

# TOWN



Saturday 2nd November 2024 - £2



ST HELENS TOWN A.F.C.

v



HARTFORD E.C.

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# FROM THE CHAIR

*Welcome to the PSD Stadium at Ruskin Drive, for the eleventh match of our Cheshire League campaign and only the fourth at home, against Hartford FC.*

It seems a long time ago since the warm, sunny, September Saturday we played the reverse fixture, when we came from behind to take all three points. It is actually our last-but-one league fixture, with only the trip to Sandbach four weeks ago since then. It can be difficult to maintain momentum with such big gaps, but it's the same for everyone.

The First Team's last two matches were in cup competitions, victories at home against Forefield Rangers in the Liverpool Junior Cup, and away at Knuttsord in the JA Walton Challenge Cup. The latter was special, with victory secured in the sudden death stage of a penalty shootout, against a side from the top of the division above us. It was a memory that will stay with us.

The U23s are in the midst of a quiet period, having not played since 5 October, no game this weekend and having been awarded a walkover in a cup competition next weekend. Manager Matt Birchall will be focused on getting the team keyed up for whenever they do resume, after what amounts to an unexpected mid-season break.

The U18s under Carlos Rodrigues are well and truly up and running in the North West Youth Alliance, with last Sunday's 3-6 victory at Congleton taking them to seven points for the season, after five games. That puts them in fifth place in the 11 team league, which is a solid start against tough opposition. They play Maine Road here at Ruskin tomorrow, 3 o'clock kick off. All welcome, as ever.

It is a pleasure to watch all three of the Town teams at the moment. We can't win anything in Autumn, however; the whole Club needs to carry

on working hard at the right things, on and off the pitch, if we are to build a genuinely successful season. That's what we're doing our best to do.

Come on the Town!

*Ste Lingard*



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# A WORD WITH THE MANAGER

*Myself and the club would like to welcome everyone from Hartford FC to Ruskin Drive this afternoon.*

No matter what the score is, we hope you'll join us after the game for refreshments in The Wicket bar.

*Well it's finally good to be back on home turf, after a tough run of away games.*

The start we have had, has been exactly what I expect of this particular group of lads.

The new additions have massively improved us in ability, fitness, skill and most importantly attitude.

The numbers for games and training is exceptional that is massive credit to each and everyone associated with the club.

I'm also made up with our 2 new additions to the group Will Clapham and Ellis Morris both who are great players and with attitude that we want in this club.

Today's game is another test of our ambition as we know Hartford will prove a tough test having climbed to 3rd in the league.

As always we can only concentrate and control what we do, and let's hopefully continue this fantastic vein of form.

Enjoy the game and thank you for your continued support.

Peo - #Tellinstown #Mertz



Peo (R) & Seddo (L)

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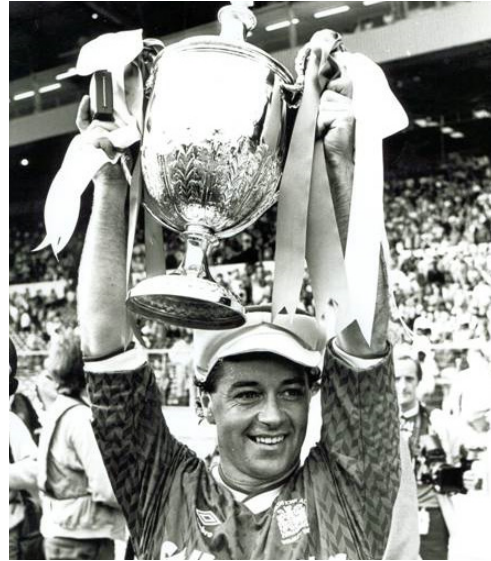
# A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOWN

The original St. Helens Town club was formed in 1901 and played at Park Road, behind the Primrose Vaults public house. Although it was known as the Primrose Ground, the players changed further down Park Road at the Black Horse pub. Playing in the Lancashire League and Lancashire Combination, the team enjoyed some early success, but struggled after the Great War and appears to have folded midway through the 1928/29 season.

