-old defensive ball-winning midfielder **Harvey Bunker** is the next through the door as he puts a paw on a two-year contract following his release from Forest Green Rovers. Bunker came through the Vegan's academy going on to make 149 senior appearances, scoring 11 goals including one in Robbie



Savage's 4-2 Cry Fest at Brunton Park last season. During his 6 years as a pro there, he had loan spells at Chippenham Town, Weymouth, and Scunthorpe United. As one of their supporters said on the FGR forum: "He will be an asset at Carlisle I think and I suspect we will miss him more than Robbie (Savage) thinks, lot of pressure on young players but he has a great attitude."



Head physio **Sophie Birnie** and director of performance **Greg Stebbings** depart in the nearest thing Brunton Towers has had to a backroom GoT Red Wedding.

23rd Jun (Tue)

Big **Richie Bennett** is off again, the veteran striker moving to Spennymoor once his contract Scarborough Athletic expires.

24th Jun (Wed)

Fresh from his release by Ipswich Town, one time young full-back **Ryan Carr** will be hoping for some pitch time with St Mirren after signing on a two-year contract, with a club-held option of a further 12 months for the Scotland U21 international.

25th Jun (Thu)

Former stopper **Tomáš Holý** signs a two-year contract with Czech second-tier side FK Viagem Ústí nad Labem.

They'll be no **Kadeem Harris** back at Brunton Park, the 33-year-old winger deciding to slum it down in Gillingham having left Salford City following the expiration of his contract.

26th Jun (Fri)

Another linked former loanee won't be back either, **Charlie McArthur** going to York City on a permanent from Newcastle, while a more long-in-the-tooth former central defender in the grizzly shape of **Tom Parkes** will be lending his experience to NL rivals Tamworth.

29th Jun (Mon)

Last season's season ticket sales tally of 3,424 is now in view with 3,271 sold to date.

The rumours of **Martin Foyle**, the club's head of recruitment, leaving to take up

a new role….a place behind Perspex in their legends' museum perhaps…. with Port Vale come true.

Former Wembley Wonder **Joel Senior** pens a two-year deal with Tranmere Rovers after leaving the Gas in the summer, reuniting with former Pirates boss Darrell Clarke in the process

Crowd favourite old boy **Richard Keogh** is appointed assistant head coach at Walsall while **Jordan Jones** or what's left of his body, is among the players at the PFA pre-season camp for free agents. Other exes include stoppers **Michael Kelly** and **Shamal George** and defender **Reece James**.

30th Jun (Tue)

Bringing the band back together (BBBT) Part 3. 27-year-old centre-back Gateshead defender **Brad Nicholson** arrives an undisclosed fee on a two-year deal with the option of a further year. The left-footed former Guiseley, Boston United, Scunthorpe United and Solihull Moors man is also a long chuck specialist. The move is promptly followed by BBBT Part 4, 27-year-old fellow Heed man **Kenton Richardson** signs a one-year deal with the option of a further year. Described as quick, strong and comfortable on the ball,

Richardson started out at the Monkey Hangers before spells at Notts County and Sunderland. A loan spell at Spennymoor Town was followed by a permanent move to Gateshead in 2022 under Magic Mike.

1st Jul (Wed)

Various old boys are on the move. Fresh from his departure from Tranmere Rovers, ex-United striker **Kristian Dennis** scrawls his name on a deal with NL rivals Altrincham. The **Kyle Dempsey** reunion remains on pause with the former midfield tyro doodling a two-year deal with L2 Port Vale while **Macaulay Gillesphey** joins the Bantams on an initial two-year deal after departing Charlton Athletic for an undisclosed fee.

2nd Jul (Thu)

Blink and you missed him ex-Blue **Martin Smith** joins Gateshead's denuded coaching staff.

3rd Jul (Fri)

Aaron Hayden finds his level with a move to NL North's newly promoted Hednesford Town on a one-year deal.

