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**CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE
MAINTAINING THE PAST**

**written
in stone**



BY MARK HYDE



George & Katie

Welcome back to Grosvenor Vale as remarkably we start yet another season at non-league footballs top table.

A warm welcome also to the Truro fans who have undertaken the not inconsiderable journey from Cornwall today. Many of us have fond memories of our away trips to Truro and the fantastic hospitality shown to us by their supporters. Enjoy your afternoon and welcome to the National League.

In many ways our dramatic last day survival seems an age ago but in others the break and pre season seems to get shorter every year.

Much has happened in the world of Wealdstone since that Halifax game, not least of which was a change in our management team. Welcome back Sam and all the very best for 2025/26.

Finally, as is tradition, my notes at the start of the season include a call to arms for volunteers around the ground or with help running the Supporters Club. Any free time given is truly appreciated and it is a great way to meet likeminded supporters and contribute to the club's success.

You are unable to spare time but want to still help I hear you say... fantastic. As always we have plenty of ways you can contribute at this time of the year. Within these pages you will see Match Sponsorship, Ball Donations and Players Kit Sponsorships all waiting for you or a group of friends to commit. Please take a look as it directly impacts our on field performance.

Thanks for buying a programme and we look forward to your continued support. **Mark**

MASCOTS

Time constraints dictated that we couldn't acknowledge the two special guests at our recent QPR friendly so please welcome.....

George (11) and Katie (10) from Ballyclare, Northern Ireland. They are the children of lifelong Stones supporter James, and grandchildren of our very own Mim.

Football runs deep in their family. George plays for Barn United and was their top goalscorer last season. Katie also shines on the pitch—she plays for Ballyclare Comrades Ladies, where she was both top goalscorer and Player of the Season.

The Goodmans have a proud mascoting tradition with the Stones. James and his sister Joanna were mascots for the last ever game at Lower Mead, 34 years ago—now the next generation takes centre stage!

BOSTON COACH TRAVEL

Monday 25th August

Departs Grosvenor Vale 8.45am

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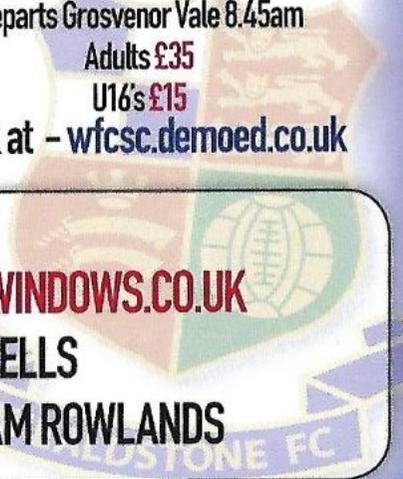
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WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 2024/2025

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1984 / 1985 FA Trophy

LEAGUE CUPS

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY CUPS

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1962 / 1963 Senior Cup
1964 / 1965 Senior Cup
1967 / 1968 Senior Cup
1984 / 1985 Senior Cup
2003 / 2004 Charity Cup
2010 / 2011 Charity Cup

NON TITLE-WINNING PROMOTIONS

1997 / 1998 Isthmian League Division 2 (3rd)
1998 / 1999 Isthmian League Division 1 (3rd,annulled)
2003 / 2004 Isthmian League Premier Division

The legal name of Wealdstone Football Club is Wealdstone Football Club (2000) Ltd (Registered Number 03953962). Shares in excess of 10% are held by Peter Marsden Property Finance Ltd & Wealdstone FC Supporters Club

GROUND REGULATIONS

People are only allowed entry to The Vale on match days subject to the following rules and regulations:

- 1) The club reserves the right to eject from the ground any person who is considered to have committed any of the following acts:
 - Entering the ground through any means other than through the turnstiles or entrances
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 - Carrying items which may be considered a danger to others, including cans, bottles, or glasses containing alcoholic beverages
 - Throwing any article onto the field of play - Climbing floodlight pylons, fences, stands or any structure or building
 - Using obscene or bad language likely to cause offence to others - Hitting the side or back panels of the Bulls stand
- 2) No spectator ball games.
- 3) The consumption of alcoholic drinks is permitted INSIDE the social club bar, garden and boardroom areas.
- 4) Vehicles parked on the Grosvenor Vale site are at the owners' risk.
- 5) Wealdstone Football Club supports the FA's campaign on pyrotechnics (e.g. flares and smoke bombs). Any misuse of such items in and around the Ground will result in those responsible being asked to leave the ground and, in line with football authority guidance, may result in a report to the Police, potential prosecution and a ban from the Club of up to three years.
- 6) No Smoking or Vaping inside the ground.

