Cambridge Fans United

CFU

"Uniting Our Community"

AMBER NEWS

Special 'We've Got Our Stadium Back' Edition

March 2022



Opening Celebration,

"Never let the things you want make you forget the things you have."
Anon

Recently, when I stood behind three young lads at Newcastle, they were saying that the match result didn't much matter. They considered that we had moved on so far since some of the very dark days not so very long ago, that just to be there in that fabulous stadium, locking horns with the world's most wealthy club was an occasion to savour, no matter what. They were trying to decide if, during their experience as Cambridge fans, they had experienced any greater moments. They mentioned the Wembley finals, particularly the first one at the real Wembley, our first game back in the League, beating Morecambe 7-0, promotion to league three and a host of unforgettable moments, all of which have helped to make supporting our amazing club even more worthwhile.



Amusingly, they tried to draw up a top ten worst ever experiences as a Cambridge fan, Hayes and Yeading were mentioned, Histon and a number of other small clubs who had the temerity to beat us and sing, "Football league? You're having a laugh." As if we didn't already feel bad enough. I am sure that we all have a store of such memories which are inevitably part of the baggage carried by fans of all real clubs and even some of the ridiculously rich ones who try to buy up all the glory for themselves. Losing at Wembley is always tough but two games in 2005 stand out as my own particular nightmare moments. The first was a 3-1 home defeat to a dreadful Kidderminster team who had been reduced to ten men at an early stage of the game. I saw lifelong Cambridge fans crying uncontrollably as they realised what this particular defeat almost certainly meant, whatever the hapless Steve Thompson was claiming. Shortly afterwards, I watched relegation from the Football League become a certainty as we stuttered to a nil-nil draw with Rochdale. It didn't help that I was part of the group which had sponsored the game or that I had had a long and unproductive conversation with John Howard or that Chairman Roger Hunt had done his best to pacify a truly angry crowd who felt, and had been, betrayed by those entrusted to run the club. Dave Kitson had been sold for a ridiculously low price with no sell on fees attached to the deal. Two of our Directors sold themselves our ground at a very low price, claiming that this was the only way to avoid administration and keep us from insolvency.

Of course it soon became clear that we had been misled and that we were actually hours from extinction. History shows that only the last minute intervention of Sports Mister Richard Caborn saved us. We now know that we would have been better off going into administration which would have meant that the ground couldn't have been

sold separately. Of course it was and CFU failed in a desperate bid to buy it back. We never got the multi- purpose all- seater stadium we had been promised and I began to wonder if it would have suited some people much better if we had been allowed to go bust. The image of housing being built all over our beloved Abbey has never quite left me and many others. The covenant which 'Colonel' Francis , who gave us the land and stipulated that it could only be used for sporting purposes in perpetuity, had mysteriously disappeared. Some claimed that it had never existed. Fortunately the lawyers were never required to prove anything either way.

No doubt our redoubtable benefactor would have been delighted by last week's astonishing news that Grosvenor had agreed to sell our ground back to us at a very reasonable price. I say our ground in the sense that the club and its ground belong to the fans. Without the support of generations of fans, the concept of a football club has no meaning , as the owners of the so called Big Six were forcibly reminded last year when they tried to join a European Super League without even consulting them. Shameful. It seems that Tracy Crouch has helped to smooth the way for this astonishing development, which is entirely in keeping with the findings of The Fans Led Review. If we had had a Golden Share arrangement in place in 2005, many of my unhappiest memories of being a Cambridge fan would never have happened. The problems which have afflicted Bury, Macclesfield, Coventry, Northampton, Stockport, Derby, Blackpool, Hull and Cardiff would probably have been avoided. It makes absolute sense for clubs to work closely with fans and to involve them in major decisions , particularly those affecting legacy and heritage. Clubs shouldn't be able to move or sell grounds, change the badge or the club colours without asking the fans first. The Golden Share is a way of protecting clubs and has come about because of Government pressure and the hard work of people like Godric Smith who were heavily involved with the Fans Led Review. We will be the very first club to adopt this protective organisation. No doubt it won't be easy but we should be very proud that we are leaders in this respect. Paul Barry once told me that if we couldn't be the best club on the field, we should be the best off it. Who could disagree? The work being done in the community, for mental health and to give fans a real say in future are all reasons to be proud of our club. We have a fine young manager, a team which never gives up and fans as loyal and passionate as any. I hope that CFU will be closely involved with the Golden Share, whatever form it takes. After all the pain, the future looks good and I look forward to a close relationship between the club, CFU and other supporters groups as we aim ever higher.



United in Endeavour

And Another Thing….

Whilst our chairman is looking forward to better days, I've been forced to reflect on the bad old days. This is how it happened.
I decided to move my overcoat which I've not been needed to wear since before global warming. I can tell you the exact date that I last wore it because in the pocket was a "Carols at the Abbey" programme dated Monday 17th December 2007. That night was cold.



It tells me that Rev. Stuart Wood welcomed us and scriptures were read by Jez George (Head of Youth Development), Phil Law (Club Director) and Greig Reid (Club Physio). Graham Daniels was named but it didn't say that he would enact how he got the better of Newcastle United! The stewards were volunteers. What was more interesting was the invitation to return for the next two games which were a Friday meeting with Rushden and Diamonds in the Setanta Shield and the Boxing Day match in the Blue Square Premier against Histon. I remember the latter but not the former although I must have attended both. However, I do remember the coldest ground I ever went to and that was Rushden and Diamonds.