The club was re-formed by George Fryer and a group of local businessmen in 1946. They took out a lease of the former cricket ground at Hoghton Road, Sutton, adjacent to the St. Helens Junction railway station and, although it entered in the FA Cup in the 1946/47 season, a team could not be raised in time to fulfil its tie with Prescot Cables.

Friendly games were played, then local team Derbyshire Hill Rovers were taken over in April 1947, those players forming the nucleus of the team which entered the Liverpool County Combination at the start of the 1947/48 season. St. Helens Town soon began to prosper and early results included a sensational 10-4 win over Everton "A" on 6th December 1947. Former German prisoner-of-war Bert Trautmann joined the club in the Summer of 1948, the strapping goalkeeper helping the team to win its first trophy, the George Mahon Cup, which was secured with a 2-1 win over Runcorn at Prescot on 7th May 1949. Crowds averaged over 2000 that season, peaking with a league record attendance of 3012 against Burscough in October 1948.

The following season, 1949/50, Town entered the Lancashire Combination and, despite losing Trautmann to Manchester City in October 1949, they won the Second Division title in some style the



following season, three players, Albert Leadbetter (36), Harry McCann (32) and Terry Garner (31) all netting over 30 goals apiece. An all-time club record attendance of "between 8000 and 9000" witnessed a friendly game against Manchester City, arranged as part of the Trautmann transfer deal, in April 1950 and another 4000 witnessed a second match with City the following season.

Although relegated by a slender margin from the First Division in 1951/52, the club continued to look forward, even contemplating Football League status and, in order to further its ambitions, moved to the former St. Helens Recs. rugby league ground at City Road. Initial crowds were encouraging but, despite success, the club decided to move back to Hoghton Road in October 1953, where they remained until April 2000.

Town produced a number of fine players who joined Football League clubs, including Bill Foulkes (Manchester United), John Quinn (Sheffield Wednesday) and John Connelly who joined Burnley, later transferring to Manchester United and who played in the England 1966 World Cup winning squad. More recently, Dave Bamber scored goals in all four divisions of the league with a host of different clubs, starting and ending

his league career at Blackpool and in more recent times, Karl Ledsham, who had a productive career at conference level with Southport, Lincoln City, Barrow and Stockport County before moving to the USA.

Following a second relegation in 1956, St. Helens Town continued to play in the Lancashire Combination, winning the Championship in 1971/72, by nine points ahead of Accrington Stanley.

However, the formation of the Northern Premier League in 1968 led to a gradual drain of stronger clubs from the Combination and St. Helens joined the Cheshire League in 1975, becoming founder members of the North West Counties League seven years later. They held the proud record of being the only club



to play in the NW Counties' top flight every season until they were relegated in April 2015, conceding an injury-time equaliser to Silsden in the last game of the season, a match they had to win to stay up.

Town enjoyed a golden era in the late 1980s, just missing out on an appearance in the First Round proper of the FA Cup in 1985/86, losing to Morecambe in a Fourth Qualifying Round Replay, but they obtained ample compensation by winning the FA Vase at Wembley in 1987, beating near neighbours Warrington Town 3-2, with two goals from Phil Layhe and one from Brian Rigby.

They were regular promotion candidates for many years, largely due to the scoring exploits of Steve "Pellet" Pennington, who grabbed 216 goals in 351 games, his season's best hauls of 45 in 1993/94 and 46 in 1997/98 just failing to beat the club record of 47 scored by Phil Stainton in 1963/64. Former club captain Andy Gillespie won the NW Counties' golden boot with 34 goals in the 2015/16 season and netted another 24 times the following season.

Town moved from Hoghton Road in 2000 to ground share with St. Helens RFC, as part of the merger into the new Sporting Club St. Helens. Developing the new Saints stadium took years longer than anticipated, and when Knowsley Road closed in 2010 Town became nomads, plaig variously at Ashton Town, Ashton Athletic, Prescot Cables and Atherton Collieries. Town returned to St. Helens Borough in August 2017, playing on a 3G surface at Ruskin Drive, after St. Helens Council redeveloped the facilities.

The 2021-22 season saw Town in the NW CFL First Division North. It was a disastrous campaign, with only four wins and four draws from 36 league games. The club finished bottom of the table, 21 points adrift, and was relegated to the Liverpool County Premier League.