United rinse and repeat their decision to bin off the National League Cup.

4th Jul (Sat)

The prospect of joining **Jack Armer** at Burton Albion, plus another signing-on

fee, is too much for ex-striker Matt Dennis with his penning a tidy three-year deal.

Brennan Dickenson plays on trial for the Jameaters in a preseason friendly win over Penrith with ex youth players **Jack Porter** and **Simon Rigby** also featuring.

7th Jul (Tue)

United win a behind-closed-doors friendly against Queen of the South with the score rumoured to be 5-0 including a four-goal haul for Kelly. Players either photographed in the game or mentioned by Elliot as taking part include summer signings Miguel Azeez, Harvey Bunker, Archie Mair, Kenton Richardson and Brad Nicholson with Junior Luamba, Ryan Galvin, Elliot Embleton, Regan Linney, David Ajiboye and Callum Whelan, as well as young pros Jonah Lowes and Seb Mason plus youth team player Will Hatton also in action.

62-year-old veteran **Joe Garner** will be lining up for NL North newbies Morecambe next season after inking a one-year deal with the optimistic option of a further year with the wage dodgers.

8th Jul (Wed)

Simmo-era midfielder **Dylan McGeouch** squiggles a two-year deal with Lowland League side Gretna 2008. The Scot was named player of the year last season at Ballymena.

9th Jul (Thu)

Next season's home player wrapping is revealed without any reminders of Aquafresh or the mid-70s kit in sight. New clobber suppliers Macron have sensibly shown some restraint; a plain blue design with a subtle checked pattern in the fabric, accompanied by white, red and blue on the collar and sleeves.

Magic Mike adds two-time former United loanee **Adam Campbell** to his South Shields playing deck while his former first-team goalkeeping coach with the Blues **Tom Weal**, takes up the role with Leicester City. Also on the move are **Cole Stockton**, who signs for Accrington Stanley on a two-year deal, and the immortal **Derek Asamoah**, the Anfield hero bringing it all to Isthmian League South East Division side Whitstable Town at 45 years young.

10th Jul (Fri)

The new fixtures allow United to start their title-winning campaign with a home clash against newly promoted Worthing followed by a long trip to Yeovil Town.

Former midfield project **Jayden Harris**

retains his NL status after inking a deal with Wealdstone after leaving Sutton United.

NPL Premier Division side Warrington Rylands welcome made of Weetabix ex-Blue **Joe Riley** after his departure from Tamworth while **Shamal George** escapes from the PFA Gulag and finds his way to L1 Bromley on a two-year deal.

11th Jul (Sat)

CUFC YTH XI (3) 4 CLEATOR MOOR XI (1) 1 – PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY (PSF)

Wheatley's cool finish from a through ball, a Muldoon strike into the bottom corner, another Wheatley goal after getting on the end of Worth's long ball and rounding the keeper and Bell finishing off another fine team move, made it a comfortable afternoon's work for the nippers.

MOTHERWELL XI 2 CUFC XI 3 – PSF (BCD)

Despite several players missing, a mixed Blues side featuring several young pros and youth players themselves, were too good for an equally young Well side with **Linney, Ajiboye and Mason** reportedly all on target.

CUFC First half: Mair, Trialist, Richardson, Nicholson, Galvin, Trialist B, Bunker, Lowes, Linney (Tonge 30), Luamba, Kelly.

Second half: Breeze, Trialist (Hatton 66), Ellis, Trialist C, Harper, Whelan, Azeez, Hetherington, Rafferty, Ajiboye, Mason.

After a week training with the club, St Johnstone decide not to sign former youngster **Liam McCarron** following his departure from Boston United.

13th Jul (Mon)

Still on the road back after recovering from injury, one-time loan midfielder **Jack Sowerby** takes up the offer of being paid in fish n' chips as he signs for North West Counties League side Ramsbottom United.