Frank Pearson

Didn't we also go to AFC Telford in the famous Setanta Shield? At least there were 34 of us, I recall, and Lee McEvilly nearly rescued us with two goals in the last ten minutes it we lost 4-2, I think. Don't think we ever played Setanta again, thank goodness.

Robert Osborne

I think that Telford's ground was the coldest place on earth, although Robert tells me that both Hayes & Yeading's grounds qualify. Ed

My 10 Most Painful Cambridge United memories:

1. 1974 - losing 0-6 at Darlington, a terrible performance against a team near the bottom of the table.

2. 1990 - winning the play offs at Wembley beating Chesterfield 1-0. I was in the RAF stationed in Germany. I wasn't there and never hear the end of it.

3. 2005 - Getting relegated to the conference and nearly going bust. I thought we were finished.

4. 2008 - Losing 0-1 to Exeter City in the conference play off. Thought we did ok and a draw would have been fair.Extra time who knows !!

5. 2009 - losing 0-2 to Torquay United in our second conference final. The early decisions went against us and lost a game we started brightly.



6. 2011 - losing 0-2 to Hayes & Yeading, a very poor performance against spirited opponents.

7. 2009 - losing 0-2 to Grays Athletic, see above.

8. 1992 - losing 0-5 to Leicester City. We started well in this div 2 play off, didn't take our chances and got punished. The premier league was that close.

9. 1984 - just about the whole season, we finished bottom of the table under John Ryan, we were truly dreadful.

10. 1985 - see above, we came bottom the next season too, John Ryan was sacked. In 2 years I remember winning only a handful of games.

No wish to repeat any of this, ever.
Richard Stephen

I won't mention that he missed Newcastle due to having Covid! Despite my teasing, we have no more passionate fans than Richard. Ed



CFU Statement

Following this week's news concerning the agreement in principle with Grosvenor for the Club to buy back the freehold of the Abbey Stadium, Cambridge Fans United would like to make the following statement:

We would like to thank Grosvenor for allowing this opportunity and to thank them for their continued support during some of the really dark days in the club's history. Without their support the club may not have achieved its current success and be in the position we find ourselves today.

We would like to thank Paul Barry, Mark Green and Adam Webb for their superb support during the past two years and especially throughout the period of Covid. We would also like to thank them as custodians for enabling this opportunity to take place.

There must have also been a lot of work going on in the background by many others on the Board and elsewhere. We must not forget their part and we really do appreciate it.



CFU Chair Andy Stephen said, "Every supporter's heart was broken when the ground was originally sold. Today, those hearts have been repaired. I still cannot personally believe we are in this position or even talking about it. I never thought this day would happen in my lifetime. Supporters cannot express their gratitude to everyone personally. However, we are happy to do so on their behalf."

The Fans Led Review which took place last year has also promoted the protection which will ensure the freehold is secured for future generations of Cambridge United supporters with the Golden Share. This mechanism will, if future owners wanted to sell the Abbey and relocate the Club, allow those holding the Golden Share to veto the decision unless it is agreed to be the right thing for the Club.

Andy continued, "The club's motto is United in Endeavour. The Abbey Stadium's return is the opportunity for everyone to come together and be united in building a brighter future which we can be proud of."

I was interviewed about this news on Radio Cambridge. I told them that I would be smiling for months. I still am. Ed

CAMBRIDGE UNITED COMMUNITY TRUST NEWS

RETURN OF SENIORS' LUNCHES

On Thursday March 10th Cambridge United Community Trust welcomed back over 50 seniors to the Abbey Stadium to enjoy a two course meal and a game of Bingo.

These ever popular lunches have been going on for years now, but unfortunately because of COVID-19 most of the lunches over the past two years have had to be cancelled. They briefly returned last year, but the new Omicron Variant meant that there haven't been any lunches since December.



Simon Wall, Community Engagement Manager, explained: "For many seniors in our community these lunches have been the highlight of their month. A chance to meet up with their friends, relax and just have some fun. When we had to cancel the lunches it was absolutely devastating but we at the Trust made sure we kept in touch with as many of the seniors as possible, through garden gate visits, phone calls and virtual events. To see so many attend the lunch was fantastic and we can't wait for the next one".

The lunches will carry on taking place at the Abbey Stadium on the first Thursday of every month at 12pm.

If you would like to find out more information about the lunches, please contact simon.wall@cambridge-united.co.uk



WELLBEING WALKS

With help from The Ramblers and Cambridgeshire County Council the Community Trust have started to create a coordinated programme of led walks across Cambridge. The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks goal is for everyone to have access to a friendly, short,

group walk within easy reach of where they live to help them become and stay active. It provides opportunities to chat to others, explore the local area and most importantly make participants feel good. Walking outside is proven to improve both physical and mental health and so the Trust jumped at the chance of being involved in the delivery of Wellbeing Walks in Cambridge.

Last year the Trust started an Abbey Wellbeing Walk which is now led by volunteers and on Friday 11th March they launched their second Wellbeing Walk, this time in Trumpington.