A consortium of Town fans bought the club from St. Helens RFC in Summer 2022. They took the decision to move it to the Cheshire League, believing it offered the most constructive environment in which to rebuild the club. It was a difficult decision, however, as it involved having to start at the bottom of that league system, a further two divisions down. The 2023/24 season was the first in the Cheshire League.

The rebuild is ongoing.



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# OUR OPPONENTS

Unfortunately, there are only limited and sporadic records of football being played within Hartford village before 2000. Certainly there are still many within the village who remember the successful U11's, U13's and U15's teams of the early and mid 1980's, who played under the name Hartford Boys FC. The "Boys" later being dropped in 2011 in with the growing demand for mixed junior and girls football.



Historically, the focal point and spiritual home of football within the village had always been the "Green Field" located behind the village post office; a safe, enclosed and idyllic location situated in the shadow



Now an FA Charter Standard Community Club with 25 competitive teams (including 6 girls teams), an early years academy, and 350+ active playing members (including 75+ female playing members) the club is in its greatest ever period of expansion - the future looks bright!

For the 2019-20 season Hartford fielded an Adult Open Age First Team in the CFL2, so this is only our 5th competitive season. A project very much in its infancy; we're proud to promote youth and a player pathway and also have a competitive U21's team who regularly feature in the First Team.



of the St Johns village church and on the edge of the conservation area. However, always blighted with drainage and water logging issues, the pitch became less and less usable during the winter playing season.

The modern incarnation of the club took the decision to leave "The Green" in 2015 and embark on a bold and ambitious new vision for football provision in the village.

Relocating to the stunning new 3G facility at Hartford High School, introducing a "one-club" philosophy and adding a dedicated girls football section.

# CULTURE VULTURE

## FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE

**This week saw the Ballon d'Or awards.** Real Madrid got wind that their star Brazilian forward, Vinicius Júnior, would not be receiving the main "Billy Big Balls" award; instead, it was going to a supposedly average Spanish player who plays for Frank Sidebottom's Moss Side lottery winners, Man City.

In justifiable outrage at this perceived injustice, Real Madrid decided they would not attend the ceremony. After all, they only won best team and best manager. (In case you haven't noticed, I'm being sarcastic here—yeah, I know, I'm subtle!) Football is a tribal affair, and if you're reading my articles (may your gods bless you), you probably know my favourite MASSIVE club is City.

That being said, I'm fairly confident I'd still find Real Madrid's behavior spoilt, no matter who picked up the main award.

Ex-City and Argentinian legend Sergio Aguero defended Rodri's achievement, stating, "Football is for everyone, not just Real Madrid—they are so entitled." This sentiment was brought to mind on an overcast Wednesday afternoon at Liverpool FC's training ground.



Our sister club, **Hope United**—a refugee team from St Helens—was invited to an afternoon football tournament with a refugee team from the **Liverpool FC Foundation** and another from Warrington. It's been an absolute privilege to be part of this team, and the coaches from Town have embraced the project wholeheartedly. With the Parr Sports Community minibus unavailable, Peo, Brad Coy, the legendary Kenny Dixon, and I decided to make the short trip to Kirkby ourselves.

The players were less than keen on piling into my Dacia Stepway, favoring Peo and Kenny's taxis (they're taxi drivers, by the way), and, of course, Brad's gangster Range Rover was higher up the pecking order than my 0.9-litre French budget mobile. In the end, Victor, Najee, and Mostafa drew the short straw and off we set down the East Lincs.

On arrival, we were greeted by a less-than-friendly security guard as we wandered around the visitors' car park looking lost. A tip to anyone visiting Liverpool Academy: don't step on the grass verges—they take it seriously. Our friends from the Liverpool Foundation welcomed us and showed us to the pitch. After a quick Wonder Woman-style change into our kits, we were ready for the first match: a 20-minute game against

the LFC Foundation team. We played some solid football, particularly at the back, but unfortunately didn't look sharp up front, and we lost 1-0.