14th Jul (Tue)

CARLISLE CITY XI (1) 1 CUFC YTH XI (0) 2 - PSF

A stronger youth side with Hatton, Tonge, Rafferty, and Towers starting, excel with the come-back completed by Towers' brilliant chip and Bell smashing one past the keeper in a game they lost heavily last season. Towers also hit the post, Hatton was denied by an excellent save, and Robinson had a good game between the sticks.

Ben Aaron, Finley Boertien, Harry Cairns, Dan Miller, Kai Muldoon, Brad Robinson, Josh Wade and Nathan

Wheatley are announced as all stepping up to be part of United's under-18 squad under Birch, Devitt and the beady eye of academy manager Andy Lowe. Boertien and Wade have been at the club since under-9 level.

Glenn Boden is back in the game, becoming NLN Chester City's new first-team performance analyst under Phil Parkinson, while **Simmo** takes up a role as the U18-U20 technical lead in the Saudi Arabian Football Federation, ending his ten months with the USA under-16 boys' national team.

16th Jul (Thu)

After one of the longer recruitment gestation periods, the Blues finally get their CEO with Southend United chief executive **Tom Lawrence** confirmed as Nigel Clibbens' replacement at Brunton Park. By all accounts, his five years at Roots Hall have been widely regarded during a difficult period for the seasiders.

17th Jul (Fri)

WORKINGTON REDS XI (4) 5 CUFC YTH XI (0) 0 - PSF

With the injury-stricken first-team group kept in cotton wool, a young Blues team battled gamely in the harsh reality of a men versus boys contest including various Reds looking to earn a contract. First-team trainee Will Rafferty's constant movement and play caught the eye out of the youngsters, his HT introduction making it a much better contest.

CUFC XI: Worth, Hatton, Bell (Cummersky 73), Aaron, McDonough (Murphy 64), Boertien (Miller 57), Wade (Rafferty 46), Tonge, Wheatley (Hodgson 67), Muldoon (Stuart 83), Towers.

Transfer specialist Pete O'Rourke claims on X that L1 Cambridge United have been told to do one after coming in with an offer for Blues #1 **Gabe Breeze** while Elliot admits the keeper's attracting attention.

Sam Hetherington's 45-minute run out in the recent Blues friendly against Motherwell will be the last for now as it's confirmed to be about to sign for a NLN club, which is confirmed a few days later as previous loan club Darlington on a one-year deal.

18th Jul (Sat)

21-year-old former Blackburn Rovers player **Leo Duru** and 25-year-old ex-Worthing midfielder **Jack Young** appear to be the two mystery trialists as the club takes the sacks off their heads during family fun day open training session. USA under-20 international Duru is a

versatile, fleet-footed right-sided player who was released by Blackburn at the end of last season while Young was on Newcastle United's academy books during Elliot's time there. Young's playing CV includes Tranmere Rovers (loan), Wycombe Wanderers (loan and permanent), Ayr United (loan), Wealdstone (loan), Dorking Wanderers (loan twice) and Farnborough (permanent).

Turkish delight for one man as ex-Blues midfielder **Elliot Watt** (aka a poor man's Callum Guy) bags a move from the housing estates of Motherwell to join top-flight side Samsunspor in a reported four-year, £2m deal. Samsunspor reached the last 16 of the UEFA Conference League last season.

20th Jul (Mon)

The latest PFA pre-season camp features ex-midfielder **Alfie McCalmont** after his departure from A-League club Central Coast Mariners, **Harry McSpreader** and ex-loan keeper **Ben Amos** all looking for a club.

Giant striker **Kyle Hudlin** is the latest player on trial, the towering former Huddersfield Town frontman a free agent after leaving Vietnamese club Thep Xanh Nam Dinh. His path has crossed, Hudlin scoring the winner for Newport AFC against the Blues in the 2024/25 season.

