

TOWN



Saturday 5th April 2025 - £2



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FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the PSD Stadium at Ruskin Drive for today's match against Halton Farnworth Hornets, and especially to everyone making the short journey across Junction 7 of the M62. Fingers crossed for a good afternoon of football.

This is the first time we have played each other (at First Team level) this season, which feels a little unusual at this late stage. Plus, we'll be making the return journey in 10 days, for our first midweek match since Newton-le-Willows away last August.

I visited Halton's Wilmere Lane ground last September, to watch our U23s. We put on a good display and won comfortably, with some excellent performances – one of many under manager Matt Birchall.

That is one of several reasons why everyone at the Club is very sorry that he has decided to move on at the end of the season, as he wrote in these pages recently. He has done an excellent job since joining us two years ago, ably supported by Joe Bone.

Matt brought high standards, ambition and a keen competitive spirit to the U23s set up, after a period of instability. He has made it an attractive place for good young players to develop, helping them make the transition from U18s to open aged football and to remain in the game at this level. The number of former junior players who are in that squad and even the First Team squad is a testimony as to how capably he has done it. My thanks to Matt for all that he has done, and for being such a good person to be around.

Matt and the U23s are away to Winstanley today, then have their final game of the season at home against (you guessed it) Halton Farnworth Hornets next Saturday. The First Team don't have a game that day, so please do come along to help give Matt a proper send off, if you can.

As ever, things have to move on. We're looking for a new manager for the U23s, as you will see from the advert on our social media. Give it a share if you can, and help write the next chapter.

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 Halton Farnworth Hornets 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.

Looking back on last week's performance, I was very pleased at our application towards a game which could of been a much tougher challenge.

Although we scored 7 goals, it felt like going through the motions, which I get at this stage of the season as results are all that matter.

It probably is just me and the management team, that we strive for the same standards week in and week out.

That being said, it shows how far we have come over the past few years that I'm picking holes in a 7-0 victory.

Taking us to today's game, we genuinely don't know what to expect from our visitors today. They've had lots of mixed performances during the season, plus a few weeks without games due to different circumstances.

As always though, we can only control what we can do and not worry about anything else. Let's keep our fingers crossed and get the 3 points.

Enjoy the game and keep pushing us onwards with your fantastic support. As always it's much appreciated.

#tellinstown #mertz

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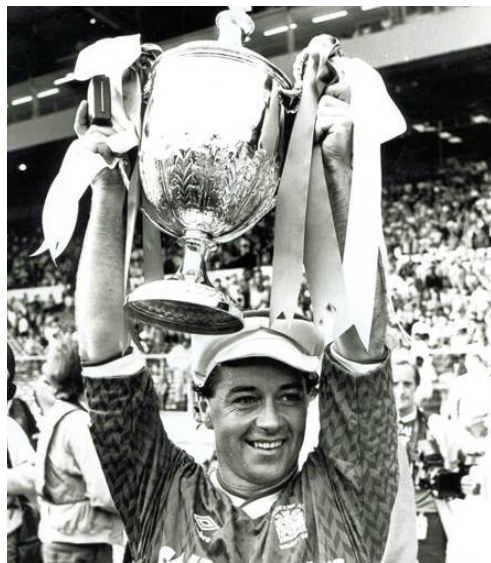
A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOWN

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 over 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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THE NON-LEAGUE PAPER

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by Jon Couch

AMIDST the serious stuff confined behind the closed doors of a football club boardroom, a level of humility is so important.

Football is a different animal these days – especially at elite level – with the Beautiful Game now almost a subsidiary to a ruthless, cut-throat business enterprise.

But Non-League football, where the game is at its purest, still proudly holds its traditional values and there's one day a year in particular where that humility comes to the fore; April Fool's Day.

Fueled largely these days by their social media presence, football clubs simply can't resist playing a light-hearted seasonal prank on their supporter base and, let's face it, it gets us every time!

Take Ebbsfleet United's Liam Daish being pictured holding aloft a Usain Bolt shirt with his 100m record 9.58 emblazoned on the back after the club announced they had clinched the signing of the Jamaican sprinter.

Or, how about when the United Counties League announced they were to trial VAR – a reveal so convincing that it even fooled some FA chiefs into questioning the move around the boardroom table.