The second game was LFC against the Warrington team. Maybe because we weren't playing, it seemed to last for 2 hours rather than 20 minutes. Finally, our time came again. I'm not sure who exactly we played, but it seemed like Liverpool and Warrington had teamed up to crush us. However, no matter where you're born, there's something about St Helens that teaches you to deal with what you're given. Our Hope side rose to the occasion. We went down 1-0 to a harsh penalty (it was actually blatant, but as I said, it's a tribal game). We pulled one back thanks to Mobin, and we nearly won with the last kick.

This world can be unforgiving, filled with judgment, hate, war, and inequality. You watch the news and, if you put aside your politics, beliefs, and preconceptions, you're left wondering what's wrong with the world. However, amid all the chaos, some things can still unite us powerfully—I believe football is one of those things. Unless you support one of the clubs I don't personally like (as I said, it's also tribal).

Anyway, enjoy the game, c'mon The Town, and as always... stay cultured.

**Mike Bagshaw**

**Culture Vulture**



Bolu doing some strange young person sign



Dont walk on the grass!



Action from the game against LFC Foundation



We Are Hope



Will the game we're not playing in ever end?



When's it our turn?

# MEET A MERT!

## CHRIS FOSTER

**Age:** 34ish **Position:** Centre Back

**Who do you support?** Manchester United

**Best player of all time?** Paul Scholes

**Best ever kit?** Man Utd 3rd kit 2004/05

**Pre-match ritual?** Got to have a Pimblett's meat and potato pie on a barm with brown sauce for my dinner before a match!

**What are you watching?**

I'm watching shameless USA at the minute, got nothing on the UK version

**What are you listening to?**

Post Malone at the minute, don't mind a bit of country.

**Who's the biggest moaner?** Cookie

**Worst dancer?** Only seen a snippet, but Scott Williams.

**Worst tattoo?**

Probably Charlie Leech with his random ones.

**Worst dressed?** Kenny with

some of the gear I've seen him wear.

**Worst haircut?** Pacey had the worst

haircut about 3 weeks ago it was shocking!

**Who would you want with you if you were stuck on**

**desert island?** Alex Pettersen, if you need something making or fixing, he's the man, so we would survive! Just look at his boots; Gorilla Glue Galore!

**Tightest with money?** Pacey, that lad won't

part with 50p without arguing over it.



## BEAT THE YICKER

1. Actress Leslie Ash is married to which former Leeds United striker?
2. Which Greater Manchester club was formerly known as Pine Villa?
3. Which club rejected a young Alan Shearer after giving him a trial in goal?
4. Which Cheshire league club play at Simms Road?
5. Which former Pilks goalkeeper is starring for league 1 Wigan athletic this season?
6. Crusaders v Cliftonville is a derby in which city?
7. Which Merseyside club are known as the Sandgrounders?
8. Who won the Fa cup in 1966?
9. Tranzonspor are from which country?
10. Who are the only unbeaten team in all 5 divisions of the Cheshire league so far this season?



Answers at the bottom of the page.

## ANAGRAMERTZAGRAMZ

Peo had a few too many in the Griffin, and we can't make head nor tail of his teamsheet. Can you unscramble his nonsense before kick off?

1. JONES IN WINKLES
2. SENT ALE EXPERT
3. BABY BUM KNOW EXCEL?
4. ERIC'S FROTHS
5. CREATE G PARTY
6. DIE WHALE DEATH
7. AI CRECHE HELL
8. MOB SCARING
9. O O'CRANKY
10. CHIP ARSON SMILE
11. NEE THAT WON'T





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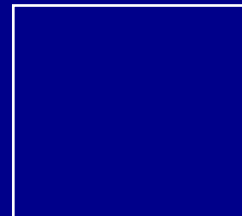
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# TOWN U23s

*With no game for 4 weeks due to the league schedule and a bye in the County Cup, it has been a frustrating couple of weeks for the 23s.*

Finally, a chance for the lads to put the boots back on and the gaffer to get the tactics board back out. We face a tough home tie in the Reserve Challenge Cup v Poynton.

Poynton will be a tough opponent as they currently sit 3rd in the Division above us. We've done our homework, and prepared as well as we can for the fixture. The boys will just be glad to get back on the pitch and give everything they've got to cause a cup upset.

Our next league fixture is on 16/11 at home to Winsford as we look to put a disappointing few weeks behind us and kick on for the rest of the campaign.