21st Jul (Tue)

WIGAN YTH XI (5) 5 CUFC YTH XI (0) 1 – PSF

The youngsters started off like France although unfortunately, not the good version but the one on the wrong end of a first half gubbing by England in the World Cup 3rd Place match. The Latics goals arrived like an evening National Lottery draw; 3, 8, 26, 36, 44, and the bonus ball is…….

Wade managed to get a goal back just after the hour and Towers unluckily clipped the woodwork in a better second half that had a little Va-Va-Voom about it.

DARLINGTON (1) 2 CUFC (4) 4 - PSF

A vibrant United were far too good for Darlo, putting the game to bed in the first half before making wholesale changes for the last 45. The lack of playing options meant that Galvin, Bunker, Ellis and Duru were pressed into the backline with Harper, Azeez, Whelan and Ajiboye across the middle and Kelly and Linney up top. Harper and Whelan combined for Bunker to convert the latter's low cross for 0-1 before

Duru found Azeez, who slotted home. The impressive Duru, who looks almost nailed on to sign, then played a part again to make it 0-3, leaving his man to

cross for Ajiboye to retrieve and leave Linney with a simple finish. No sooner had the hosts pulled one back then Whelan drilled one in from 25 yards out to restore the cushion. The last 45 was largely game management and a chance for the likes of Lowes to impress with Hudlin having one chalked off for off-side.

CUFC XI: Breeze (Mair 46), Ellis (Hatton 72), Harper (Tonge 72), Galvin (Trialist – Storey 72), Bunker (McDonough 72), Azeez (Mason 69), Whelan (Lowes 62), Ajiboye (Rafferty 62), Linney (Trialist – Young 51), Kelly (Trialist – Hudlin 69), Trialist – Duru (Williams 62).

22nd Jul (Wed)

Forget The Odyssey, the club decide to tie midfield colossus **Harvey Macadam** until the summer of 2028 after agreeing a contract extension.

Next season's away player wrapping is revealed as a striking bright pink and blue design that can be seen 35 miles away on a clear day from the top of Scafell Pike.

Gateshead continue to get a bum deal with former Blues utility man **Jack Robinson** joining them on a one-year deal following a trial and an entire year away from first-team football.

The familiar sight of **Omari Patrick** might be back at the home of the Gods next season, if he can break into their match-day 40, as he thumbs a deal with the Robbie Savage Circus down in Gloucestershire

23rd Jul (Thu)

Let the bidding war commence, Elliot notes that more clubs than Cambridge are showing keen interest in #1 keeper **Gabe Breeze**.

The Jameaters permanently sign former United youngsters **Dan Hopper** and **Simon Rigby** following the latter's trial spell with the club and impressing in the recent CUFC friendly.

24th Jul (Fri)

WBA re-sign experienced ex-Blue **Conor Townsend** on a one-year deal following his departure from Ipswich.

25th Jul (Sat)

CUFC YTH XI 1 MIDDLESBOROUGH YTH XI 2 – PSF

Few details on the game other than Will Rafferty scored for United.

United finally announce **Leo Duru** on a one-year deal, with the option for a further 12 months.

27th Jul (Mon)

30-year-old Fleetwood Town defender **Toby Mullarkey** is brought in to help shore up United's patched up defence on a half-season loan. Mullarkey naturally ticks the "have you previously worked with Rob Elliot?" box, playing for him in L1 at Crawley Town. The ball-playing centre-half had spells at Rochdale and Grimsby Town before joining Crawley and then moving to Fleetwood last summer, where he made 27 appearances including 22 starts as the Cod Army finished L2 in 15th.

Josh Emmanuel joins Jordan Jones, Alfie McCalmont and Michel Kelly in the latest ex-United cohort to take part in the week's PFA pre-season Gulag camp. Shamal George dug the tunnel, now find it lads.

Trialists **Hudlin** and **Young** are allowed to look for other clubs.