If you would like to find out more information about the Wellbeing Walks, please contact jake.potts@cambridge-united.co.uk

SAVE THE DATE

Cambridge United's match against Morecambe on Saturday 9th April will see the return of the Community Trust Matchday. This will be a celebration of the Trust's work in the community and will give participants, local school children and their families, as well as local residents, a chance to watch a match at the Abbey Stadium. It will also be an opportunity to raise money to help fund the amazing work that the Trust does, which is reflected in their core values to be 'Caring, Transformative and Collaborative'. There will therefore be a 'Bring a Pound to the Ground' campaign leading up to the event and then bucket collections on the day.

Highlights of the halftime entertainment will include a demonstration from Disability football participants, a special version of 'Chip in the Skip' and the reading out of the poem that won the Trust's recent 'Diversity' poetry competition which over 500 children entered.

Keep an eye out on the Club and Trust's social media channels to find out further details of the day nearer the time.

Simon Wall

I am a great fan of the Community Trust. I know that the Seniors' Lunch and Afternoon Tea provide a vital lifeline for many elderly and lonely people. For some they are their only social activities. It was very moving listening to lifelong fan Terry O'Dell talking about his recent illness. As he said, "We are all one family." One Club – One Community. Ed



Warm welcome for all and inclusive, diverse environment is the target at Cambridge United



One club, one community has become an increasingly strong message from Cambridge United during the past three years.

The standing of the Cambridge United Community Trust was always well known by those that use the programmes and activities provided, but it was brought into sharper focus by their work during the first lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic.

That gave an outsider a look at what the U's do – and have done for a long time – to reach out to the community, but those efforts are not confined to officials of the club.

Cambridge Fans United are actively involved in initiatives to engage and bring more parts of the city to the Abbey Stadium.



Creating a warm, welcoming environment for all is one of the main strands of fans' groups such as CFU, the Cambridge United Supporters Panel and the work of Supporters' Liaison Officer Dave Matthew-Jones.

"The aim is to increase diversity and inclusion in football in general," said Ben Phillips, the CFU vice-chairman, pictured below.

"For the last five years people have realised that you need to do that and cater for all demographics. With CFU, that's what we've tried to achieve to help the club in championing in different areas.

"It's trying to promote that and show we are all one club. I think the key there is one club, one community.

“The community trust does great work in the community, and CFU wants to help that if they can, working with the trust.”

Cambridge United are broadening the diversity and inclusivity. Picture: Ben Phillips/Captured Cambridge Sport (55166203)

One such development has been the creation of the Amber Belles. It started last April, and amassed more than 100 members on social media within the first month as a way for more female football fans in the Cambridge area to interact with each other.

The group is an associate member of We Are The FSA, and co-founder Emma Smith has become an ambassador of the Her Game Too panel.

There are also discussions about how to make the Cambridge United Women’s team feel more part of the overall club – they played at the Abbey – last Sunday – an area that is complicated by their home ground being at St Neots Town FC.

Becoming a more diverse and inclusive club includes making the Abbey as hospitable for as many different people as possible.

CFU have a supply of noise-reducing ear defenders that can be loaned to supporters, and the club has worked with Picture Path to create an app that is designed to reduce anxiety for SEN children in all areas of their lives and when they visit Cambridge United.



“I’ve got a nephew who is autistic and when he first came to the stadium he lasted 10 minutes, now he is a season ticket holder who comes to every game,” said Phillips.

“As a family we put our own provisions in place for him to achieve that and now he is football obsessed.

“CFU have helped the club at arranging for sensory packs to be given out. We’re looking at how we can improve the experience of SEN children and maybe create a safe area, so to speak.

“It would be an area within the stadium, maybe a room somewhere, where if a child comes to the stadium who experiences sensory overload then they can go to a steward and say can I use the sensory room.

“They would go to the room just to take 10 minutes out. The more provisions you put in place for diversity, inclusion and different demographics the more people you will see come to the stadium, so it’s two-fold.”



Cambridge Fans United presented the imam of Cambridge Central Mosque with a United shirt (46012803)

That applies with regards to working with the Cambridge Central Mosque.

At the start of last year’s Ramadan, members of the football club made their first visit to the place of worship to provide provisions and gift packs for those fasting.

The project was supported by Anwar Uddin, of Fans for Diversity, and Kick It Out, English football’s equality and inclusion organisation.

“You’ve got a massive mosque which is one of the biggest in Europe within two miles of the stadium,” said Phillips, who did a photography project called ‘Your City, Your Shirt’ last summer to showcase the city’s diversity. “It’s a massive catchment of people, they all like football. A lot of them support Premier League clubs, so why not come and support your local club.



“It’s a case of going there and showing them this is Cambridge United, we’re a welcoming football club, what can we do as provisions to get you to come to the football stadium. We were greeted with open arms. We’ve been there three times now, we gave them a tour of the Abbey, they came here for tea and coffee and some educational classes, some training on the pitch.

“Now the aim is to push that on again and try to get them to come to a game.”

CFU vice-chairman Ben Phillips

The work of CFU goes hand in hand with the efforts of the club and the community trust, and the extra efforts of the supporters’ groups can be so pivotal.

“It’s a softer approach because it’s a fans-led thing. We work closely with the football club in trying to support them,” said Phillips.

“I think with fans working in partnership with clubs allows more things to be done. I think in the last two or three years, since Covid, we’ve actually worked really hard at the community side of things.”

The Community Trust’s Phil Mullen launched ‘Amber and Proud’ football sessions for the LGBTQ+ community, with support from the Football Foundation’s Return of Supporters Fund, and BAME-specific football-led coaching sessions have also been held.