**Matt Birchall - U23s Manager**



### Town U23s Upcoming Fixtures

02/11 12:15 St Helens Town v Poynton Res. (RDCC)  
16/11 12:15 St Helens Town v Winsford Town Res.

### CHESHIRE RESERVE LEAGUE 2

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Lymm Rovers Res.	10	6	3	1	31	15	16	21
2	Billinge New Street Res.	11	6	3	2	21	12	9	21
<b>3</b>	<b>St Helens Town U23s</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>
4	Haydock Res.	11	5	1	5	23	29	-6	16
5	Clay Brow Res.	8	4	3	1	16	14	2	15
6	Winsford Town Res.	9	4	2	3	29	23	6	14
7	Sandbach United Dev. Squad	8	4	1	3	20	5	15	13
8	Crewe FC Dev. Squad	7	4	1	2	17	15	2	13
9	Winstanley Warriors Res.	9	4	0	5	25	24	1	12
10	Moore United Dev. Squad	11	2	1	8	11	31	-20	7
11	Halton Farnworth Hornets Res.	12	0	0	12	6	47	-41	0

# TOWN U18s

*We had a difficult start to the season, with a new team. Getting to know the boys and how to get the best from them takes time, and this league is very hard, the standard of teams is very high.*

The team is settled now, we know each other and we're starting to get the best from this group.

Getting our first win against Macclesfield (a team who rarely lose) was a good kick off for our season. Since that win we've started to believe in ourselves, and the boys now realise how good we are.

I've been working on this in training, working on the psychology of the team, having meetings about what they're doing right and wrong, and we're ready for a good season, especially after last week's win.

I'd asked the lads to start the game the way we've been finishing them, and we scored in 21 seconds, and by 25 minutes we were 5-1 up. A special congratulations to Daniel Yawson who bagged a hat-trick.

My job is to prepare these players to progress through the club to the first team, and we've already got a couple of lads who've made that leap, but on the field we're going to try and keep winning and see how far we go. To be honest, my initial aim was to avoid relegation, but now our sights are firmly placed on a top three finish.

Finally, I'd like to give a shout out to the club, and how supportive they've been with us. From the fans, right on up to the chairman, everyone's been very supportive

### Town U18s Upcoming Fixtures

03/11 15:00 St Helens Town v Maine Road  
10/11 14:00 Ramsbottom Utd v St Helens Town

### NORTH WEST YOUTH ALLIANCE DIV 1

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Aintree Villa FC	7	4	1	0	19	7	9	13
2	Atherton Collieries AFC	7	3	1	1	14	10	0	10
3	Winstanley Warriors FC	4	1	0	0	10	11	1	9
4	Macclesfield FC	4	1	0	0	9	7	9	7
<b>5</b>	<b>St Helens Town AFC</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
6	Chorley FC	4	0	0	0	6	18	4	7
7	Congleton Town FC	7	1	0	4	6	5	2	7
8	Nantwich Town FC	5	1	0	1	4	11	0	6
9	Ramsbottom United FC	2	0	0	0	3	15	-3	6
10	Maine Road FC	7	1	0	2	3	16	-9	3
11	Stalybridge Celtic FC	4	0	0	3	0	24	-20	0

of us. I can't praise them enough, that's what makes a team work well, when everyone's organised behind you.

*Thankyou, Carlos.*



# TOWN IN ACTION

Town 3 -1 Sandbach Town - September 2nd

Photos by Mary Castrogiovanni



James Jones



Ian Roby



Archie Hanson



Ethan Wetton



Scott Williams



Tom Hunt



Pacey Garrett



Charlie Leech



Player of the Match Jake Sant rising for a header

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Michael Bagshaw, Steve Ball, Daniel Castrogiovanni, Kenny Dixon, Gill Ellison, Michael Featherstone, Neil Hitchen, Annmarie Houghton, Ste Lingard, David O'Keefe, Gavin Scott, Paul Styles.

