

TOWN



MATTY LEES
PRESENTS
FESTIVAL of
FOOTBALL
2026



Saturday 18th April 2026 - £2



v





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FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the PSD Vehicle Rental Stadium at Ruskin Drive for today's Festival of Football, the third in what is now an emerging tradition.

This time the event is presented by Matty Lees, as part of his testimonial season. Our thanks go to him and his testimonial committee, and to everyone involved in putting on the day. It is great to have Saints legends, community charities and junior teams involved, celebrating our love of football and honouring Matty's contribution to Saints and the town.

The exhibition and junior matches are up first, before Town return to competitive action against Wythenshawe Reserves. Welcome to everyone making the trip from south Manchester, and we hope they enjoy the game being part of the Festival.

We're returning to action after a week off, following the game here against Daten on the 4th of the month. That was a tight, tense affair indeed, and a draw was a fair result. Having had two 0-0 games in a few weeks after nearly seven years without one, I know the lads are keen to amongst the goals again.

Our U23s don't have a game today, but they deserve a special mention: last Saturday they won away at Winstanley Warriors (1-4), maintaining their position at the top of their division. It was their 11th successive league win, and they are now very close to securing the title. They continue to retain proper focus on preparing properly for each game (despite the sometimes long gaps between them), working hard and playing attractive, flowing football; they are a credit to the Club. If you are planning to attend the First Team home game next Saturday against Stretford Paddock, I encourage you to get down early to see the U23s against Winstanley at (12.15pm), as you could witness something special.

Meanwhile, let's enjoy today, seeing our community come together around our two favourite sports, and our favourite place – St. Helens. Thanks again to Matty Lees, all our sponsors, and to everyone involved in the Festival. As ever, this is one big team effort.

Come on the Town! And Come on You Saints!

Ste Lingard



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A WORD WITH THE MANAGER

Myself and the club would like to welcome everyone from Wythenshawe 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.

It's good to be back at it after a week off, I hate the breaks when we are playing well but I suppose it can't be helped.

Reflecting on our last game against Daten, and after being my own biggest critic of what we could have done to get the 3 points, we created some great chances and opportunities to win the game, even though they definitely came for a point. The second half was again frustrating, as they sat right back and we even nullified their biggest weapon in the monster of a long throw!

So now we need to just concentrate on securing promotion and enjoying the rest of the games. Today's game will be no walk in the park as Wythenshawe have shown with some of their recent results - including an excellent result last week. So they

will be full of confidence, and we have to be at our best and show them the respect they deserve.

Before today's game we are holding our Festival of Football where we help to raise some money for Saints captain Matty Lees and promote some of the great work we do away from the 1st team.

I'd like to mention our **u23s** who are only a point away from promotion which is an unbelievable achievement with a brand new squad at the beginning of the season and arguably the youngest group of lads in their division. With 2 games left they can still secure the title as well so the future is looking very bright.

Lastly, if you're free tomorrow our **u18s** are in their cup semi-final here at Ruskin and if you can spare the time to pop down and support Carlos and the boys it would be fantastic.

Hopefully we have a very successful weekend.

As always your support is greatly appreciated .

#tellinstown #mertz - Peo



Peo (centre) with Mike Featherstone (L) & Seddo (R)



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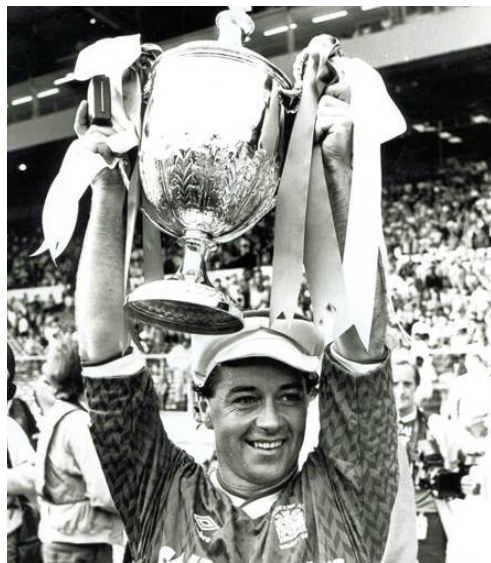
A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOWN

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 club's first in Cheshire League Division 2. The following season Town finished 11 points clear having lost only one league game in the whole campaign, securing their first title for more than 50 years and promotion to Division 1.

The rebuild is ongoing.

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CULTURE VULTURE

MEMORIES OF ASHTON GREEN

Sometimes I just don't know what to write in this article. This is my fourth season doing the Culture Vulture piece and, if I'm honest, it can feel like I've exhausted what I know about St Helens—both the trivial bits and the more serious stuff. And fitting this in? That's another challenge altogether when life already feels like a full-on juggle of work, family, charity commitments, a bit of weekend rock god, and the usual role of friendly, local, moaning, middle-aged dad.