Prior to the pandemic, there was a student night held in order to embrace Cambridge’s ever-swelling student population and it got more than 900 additional fans through the gates.

CFU, through chairman Andy Stephen, also hopes to develop more provision for those with dementia and vulnerable people.



Cambridge United are broadening the diversity and inclusivity. Picture: Ben Phillips/Captured Cambridge Sport (55166205)

“We wanted to put a system in place where somewhere in the stadium there would be an area that would be for the elderly, the vulnerable and dementia sufferers,” said Phillips.

“We didn’t get it off the ground at the start of the season but it’s something going forward that we want to work with the club on that we want to promote.

“Some people come to a football stadium and feel intimidated by the atmosphere and environment they are in, but if you can make it feel safe it becomes less important.”

The ultimate aim is to make sure that the football club reaches as much of the community as possible, and show that they are inclusive, diverse and accessible to all, even within the constraints of an ageing Abbey Stadium.

“I think we can do more as a supporters’ trust and supporters groups to help bring people in,” Phillips added.



“We can just say to people, we’re here, we’re in the heart of the community, we are a friendly, family football club.”

U's are second in the fans' index

Cambridge United have placed second in the Fan Engagement Index.

Each club in the top four tiers of English football was assessed on their dialogue with supporters, how supporters are represented as part of the club’s governance and how transparent the club is with their supporters. It was based on the 2020/21 season, and United were second behind Exeter City, moving up a place from third in 2019/20.

United CEO Ian Mather said: “Engaging with our fans in a meaningful way is important to every football club. It is the fans that make a club what it is.

“We are very pleased to be recognised for the way we do interact with our supporters in the latest Fan Engagement survey. Coming second out of 92 is great, though it still leaves room for improvement!”

Supporter liaison officer Dave Matthew-Jones said: “Fan engagement is so important and should never be ignored or taken for granted.

“Looking at the results there are still areas we can improve upon especially in transparency.

“Where we can make improvements we will review and do so. It shows we are going in the right direction and the importance of supporters at Cambridge United.”

Malcolm Lindsay 1940-2022

[Published by Coconuts]

All connected with Cambridge United were sad to learn of the death, at the age of 81, of striker Malcolm Lindsay, who helped the U’s win the Southern League and gain election to the Football League in 1970.

Malcolm, who had been battling cancer since last year, played 35 times and scored 16 goals for the U’s, although he was better known for an astonishing career with King’s Lynn – his 321 goals for the Linnets in 749 games is a club record.

United knew all about him long before Bill Leivers signed him in February 1970 to bolster the attack as they strove for their second successive Southern League title. The bustling Northumberland-born striker had scored five times against United, and he had also been on the receiving end of a headbutt from U’s goalkeeper Keith Barker during a 5-1 Linnets win.

Leivers was on the look-out for a proven goal scorer when the on-loan Paul Gilchrist departed, and Malcolm, already a legend at The Walks who had been top goal scorer for several seasons, fitted the bill perfectly. The United manager paid £750 for the all-action centre forward, and immediately picked him for an Eastern Professional Floodlit League derby against Cambridge City. Malcolm repaid some of the fee with both goals in a 2-0 United win.



He quickly developed an understanding with fellow striker Bill Cassidy, and both scored in a 2-0 Southern League win over Telford in March. By then he was usually operating as part of a three-man strike force with Cassidy and George Harris in away games, while at home the U's would switch to 4-2-4 with winger Peter Leggett joining the front line.

Malcolm continued to contribute goals as the season ended in triumph and United were elected to the League. United's first game in English football's top 92 – a 1-1 draw against Lincoln City on Saturday, 15 August 1970 – also saw his Football League debut.

As the 1970/71 season wore on, however, he found himself playing more in reserve competitions than in the League, and his season's tally of first-team games was at seven, with one goal scored, when he was allowed to leave for Boston United on a free transfer in December.

Before his move into full-time professional football, Malcolm had begun his working career at Woodhorn Colliery and served his time as an apprentice fitter at Ashington Colliery. He married local girl Patricia in 1962, and after the ceremony his new wife and guests watched him play for Ashington against Workington Reserves. He then played for Berwick Rangers and Queen of the South before moving south to King's Lynn.

After his time at the Abbey Stadium and his spell at Boston, Malcolm returned to complete his record-breaking career at King's Lynn. He finished his career with Wisbech Town in the 1977/78 season. He and Patricia, who died 15 years ago, subsequently ran the Bentinck pub in Loke Road, King's Lynn.

I know many Linnets fans who thought the world of Malcolm. Not only was he an iconic player, but he was a lovely man. He will be much missed. Ed

A Women's Day [March 5th]

What a wonderful day at The Abbey today to celebrate Women's Weekend. We really were all United in coming together and showing what an inclusive club we are. With the offer of free and reduced ticket prices for local girls' teams it was great to see 266

take it up, hopefully lots of them will return. We had fun with the selfie board (managing to capture a few stars in our travels around the ground). Emma and Anouska were also invited into Hospitality to give a talk on Her Game Too and Amber Belles which got a really lovely reaction. Lots of smiles all round today 💛🖤 please send us your photos or tag us on twitter or Instagram as we would love to see them @theamberbelles. (5th March)