This week, of course, the tricksters were out in force again – and your Non-League clubs didn't disappoint.

Many pranks involved aspects of stadia with Tiverton Town

revealing their intention to paint their pitch in the club's yellow and black colours in a spirited attempt to rally the team for the final stretch of the season.

Farnborough FC announced that their pitch was to double up as a heliport, as an extension of Farnborough Airport, while neighbours Aldershot Town revealed, Del Boy style, that they had discovered a natural spring at their EBB Stadium and would be offering Aldershot Natural Spring Water in the near future. Water cheek!

Crowborough Athletic went a step further by announcing plans to move into a 'world-class' all-seater stadium dubbed "Wembley of the Weald", while Radstock Town also unveiled plans to build a brand-new stadium on the site of an old Co-Op supermarket.

Ashington continued the theme by announcing the club were being forced to move into the grounds of the nearby Ashington Hirst Castle by the Coal Authority after a small hole was found in one of the penalty areas, caused by a collapsed seam from the former Woodhorn Colliery.

Several clubs revealed they had signed former star players – with two, ironically, snapping up the same one! Former Fulham, Wigan and Ipswich midfielder Jimmy Bullard was introduced by both SC Thamesmead

and Boston Town, while ex-Tottenham favourite and TV pundit Garth Crooks was unveiled by Leighton Town.

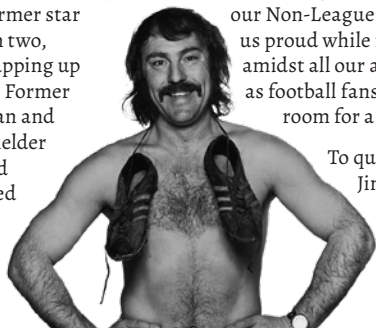
Elsewhere, Chorley FC announced the exclusive launch of their club collectables, including a figurine of manager Andy Preece, while Tamworth confirmed that their Lamb Ground will to host competitive lamb racing on a matchday as part of their half-time entertainment. That's baa-rrly believable!

And in a bold step for international relations, Dover Athletic revealed how they will play their next home game across the Channel in Calais with fans invited to attend the match aboard the new club ferry.

Bishops Cleeve unveiled a new slick oil colour shirt (which actually looked quite nice) in conjunction with a sponsorship deal with petrochemical giants INEOS, while Welsh club Colwyn Bay announced that, as from next season, the club will be known as the Turtles rather than the Seagulls, as part of our new partnership with The Blue Turtle Group, with the team running out to the song "Turtle Power".

So, once again for April Fool's Day, our Non-League clubs have done us proud while reminding us that amidst all our airs and graces as football fans, there is always room for a lighter side.

To quote the legendary Jimmy Greaves: "It's a funny old game".



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MEET A MERT!

CHARLIE LEECH

Age: 19
 Position: Winger
 Who do you support? Everton
 Where you from? Blackpool
 What's yer job? Landscaper
 What clubs did you play for as a kid? Rainford rangers, Burnley and Wigan.
 Best player of all time? Ronaldo.
 Best goal ever? Leighton Baines' last goal for Everton.
 Best kit ever? Brazil Home 2006
 Favourite other sport? Rugby.
 Any pre-match ritual or superstitions? Honey and a Redbull.

Best moment in a Town shirt so far? My corner against Stretford Paddock when Jake scored the winner.
 Best thing about Tellins? Going to the Saints games. (Presumably he means the Rugby Saints, not us, the Footy Saints - Ed.)
 What are you watching? Breaking Bad
 What are you listening to? Country music.
 Biggest moaner? Max Buckley-Benbow
 Who's the cleverest? Will seems like a nerd.
 Who is the "least cleverest"? Me and Pacey