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Gaffer's column

By
SAM COX



First and foremost, welcome to the Vale for the start of the 2025-26 season and I'm very excited by to be back here as manager of Wealdstone Football Club, my third stint with the club.

Did I think I'd be having a full pre-season behind me and be starting back at the Stones this year? To be honest, no I didn't. But the prospect for me to kick-off this season as manager of the football club that I hold so dear to my heart.... it makes me very proud.

Yes, it's going to be tough but here's to a competitive and enjoyable season!

I'd also like to say to all of the fans, welcome back to the Vale because you're going to be a massive part of anything we do that's successful.... we need to make this stadium a fortress like we have in the past, like I recall only too well. We will be navigating through good patches and rough patches but we must remain humble as to who we are and the constraints we have. If we all rally behind these boys and be that positive influence, the 12th man as you've been the in the past it will make a huge difference.

The players have been an absolute joy to work with in pre season, putting in a real shift in every training session and they have managed the transition to taking on lots of information while listening to what we want from them in and out of possession. They are learning the way we want them to play.

I love being back, I feel a lot different and a lot more mature since my return and the experiences I've subsequently gone through. Pre-season has gone well and we've managed to keep the vast majority of play-

'It was a big, big decision in the summer but to be the manager of Wealdstone, the club I love, makes me so very proud'

ers fit throughout - we've implemented injury prevention, alongside performance because if we're honest, the last two years have seen too many injuries at crucial times. You can't make players bulletproof but the introduction of Ethan and Aaron's gym programmes for the upper body, lower body and power sessions three times a week - alongside Georgie Turner our physio - has been a fantastic asset. Our squad is in great physical shape.

When I was appointed by Rory and the board I told them that I want to bring a philosophy and an identity back to the club, and make it a place not just for the fans to come and enjoy themselves, but also for the players. Football careers go

so quickly - take it from me - and what I'm big on is to give them the chance to showcase their abilities and to love being in a great place.

But now its business time! Time to put all that hard work recruiting players into practice!

We've been as active as we can be, with help from Head of Recruitment Steve Boone who has been absolutely fantastic. I've spent more time on the phone to him this summer than to anyone else! Getting players who fit our profile is essential so a big welcome back to Connor McAvoy who has obviously

been at the club before, under both Stuart and Gibbo. He was identified to us early on - albeit he was on trial at other clubs - and we managed to secure him. Unfortunately he picked up an injury against Slough and we hope and pray he has the best possible recovery.

Nathan Tshikuna, meanwhile, brings a wealth of experience to the midfield area. He can play deeper and also closer to the goal adding strength, power and pace - he'll be a huge asset going forward.

We also signed Dylan Kadji, a young prospect who has shown maturity above his years in pre season... we expect a bright future from this talented midfield-

er. Also arriving at the Vale is young winger Sak Hassan, a joy to work with and who shows great signs of learning, and midfielder powerhouse Omar Mussa (below) from Torquay who has been outstanding in every pre-season game he played. He has enormous strength and ability, as has left wing-back Junior Tiensia who signed from Barrow. He has been almost unplayable so far! On top of that we are hoping to sign two triallist forwards after this programme went to press - and have added the experienced defender Moussa Diarra and winger Marcus Day to what is now a healthy-looking squad.

Personally speaking, I had a big decision to make in May.

As you all know I had responsibilities coaching the Guyanan national team, and I was going through the process of possibly becoming the national manager: The interviews were down to the final two and in the middle of all that I got a phone call from Rory asking if I'd take the job as manager of Wealdstone. Everyone knows that national football with Guyana has been a huge part of my life over the past ten years, one of the proudest things I've done in my life

So it was a huge decision for me, do I wait and see if I get the Guyana job or do I take on the Wealdstone job? I've made my decision, it's great to be back and now I've got my full focus on helping the club be successful.