To: Info <Info@cambridge-united.co.uk>
Subject: fans

Hi, i feel compelled to contact you regarding the Cambridge fans at Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday 12/03/2022.
i work as a turnstile operator and being new to the role i had not covered the away supporters turnstiles before and was a little nervous about the task. as soon as the turnstiles opened my fears were over. every supporter i let through my turnstile had a smile and a friendly greeting for me, i thoroughly enjoyed myself listening to the chanting and singing and the brief conversations i had as they passed through .they were truly a great credit to your club

good luck for the remainder of the season

Hot off the Habbin

[programme articles]

Luton Town

"A trophy carries dust. Memories last forever."
Mary Lou Retton

I have often been asked why I joined CFU and why I spend so many hours producing the Amber News. The answers are related and very much connected to a conversation I had with John Howard as the U's were sliding out of the league and approaching possible liquidation. The game was the one which confirmed our relegation from the football league and feelings were running high about the fact that two of our directors had sold our ground to themselves. A lady police office warned me about my conduct but, to be fair, John Howard told her that I was being both polite and reasonable. He talked about a new all seater stadium, which is yet to materialise, and suggested that football fans don't really understand the important issues. A fellow director was even more critical of our fans and used surprisingly foul language to tell me so. Perhaps he was unsettled by the fact that the Unofficial Away Supporters' Club had sponsored the game and were present in large numbers. No matter.



History shows what happened next. Dave Matthew Jones and others effectively formed CFU to fight for the future of our club. They desperately tried to raise funds to buy the ground back but, alas, it was sold to Grosvenor for rather more than was paid for it. One day we will have a new ground and it is my profound hope that CFU will have a financial stake in it as a guarantee that it will never be owned by people outside the club. Why is this relevant? Look at Derby County's struggle for survival and what happened to Bury. The fans who lose their clubs are the ones who suffer most but the collapse of their clubs is clearly not their fault. This is why the game needs proper ,effective and external regulation. Regulation that is meaningful so that football clubs are safe from irresponsible or incapable owners. This is why the club are backing the Fans Led Review and urging fans to contact their MPs about it. We need a fairer distribution of wealth and more formal arrangements for the representation of fans in their clubs. Working together effectively is surely better than fans groups having to react after the horse has bolted and better for clubs too.

Of course there is no crisis at Cambridge United now so there will be those who feel that CFU no longer have a role. Perhaps it is less clear since I don't want to believe that we are always preparing for the next crisis. I believe that our current role is a very productive and supportive one. The lottery do a brilliant job of finding extra funding for the club. Only recently an emergency stretcher and robust wheel chair for medical emergencies were bought for the club. We have the electronic scoreboards and much has been provided to support the work of expert Groundsman Ian Darler and his staff.



When the club decided that it wasn't economic to run Away Travel, CFU took on the job. DMJ and Gina Parkin have done a fantastic job of running coaches to away games which fans wouldn't have got to otherwise. Again the lottery sponsored coaches to Newcastle for £500 which meant that more fans could go and that seats were cheaper. Please support Away Travel as much as you can in the future. So Many people benefit from it. We have played a part in the return of printed programmes and organised the player of the season poll last year. Fans can approach any of us in the ground. We have distinctive lanyards. We can be contacted at the caravan at the front of the ground. This also features a brilliant programme exchange.

Finally, we are holding our AGM on April 25th. This is a chance for members to help us shape our role for the future. It is my wish that we make equality and diversity real targets and not just sound bites. I want us to work more closely with CUSP and other fans' groups. I want us to support the work of the club as much as we can and establish a much closer relationship with those who run it. I hope they feel the same. We will also need to choose a new FED who will help us achieve these things and work closely with the committee I am proud to lead. More than anything I want Cambridge fans to be the best provided for fans in the country. Aim high!



A number of Cambridge United Community Trust Waking Footballers are organising a major fundraising event to support other areas of the Trust's fantastic work. The aim is to raise money specifically for the sessions run for participants with disabilities and at the same time promote the benefits of Walking Football. The plan is to play a 5 a-side Walking Football match, over a 12 hour period, with roll on roll off subs from 10am until 10pm

on Bank Holiday Monday, 2nd May 2022. The match will take place at the sand-based astro pitches at the Abbey Leisure Centre. Players can commit to as much or little playing time as they can, with subs being managed by team captains.

Accrington Stanley

"We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided."
J.K.Rowling

We'd all heard of Accrington Stanley long before the famous milk advert and before Bumble described the place on Test Match Special as God's chosen acre. They were always associated with disaster, collapse and the kind of fall from grace since experienced by many other football clubs, such as Bury, Macclesfield and Stockport County. There was no Fans' Led Review at that time, no talk of spreading the money more evenly and fairly throughout the game, or regulating football externally to protect the interest of devoted fans.

When Stanley went bust and failed to complete their season, no one realised that it was actually possible for a Football League club to simply cease to be because of financial mismanagement or incompetence, but it happened abruptly and without mercy and has continued to happen to an increasing number of clubs until now. At last people have realised that the big clubs have become very rich at the expense of the minnows who have become increasingly unable to compete with those who use their money to increase their power and dominate the game. Without change, the grass roots will wither and die and the sport itself will kill the golden goose. But we know all this.





We played Accrington in our first season in the Conference. I had no idea that they still existed. Fola Onabanje, our very own Bambi on ice, tormented them at the Abbey. We didn't do so well at their place but what a welcome our fans got. Several of us enjoyed a pint of shandy in the Crown Inn where we found the softly spoken locals friendly, knowledgeable and interested in the views of people from other places who love the game as much as they do. It was a bit like going to Newcastle in that respect.