### Management Staff

**1st Team Manager:** Paul 'Peo' Piert

**Assistant Manager:** Martin Seddon

**1st Team Coach:** Danny Hughes

**U23s Manager:** Matt Birchall

**U23s Assistant Manager:** Joe Bone

**U18s Manager:** Carlos Rodrigues

**U18s Assistant Manager:** Dave Pallett

**U18s Secretary:** Fiona Sharrock

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## ST HELENS TOWN HONOURS

- 1949 George Mahon Trophy Winners
- 1951 Lancashire Comb Division 2 Champions
- 1972 Lancashire Combination Champions
- 1973 Bass Charrington Cup Winners
- 1974 Watson Trophy Winners
- 1978 St Helens Hospital Cup Winners
- 1979 St Helens Combination Div 1 Runners Up
- 1979 St Helens Hospital Cup Runners Up
- 1980 St Helens Combination Div 1 Champions
- 1985 NWCFL Reserve Division 2 Runners Up
- 1986 NWCFL Reserve Division 1 Runners Up
- 1987 FA Vase Winners (Wembley)
- 1994 League Challenge Cup Finalists
- 1994 NWCFL Reserve Division Runners Up
- 1995 NWCFL Reserve Division Champions
- 1996 NWCFL Reserve Division Runners Up
- 1998 Floodlit Trophy Finalists
- 1999 REALCO Fair Play Award Winners
- 2009 Bert Trautmann Trophy Winners
- 2014-15 South Lancs League U17s Cup Finalists
- 2014-15 Cheshire FA U21 League Champions
- 2015-16 Cheshire FA U21 Premier Cup Finalists
- 2016-17 Cheshire FA U21 League Cup Finalists
- 2016-17 Cheshire FA U21 Premier Div Runners Up
- 2017-18 NWYA U18s President's Cup Winners
- 2020-21 NWYA U18s President's Cup Winners

### Record Attendances:

- 9000 at Prescott Cables v Runcorn (1949)
- 8000 at Hoghton Road v Man City (1950)
- 3012 at Hoghton Road v Burscough (1948)
- 2096 at Langtree Park v Wigan Town (2023)
- 1723 at Knowsley Road v FC United of Man (2006)

### Programme Awards:

NWCFL Programme of the Year  
1993-94, 1995-96, 1997-98, 1998-99,  
1999-00, 2000-01

NWCFL Premier Division  
2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

NWCFL First Division / First Division North  
2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20

Wirral Programme Club National Survey  
NWCFL Programme of the Year  
1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99

Programme Monthly  
NWCFL Programme of the Year 2007-08

Soccer Club Swap Shop	
National Programme Awards	
2010-11 28th,	2011-12 8th,
2012-13 7th,	2013-14 8th,
2014-15 5th,	2015-16 8th,
2016-17 2nd,	2017-18 5th
2018-19 6th	2019-20 5th

M60 Programmes  
NWCFL Division One North  
Programme of the Year 2019-20

### St Helens Town AFC - Player Records 1946-2021

Goals in a Career	Goals in a Season	Career Appearances (250+ games)
216 Steve Pennington	47 Phil Stainton 1963/64	448 Alan Wellens (inc. 207 estimated)
118 Terry Garner	46 Steve Pennington 1997/98	359 John Critchley (16 estimated)
108 Gary Laird	45 Jackie Kendrick 1973/74	352 Steve Pennington
105 Lee Cooper	45 Steve Pennington 1993/94	346 Gary Lowe (1 estimated)
101 Glenn Walker	40 Bob Potter 1952/53	345 Glenn Walker
94 Iain Dyson	38 Terry Fearn 2000/01	327 Jackie Atherton (122 estimated)
84 Andy Gillespie	36 Albert Leadbetter 1950/51	300 Jackie Cooke (1 estimated)
83 Harry McCann	35 Arthur Tyrer 1957/58	287 Gary Laird
81 Ray Fairweather	34 Lee Cooper 2001/02	280 Kevin Grice (147 estimated)
72 Arthur Tyrer	34 Andy Gillespie 2015/16	278 Jimmy Woodyer (67 estimated)
68 Phil Stainton	33 Ronnie Rigby 1952/53	276 Iain Dyson
63 Mervyn Bull	32 Harry McCann 1950/51	272 Ray Fairweather (3 estimated)
	31 Terry Garner 1950/51	265 Larry Redmond (134 estimated)