28th Jul (Tue)

CUFC XI (0) 0 SALFORD CITY (1) 2 – PSF

A mixed night for the Blues, which began with the rumour that Cambridge have made an improved bid for the missing Breeze, not risked after picking up a bad gash against Darlo. Mullarkey performed well on his first outing since signing while Atkinson, Luamba and Wearne had their first gallops on the turf since the end of last season. Bunker and Azeez also continued with their good pre-season form.

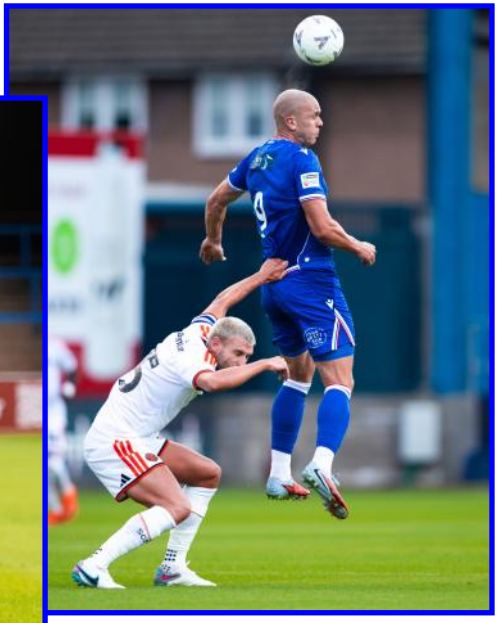
On the downside, the Blues press was beaten on a couple of occasions resulting in goals and fans were holding their breath on the fitness of Ajiboye after being taking a couple of hits to a back injury. Despite the Cumbrians enjoying plenty of the ball, the fancied L2 side were rarely seriously tested.



Duru takes the field v Salford

CUFC: Mair (Worth 86), Mullarkey (Atkinson 74), Bunker (Tonge 86), Galvin, Duru (Williams 46), Harper, Azeez (Lowes 58), Whelan (Ellis 65), Ajiboye (Luamba 39, Rafferty 79), Linney (Wearne 65), Kelly (Mason 74).





Action v Salford City sees Mair in goal and a new variant on the 'clothes line' for Leo Duru







Rob Elliot asks which boy has hidden his proper training kit during a break in the action v Salford

1st Aug (Sat)

CUFC YTH (3) 3 GATESHEAD YTH (0) 4 - PSF

After being brilliant for two thirds of the game, the youngsters were truly dreadful for the last half hour with two of the Heed goals free headers from corners and three of the goals coming in the last ten minutes. In a game played in in difficult conditions on a hard, dry pitch in a strong wind, Boertien, Wade and the promising Wheatley had put the Blues 3 -0 up and in cruise mode after an hour, and it could have been six but for missed chances.

DERBY COUNTY U21 XI (0) 0 CUFC XI (0) 3 – PSF (BCD)

An oddball of a match, this time a mixture of first-team hopefuls and younger players from the start with some of the more experienced seniors joining in later. The main positives from the first half were Atkinson and Lowes looking more than ready to contribute next season. Although perhaps well short of being 100% judging by his performance, Wearne did well to open the scoring early in the second half after linking up well down the right with Ellis. The fresh legs of Linney were then too quick for their backline, breaking through to finish Whelan's ball low past the keeper.



The lively Azeez crashed an attempt off the underside of the crossbar following some glorious interlinking play with Linney on the left as the Blues searched for a third. Even though Kelly's scoring boots were left on the training ground, looking like a man who might need several good chances for every effort that eventually finds the net, it eventually came late on when Bunker tapped in from close range with Whelan, Harper and Galvin all involved in the build-up.

CUFC: Mair (Robinson 87), Williams (Duru 60), Ellis (Bunker 60), Trialist (Storey, Mullarkey 73), Atkinson (Galvin 46), Lowes (Azeez 60), Tonge (Whelan 46), Smith (Linney 46), Wearne (Harper 60), Mason (Kelly 60), Luamba (Bell 81).

*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

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