Behind the scenes today hasn't been easy to pull together either. There are loads of moving parts for what, on the surface, just looks like a couple of games of footy. Anyone involved in grassroots or non-league football will know exactly what I mean. So why do it? Why give up so much spare time for no pay and, at times, not much appreciation? As I'm typing this, I've got messages coming in from our charity arm—banking issues again. We do all that for nowt as well.



The fabulous Anmarie Houghton from Home-Start St Helens accepting the Kings Award for Voluntary Services.

Then I glance over at my bedside table. Next to my inhaler—because let's be honest, all proper Sin Telliners have asthma—there's a book. Not just any book either: *A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution: St Helens 1750–1900*. Not something you're picking up in Waterstones. If you ever spot it in a charity shop or at a car boot, grab the beggar. It's a proper scholar's book, published back in 1993, and probably the most in-depth thing you'll find on how St Helens came to be. They can go for £100 on eBay—I got lucky and paid £15 for mine. Smells like my grandad's old pipe-filled front room in Ashton's Green. I'll read it properly and report back.

So why mention the book? No one asked, but I'll tell you anyway. It's because it reminds me that some loyalties go beyond logic. If we—the sons and daughters of this, at times, scruffy post-industrial town—don't stand up and look after things, whether that's helping out at a charity or putting a bit of love into our football club, then who will?

It's easy to sit there and be negative. We all feel it—the way the town's changed, the loss of industry, the divide between those who have and those who haven't, pubs shutting, the cost of living. I could go on. But the people who need help aren't the problem—they're often the ones caught in the middle of everything that's gone wrong.



My book, complete with inhaler



Some of the gang from the Town in the Town free footy sessions at St Cuthbert's High. The team will be part of today's event, taking penalties after the exhibition game.

Look around today. There are stalls here from charities supporting families, bereavement, single parents, recovery from alcohol and drug issues, and people seeking asylum. Real people doing real work, offering a helping hand. They say you're only two paycheques away from homelessness. One bereavement away from things spiralling. And when you look at what's happening in places like Sudan, it puts a lot into perspective.

So go and have a chat with the people on the stalls today. Take in the community around you. Enjoy it. It'll do you good—especially if Town get the win.

Because that's what this is. That's community. That's our town. And in my opinion, it's worth fighting for.

If you want to know more about any of the charities here today, get involved with the club, or if anything I've said hits home, feel free to drop me an email at

sthelensownafc@outlook.com

Stay cultured, and as always—C'mon The Town

Mike Bagshaw - Culture Vulture



The tireless Matty Molyneux and the Come Together crew head up Goniston.



James White from Dad Matters. If ever a man was made for his logo.

MEET A MERT! MATTY LEES

Age: 28 Position: Middle

Who do you support (football)? Wigan Athletic because my wife's family support them.

Best goal ever: Maynor Figueroa goal from free kick in own half.

Best ever Kit? England 1998 World Cup kit

Position if you were a footballer: Defender

Favourite other sport: Boxing

Any pre-match ritual or superstitions: Not really just an easy day and a decent coffee.

What are you listening to?: Mixed really RnB rock/indie and dance/house music.

What Saints player/s would make a good footballer?: Tristan Sailor

What boots do you wear?: Asics

Wembley or Old Trafford?: Playing at Wembley was a dream come true but have to say Old Trafford the atmosphere is better and also winning 4 in a row there holds special memories.

What could football learn from rugby? Toughness

Is Hill Dickinson the best stadium you have played at?

Yes I'd say playing there for the ashes was the best experience I've ever had for a game.

What is the highlight of your Rugby league career to date?

Playing for my country is up there but also winning the world club challenge in Penrith

Do you have an interest in coaching Rugby league in the future? Yes I would

Which RL team did you grow up supporting?
Rochdale Hornets / St Helens

Worst dressed at Saints?
George Delaney

Worst taste in music at saints?
Kyle Feldt



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TOWN IN ACTION

St Helens Town AFC 0 - 0 Daten FC - April 4th

Photos by Mary Castrogiovanni



The Tellins Ultras



Ethan Wetton

Town took a point from this top of the table clash against first placed Daten FC in a tense 0-0 draw at PSD Rentals Stadium, Ruskin this past Saturday.

At times Town looked the better side but in all honesty there were equally fraught patches for the home side during the game. None less so than on twenty five minutes when Lewis Jenkinson would be called upon as the excellent Daten midfielder Jacob Rowe threaded a pass through for league top scorer Przemek Staniszewski but Jenkinson was able to spread himself and the strike ricocheted off the Rainfordian's chest to keep the game scoreless.

Town would have chances too with the best being Charlie Simpson's volley from the edge of the box after he had out hustled the Daten defence. His effort looked certain to nestle in the bottom corner but for the excellent one handed save of Daten keeper Josh McMutrie.