Stanley don't have that many fans or season ticket holders, which means that the club has been run superbly well. It should be held up as a fine example to us all as proof of what can be done without wealthy foreign owners with a dodgy human rights record. A lot of credit must go to John Coleman who knows a good player when he sees one and is, to my mind, one of the great managers. He inspires loyalty and total commitment to the team in his players, in much the same way that Mark Bonner does here at Cambridge .The locals at Burton last week were full of praise for the way our players never give up. It is a spreading reputation which is well deserved. We have been missing some key players through injury but others have really stepped up to the plate. Ours is a squad in the true sense of the word, albeit a small one. The romantics among us, and there are some on the Habbin, are delighted to see Accrington doing so well. Long may it continue, providing they don't do too well today!

Up the U's!

Plymouth Argyle

"Great things have small beginnings."
Sir Francis Drake

I had never heard of Plymouth Argyle until I bumped into a normally taciturn Scottish airman in the NAAFI at RAF Andover. He started to explain why he supported an obscure club in far off Devon and why their fans were so passionate. He became unexpectedly tearful as he explained that they were about to be relegated from the then Second Division, an experience we Cambridge fans have now endured twice. In subsequent years I wondered why a Scotsman of all people should be so enamoured of Plymouth Argyle. Perhaps it had something to do with the uniquely named Argyle's alleged link with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who were based near Plymouth when the club were founded. The club were impressed by their determination and insistence on teamwork. How true either thing is I will never know.



Most Plymouth fans I have met over the years have talked like cartoon pirates. Certainly there is a lively atmosphere in that city, particularly when there is a football match in the offing and where drink is involved. Home Park or the Theatre of Greens , as the Wurzels prefer to call it, is intimidating at the best of times. The ferocious and loud support has certainly helped their teams to produce commitment and fight. What is it about west country teams and green? Perhaps Plymouth and Yeovil Town just like to be different.

Oddly enough, Plymouth Argyle are the oldest league club never to have played in the top flight. They have certainly had their moments though, not least this season when

they gave much-fancied Chelsea the fright of their lives in the FA Cup. Their current manager Stephen Schumacher, much like our own Mark Bonner, is a true leader able



to get the best from his players. He won the Manager of the Month award in January but since then, like us, the team have stuttered a bit. Sometimes those awards seem to jinx what follows. Like us, they sometimes struggle to attract the players they want. In their case it's because Plymouth is simply too far from anywhere. As for Cambridge, only the very rich can afford to buy a house here. It was not always so. Many former United players opted to live out their retirement in the city of King's College and the Seven Stars. Given that, the two clubs have attracted some pretty decent players down the years.

One game against Plymouth that stands out in my mind is the first game back in the league after an exile of nine long years. It would have been quite enough for me simply to be there. The icing on the cake was Josh Coulson's winner scored on the hour. I jumped so high that I fell over the crash barrier and descended several very hard steps. I didn't care though. Club legend Josh is now playing at King's Lynn and I can't jump quite so high, fortunately. No doubt Josh would love it if we beat them again. It will be a tough contest but, as a seasoned Habbinite, I remain optimistic.

Shrewsbury Town

"Somewhere behind the athlete you've become, and the hours of practice, and the coaches who have pushed you, is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back. PLAY FOR HER."
Mia Hamm



It promises to be quite the occasion as we mark the game against Shrewsbury Town with Women in Football Day. This game will be remembered by many young women as their first experience of professional football. We must hope that many of them become hooked and become lifelong fans like so many of us here. Some may already be playing football, something which I would have found hard to believe when I first started watching football in the sixties, when football was regarded as a game exclusively for working class men. Traditionally, it was seen as the consolation for a tough and oppressive working week, and diversity would have been regarded as a specialist biological term to do with species. Society has come a long way since then and we would all agree that everyone, irrespective of gender, age, culture or ability should feel welcome and well provided for at all football grounds. Football has the power to influence and improve society for the better. It is vital that we realise that the football community includes

everyone. Shrewsbury Town have embraced the cause of community and empowering women for many years. Indeed their Women's Football Team is named Shrewsbury Town Women in the Community, reminding us all that we all belong. It seems incredible that women don't always feel accepted as part of the football family but great strides have been made. In Cambridge, CFU and the Amber Belles work hard to change traditional prejudices and to pursue real equality.



Town have always impressed me since I first saw them as giants, all in red, sweeping a spirited King's Lynn team out of the FA Cup in 1965. Later I loved going to Gay Meadow , where I was delighted to hear about the man in a coracle who would have to fish the match ball out of the Severn which ran by the ground. Waste not want not, as they say. It was in Shrewsbury where I saw PC Trevor George working under cover with a very early digital camera, taking photographs of some of our better known rascals. He claims now to have taken my picture but I'm sure he was joking. We always had a tough game there and, even though they have struggled a bit this season, they are always difficult to play against. Alan Durban made his name there and they have had many managers who stayed attached to the club for always. I envy them their new ground but I confess that I loved Gay Meadow. The ground, like the club, was full of character.