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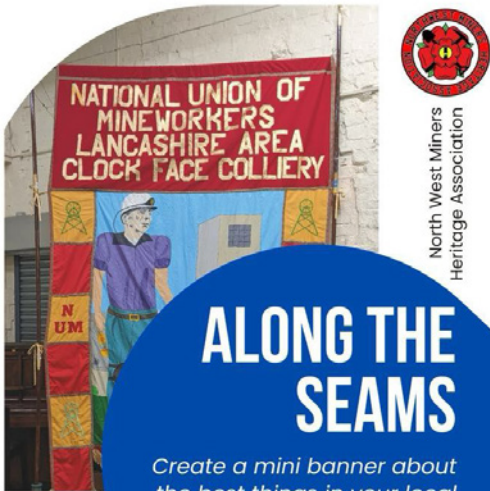
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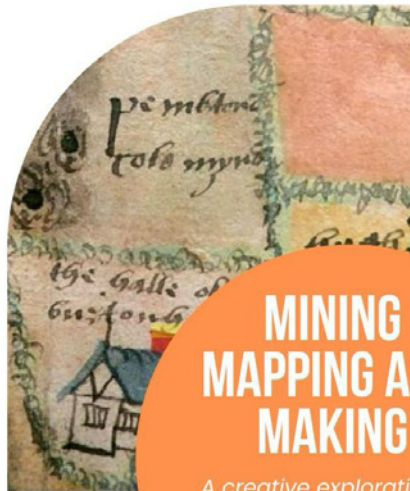
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Thomas Hunt **DEF**
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Paul Watson **MID**
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Dale Whitehead **MID**
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Scott Williams **MID**
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Ethan Wetton **FWD**
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TOWN IN ACTION

Town 7 - 0 Moore United - March 29th

Photos by Mary Castrogiovanni



Marc Gibson

Town returned to the PSD Vehicle Rentals Stadium to welcome a team that had beaten Town on its last visit to Ruskin Drive.

Moore United were the underdogs that day in January 2024 and arguably put at least one nail in the coffin of Town's promotion hopes half way through that season. Understandably, Town fans were well within reason to view the Warrington based team's visit with some trepidation.

However, Town's centre forward Ryan Cook held no such fears and calmly bagged a brace inside the first quarter. His first was down to sheer work rate, pouncing on a loose pass and rounding the keeper whilst his second was a first time volley hit with the laces that put the home fans at ease.

Minutes later, left winger Ethan Wetton would outrageously control a Sant cross field ball with the outside of his boot whilst simultaneously beating the Moore full back and firing home to make it three. Town were flying and never danger after that. Marc Gibson's close range fourth would make it an unassailable lead by half time and Paul Piert would rotate his selection by making five changes during the interval.

Shortly after the restart, Liam Diggle's powerful run and cross from the left was deflected into the Moore goal to resume normal service although Moore would have the ball in back of the net themselves after Beaumont's turn and shot but it would be pulled back for an infringement. On 75 minutes Will Clapham's clever finish after a Wetton through ball had released him made it 6-0 and the scoring would be rounded off by Town Captain Liam Diggle's goal on 90 minutes to put Town in 'seventh heaven' just as his brother Luke was announced to the crowd as St. Helens Borough Food Pantry player of the match.

The fact that Town's centre back was given the award despite the attacking prowess on display was testament to the frugal nature of Town's back four of late.

Moore fielded two excellent attacking options in Tom Beaumont and Kane Hackett who both worked tirelessly throughout for the visitors but to no avail. Lewis Jenkinson kept his second consecutive clean sheet in a week that also saw him claim The Griffin Inn player of the month award at Town.



Cookie Celebrating Not Missing a Sitter



Charlie Middlemore



Liam Diggle

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BEAT THE YICKER

Answers at the bottom of the page.

1. Who scored Bolton's winner at Wigan Athletic on Tuesday night?
2. From which Italian club did Man U sign Joshua Zirkzee?
3. Spartak Varna v Borev Vratsa is a top division game in which European country?
4. Who won the FA Cup in 1978?
5. Which league one club play Academy and U21 games at Christopher Park?
6. The lowest Premier League attendance was 3,039 in 1993 when Everton played away at which club?
7. The National Stadium (Windsor Park) in Belfast is home to which club?
8. Who is Wales most capped player?
9. Who is the record goalscorer in The Champions League?
10. Who did Town beat in the Semi final of The FA Vase in 1987?



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Treasurer: Ste Lingard

Commercial Manager: Gavin Scott

Media Manager: Michael Bagshaw

Committee

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 Houghton Road v Man City (1950)
- 3012 at Houghton 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
64 Liam Diggle	32 Harry McCann 1950/51	272 Ray Fairweather (3 estimated)
63 Mervyn Bull	31 Terry Garner 1950/51	265 Larry Redmond (134 estimated)