The second half was a little more open as legs tired and Jenkinson would be called on once again to make a big save when Daten were in the ascendancy and the potent long throw-ins of powerful Daten centre back Jack Hodgkiss would require the Town back four and Jenkinson to be ever alert. The majority of the season high crowd of 177 might have thought Town would once again get a late winner as has been a theme of home games this season and chances did emerge.

Taylor Prescott cut in from the left and his low drive across the goal was brilliantly turned past the post by McMutrie whilst Ryan Cook had the ball in the goal inside the last ten minutes after excellent work from workaholic Simpson but it was ruled offside. Wetton perhaps had the best chance as his lightning fast reactions got him to the ball when others wouldn't have but the speed at which the ball rebounded to him caused his shot to clear the bar and the game would finish scoreless.

A draw was perhaps the fairest result despite Town's frustrations and Daten remain in the box seat going into the last few games of the season. Chris Foster took the St Helens Borough Food Pantry player of the match award whilst best for Daten was centre back Ross Ward. A special mention should also go to youngster Dylan Travis who came on in the Town back four for his debut and never put a foot wrong against the division's form team. The fact that the main plaudits went to defenders on the day probably best reflected the final score.



Liam Diggle



Oli Filson



**FOOD
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Player of The Match Chris Foster



Taylor Prescott

ST HELENS TOWN AFC U23s

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	
1	St Helens Town U23s	15	11	2	2	23	35	20	32
2	Styal Res.	16	11	1	4	33	34	29	31
3	Warrington Rylands Dev. Res.	17	10	1	6	15	31	7	30
4	Winsford Town Res.	18	8	6	4	7	30	12	29
5	Winstanley Warriors Res.	16	9	2	5	9	29	12	28
6	Egerton FC Res.	17	6	2	9	-14	20	-14	20
7	Golborne Sports Dev.	17	5	2	10	-11	17	-8	17
8	Haydock Res.	13	4	3	6	-4	15	-8	12
9	Newton-Le-Willows Res.	15	2	4	9	-8	10	-4	10
10	Moore United Dev.	18	2	3	13	-50	9	-46	9

UPCOMING FIXTURES

Cheshire Reserve League 2

25/04 12:15 U23s v Winstanley Warriors Res. Ruskin Drive
 02/05 14:00 Styal Res. v U23s Altrincham Rd, SK9 4JE



ST HELENS TOWN AFC U18s

Photos by Mary Castrogiovanni

	P	W	D	L	Pts	
1	Abbey Hey	15	11	3	1	36
2	Chorley	17	10	1	6	31
3	Nantwich Town	14	9	2	3	29
4	Pilkington	13	9	1	3	28
5	Stalybridge Celtic	18	8	4	6	28
6	Atherton Collieries	15	7	5	3	26
7	Clitheroe	15	6	4	5	22
8	Altrincham Youth	14	5	0	9	15
9	St Helens Town	18	4	1	13	13
10	CMB	14	2	3	9	9
11	Cheadle Town	17	2	0	15	6

NEXT FIXTURE

Sunday 19th April

15:00 St Helens Town AFC U18s v CMB
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BEAT THE YICKER

Answers at the bottom of the page.

1. Who scored Town's penalty at the formerly named Totally Wicked Stadium in the first Festival of Football fixture?
2. In the winning 1987 FA Vase run, Town knocked out which Wirral club along the way?
3. Which Cheshire League club ground-share at Hyde United?
4. Town skipper Liam Diggle had a brief spell at which Liverpool based North West Counties League club?
5. Which Cheshire League 1 club are managed by Michael Ryan?
6. Who scored a hat-trick for Town Under 23s in last weekend's win at Winstanley?
7. Who do Knutsford play in their local derby?
8. We all know there is a big Manchester United fan base amongst our committee, but who does Town stalwart Ste Ball support?
9. Which local club play home games at Simms Road?
10. Who did Town play in their last ever game at Knowsley Road? **A) Glossop B) New Mills C) Stockport Town**



CLUB INFO

Honorary Life President: Alan Wellens

Vice Presidents: Jim Barrett, Steve Ball and John McKiernan

Chair: Ste Lingard

Vice-Chair: Gavin Scott

Secretary: Paul Styles

Treasurer: Ste Lingard

Commercial Manager: Gavin Scott

Media Manager: Michael Bagshaw

Committee

Michael Bagshaw, Steve Ball, Daniel Castrogiovanni, Gill Ellison, Michael Featherstone, 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: Lee O'Connor

U23s Manager: Danny Hughes & Gav Hanson

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
- 2024-25 Cheshire Division 2 Champions

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)
80 Liam Diggle	34 Andy Gillespie 2015/16	278 Jimmy Woodyer (67 estimated)
72 Arthur Tyrer	33 Ronnie Rigby 1952/53	276 Iain Dyson
68 Phil Stainton	32 Harry McCann 1950/51	272 Ray Fairweather (3 estimated)
63 Mervyn Bull	31 Terry Garner 1950/51	265 Larry Redmond (134 estimated)