I discovered that Mary Beard, now a Cambridge Professor, who speaks so eloquently about women's rights is from Shrewsbury. There was a time when women were few and far between in Cambridge colleges until it was realised that effectively excluding half of the best brains in the country was both foolish and counter-productive. Katherine Harley, of Shrewsbury, organised a Suffragist Pilgrimage in 1923, a march from 17 cities across

the country, which took many women with a dream to a rally in Hyde Park, London. Remembering what it cost the suffragettes to achieve votes for women should remind us that words like equality, diversity and inclusivity are not just words in a box ticking exercise or part of a meaningless virtue signalling process. We must make them our reality. As Putin's troops seek to extinguish the rights of our Brothers and Sisters in Ukraine, it is incumbent upon us all to celebrate and live out what real freedom means.



M.K.Dons

"Be thankful for what you have: you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."
Oprah Winfrey

A lot of images passed through my mind as 1,200 of us descended on Hillsborough last Saturday. Like many, I reflected on so many moments of pain spread across the years. Being thrashed at Hayes and Yeading , where we were so bad that our substitutes laughed at Martin Ling was one terrible moment of the much derided three year plan. Being humiliated by Histon was even worse and needing to win at Aldershot to avoid dropping out of the Conference was down there among the lowest of low points. We may have lost 6-0 and played very badly but look how far we've come. To be at Hillsborough at all, having made the progress we've made during the last six months was a joy.



The support for the team, given our disappointment was phenomenal. After the game some Wednesday fans told me that someone was in for a thrashing, given the way they had been playing. Us then.

And again, as someone who lived in Nottingham in 1989, the terrible disaster that unfolded during that fateful semi-final is etched forever on my mind. I met my Forest supporting friend in a pub that evening and listened to his tearful account of his sudden realisation of the unspeakable horror taking place at the opposite end of the stadium. As we walked down Leppings Lane, we reflected that some things are far more important than football.

Two days earlier, Radio Cambridge rang me to ask for my reaction to the news that Cambridge United were buying the Abbey back from Grosvenor, who, it must be said, have been excellent landlords. Paul Barry, his partners and the Board have achieved something which we all assumed was impossible. My own most painful hour as a Cambridge fan was trying to talk to John Howard and Gary Harewood as a 0-0 draw with Rochdale guaranteed our relegation from the football league. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that we would ever get our ground back. Congratulations to all those who made this possible along with Tracey Crouch who, it seems, helped to oil the wheels of the agreement. I fervently hope that CFU will be involved with the Golden Share which will exist essentially to protect the interests of our fans. It is one of the most exciting recommendations of the Fans Led Review which the club have been very much involved in. I hope that when they redevelop the Abbey we hang on to some areas of terracing. After all, they are quite popular in the Premier League now.

Football is, by its very nature, unpredictable. I wouldn't want to be a Chelsea fan right now. I wonder just how effective football's governing bodies have been in terms of monitoring the fit and proper persons who own and run our clubs. At least we now know that this problem has been recognised as one which it is vital to address. Clubs should be delighted to include fans in major decisions. There is no better way of protecting clubs and ensuring unity, which is essential to long term success.

And Milton Keynes? I hope that Harry Darling gets a warm response from us. He was a great servant of our club and we never forget those.

United in Endeavour



CFU Corner

CFU strongly Believes football is for everyone and continues to be doing a number of projects at championing diversity and inclusion within the football club.

CFU was pleased to recently learn that committee member Emma Smith has become an ambassador representing Cambridge United with #hergametoo. 'Hergame' is a campaign group ran by female football fans to raise awareness of sexist abuse in football, you can check out the great work they're doing here; hergametoo.co.uk



CFU was also pleased to be able to welcome a new addition to their committee in Anouska Wright. Anouska who stands in the Habbin stand with her family and who's a lifelong U's fan, will become a valuable member of the committee and will help work with Emma on the Amber Belles female supporters group amongst other projects. If you think you'd like to get involved and help CFU in some way then please do get in touch.

Amber belles recently made a suggestion about sanitary provisions for females at matches and we are delighted to see it's been taken on board. Thanks to Cambridge charity fundraisers, Newmarket Road Tesco's and Ian Darler who have kindly offered to sponsor sanitary provisions been available in female toilets around the stadium on a match day.

Both CFU & Amber Belles welcome suggestions from our fanbase on how we can improve the match day experience so please do get in touch.

The Amber Belles are a welcoming bunch of ladies and you can find out details on how to join them for social events and chats by searching for Amber Belles on Social media.

Lastly Cambridge United Ladies football team need your support!. They're playing at the abbey on 27th February against Norwich City in an important league fixture, it would be great to see as many U's fans come down and support the fixture and show some support to the females that represent our football club.

United in Endeavour

CUCT Walking Football Marathon

I will, along with a number of others, be taking part in a 12 hour marathon to raise funds for the brilliant Disability Programme led by Phil Mullen. Please sponsor me, or one of the others, at www.CUCTRUST.ENTHUSE.com .



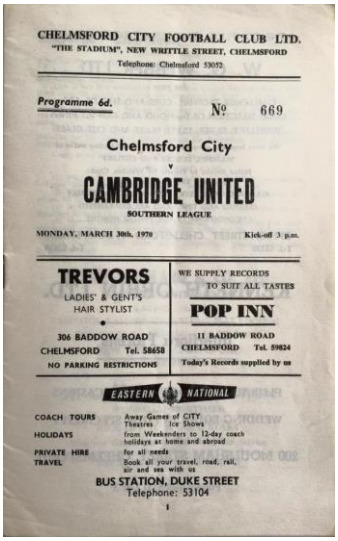
and finally….

"Going on forty, no electric shocks
The juice of a carrot, the smile of a parrot
A little drop of claret, anything that rocks
Elvis and Scotty, the days when I ain't spotty
Sitting on a potty, curing smallpox.
Reasons to be cheerful, part three."
Ian Dury and the Blockheads.

To return to where I started, there is certainly plenty to be cheerful about! After the crushing disappointment of Hillsborough, where tired limbs, flat out effort and a small squad finally conspired to create mission impossible, the following game against Milton Keynes showed that our resilient team are always capable of making a come- back whatever set- backs there may have been along the way. We probably need three points to ensure survival now- a position we would have



gladly accepted before the season began. When we've got them I'd like to see young Bennett and some other squad members given more than a run out but we'll see. We were hugely unlucky not to beat a surprisingly dirty so- called Dons team. Another inept refereeing performance and a bit of luck at the right time were in favour of the away team who were fortunate to finish with eleven men. We have come so far in the last two seasons that this undeserved loss of points is something we can all cope with and be philosophical about. There has been some talk in this edition about our most painful moments on the pitch but we shouldn't allow ourselves to forget that, until a few years ago, there were plenty of those off the pitch too. Anyone who attended the Shareholders' Meeting where Steve Chamberlain tried to explain that the club's finances were in safe hands, would have recognised the fact that alarm bells were beginning to ring again. He and the CEO of the time took the club close to ruin for a second time. Ultimately this led to shareholders losing their stake in their club through no fault of their own. Such was the fear of a single owner taking over, given the experience of other clubs, that a majority of the CFU Trust Board voted against it, a split which has taken years for CFU to recover from. It seems that our former CEO's reputation has been rehabilitated as he was seen in the Boardroom before the Lincoln game. It is surely right to move on but it is worth remembering that the time of transition was a painful one for the club and for Dave Doggett and Val Baker in particular. CFU made themselves unpopular by insisting on an independent audit but I believe that it was a vital step on the way back to stability and to financial health.


CHELMSFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB LTD.
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Programme 6d. № 669

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Financially, despite the huge challenge of the pandemic, things have got better and better, particularly since Mark Green and Adam Webb added their investment to Paul Barry's. We are lucky to have such significant and enthusiastic support from so far away. But then we are the world's greatest team….Not only is the club more sustainable and secure than it has been for many a year but, as we have heard, we have been able to buy our ground back from Grosvenor, something that even our most optimistic fans could never have even dreamed of. Our owners will be remembered for this achievement, almost irrespective of the renewed success so



clearly visible on the pitch. It is now clear that the owners, directors, team and fans are united in their aims and values and in that respect we are a model for other clubs to follow.

Our club demonstrates values which we can all identify with, having been heavily involved with Heads Up, the Fans Led Review and action to support the local community and the terrorised citizens of Ukraine. Events held for pensioners, walking football and Phil Mullen's magnificent development and management of disability football sessions are all things which Cambridge fans can be proud of. The Community Trust have done some hugely valuable and transformative work and CFU have tried to play their part by supporting diversity initiatives in the community. We have also supported the Amber Belles Facebook group, which works hard to improve provision for female fans who for too long were victims of casual sexist treatment or indifference by those who have yet to realise that the game has changed and is now inclusive for all.



The Shrewsbury game showed how the club fully supported and celebrated Women's Football Weekend. It was great to see our players wearing # Her Game too t shirts and to see CFU Trust Board members Emma Smith and Anouska Wright speak so eloquently on film. The club has demonstrated that diversity is not simply a matter of ticking boxes. Change always requires action and commitment.



Similarly, it was wonderful to see walking football showcased at half time of the Milton Keynes game and to see the players involved describing their experiences in the programme. How wonderful too to hear the NRE get right behind them and cheer their efforts. The message is clear. Sport is for all and being elderly should be no bar to participation. The benefits to fitness and mental health are obvious. It seems to me that the sessions provided for walking football and sessions for the homeless, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups are second to none. Cambridge United should take great pride in making such a difference.

This is a time of unprecedented social problems and we are beginning to understand the power of sport to transform lives. I think the fact that Mark Bonner took the trouble to phone isolated and elderly people during the height of the pandemic says everything about the club. The Community Trust did a lot of mail drops, visits and virtual meetings

during this time and ensured that no one felt forgotten. On a similar theme, CFU took over the running of Away Travel, which they have done very successfully, to make sure that people who might otherwise find it difficult to get to away games were able to do so.

The CFU AGM will take place in the Supporters' Club on April 25th. We hope plenty of people will come and hold us all on the Trust Board to account! We would like to tempt a wider range of people into CFU and onto our committee as another step towards making diversity and equality happen. We will be electing a new FED after the many years that Dave Matthew Jones has been synonymous with the role. Cambridge United will be the first English club to operate the Golden Share arrangement so we will be trailblazers in this respect. We don't know what it will look like but CFU are ready to play their part. We have a real opportunity now to make United in Endeavour really mean something. We must all take it. Andrew Stephen, CFU Chairman.



Make a difference and join CFU.
Your opinions and contributions are always gratefully received: acstephen@hotmail.com

[Deadline for next newsletter- **May 1st**]
United in Endeavour