As for my Tottenham connection: I have been working with the young academy products for over 10 years and seen some fantastic talent go through into the first team and have careers in the game, something I'm very proud of. I will still be going in into the club once a week to work with the full-time boys (on my day off) so I'll also get a chance to keep my eye on any young emerging talents. Much like I did with Kallum Cesay when I brought him to the club two seasons ago. I worked with Kallum at Spurs and saw something in him. Despite having numerous failed trails at other clubs I gave him a platform and a home at Wealdstone to show what he could do. He was a fantastic asset for us, and he was well deserving of his move. These are the types of young hungry players we want to work with and what the fans want to see. A great example and advert for any young aspiring footballer joins Wealdstone.

And finally: Truro!

They had a really good season last year and we know their threats: they are powerful and direct, have some good players and they know what they are good at. They'll obviously have a spring in their step after last season and will give us a tough challenge... so we'll do all we can to stamp our authority on the game. We are definitely well prepared for the contest so bring it on!

It's been quite a year for today's historic visitors Truro City!



SCROLL back exactly a year to the opening game of the 2024-25 season... and Truro were overjoyed to be christening their new stadium and back in the county of Cornwall after years of exile in Devon and even Gloucestershire. The League said their dilapidated old Treyew Road ground didn't pass muster for the NL South.

But while a record 2,676 crowd turned up for the grand opening of the Truro City Stadium in Threemilestone, four miles from the town centre, it had an embarrassing start a few minutes in when the referee had to ask visitors Dorking Wanderers to change their orange/black/orange kit which rather obviously clashed with Truro's red/black/red (pictured above). Many of the crowd had called this out as soon as the teams lined up!

Dorking had not travelled with a change strip but rather than ask Truro to use alternative kit they wore their shirts inside out in time-honoured Sunday League fashion (see picture below). It was a shambolic start to a new era but Truro - despite losing this opener 2-1 - just got better and better as the season progressed and were worthy NLS Champions.

The only time I can recall Stones having a similar issue was when Frickley turned up for an FA Trophy quarter-final match at Lower Mead in 1985 with an all-blue strip. We loaned them our all-red Morrit Homes kit (eeuurghh) and won 3-1. **Tim Parks**



the stones interview

It's Omar Mussa

IT'S very tempting to 'listen in' to other clubs' Fans Forums when you've just signed a player from them.

Surprisingly, the comments about the departed player are not always laced with bitter criticism, or assertions of 'good riddance to bad rubbish'. Which is what you might expect in the muddled and vicious online world.

In fact, sometimes they contain achingly desperate pleas to their club not to allow the player to leave.

Omar Mussa is one such case. Within hours of the news that Sam Cox had persuaded Torquay United's Burundian international midfielder that he would be a star in our National League side, the Devon club's Torquay Talk blog was gushing about how sad it was that he would not be lighting up their midfield in 2025-26.

"The Moose was more of an idea than a footballer. It's not just him leaving Torquay that stings, it's what he came to represent. It's the feeling that he gave us" wrote Matty Hayward.

"Omar Mussa ran the show against us for Weymouth in 2021, against a decent midfield of Asa Hall, Tom Lapslie and Armani Little and two seasons later - after being a regular for Dagenham and Redbridge and the Burundi national team - The Moose finally loped his way to the English Riviera.

"I loved watching him because of how he made me feel. Sorry if that makes me a Romantic. I loved watching Omar Mussa because he was fun. Because he was the only player to pull on a Torquay shirt in a long time where nobody knew what he was going to do next, where you knew he could skin someone or

Welcome to The Moose, the man who made last year's Torquay worth watching

wazz a forty-yard pass across the pitch. He literally, physically, non-metaphorically, not in a cliched way, got the heart racing."

Quite a testimonial! I caught up with Omar, 24, after his full debut in pre-season at St Albans, and asked him the usual searching questions....

How did the move from Torquay to Wealdstone come about? Via an agent? Yes, the move came through my agent and the amount of positive

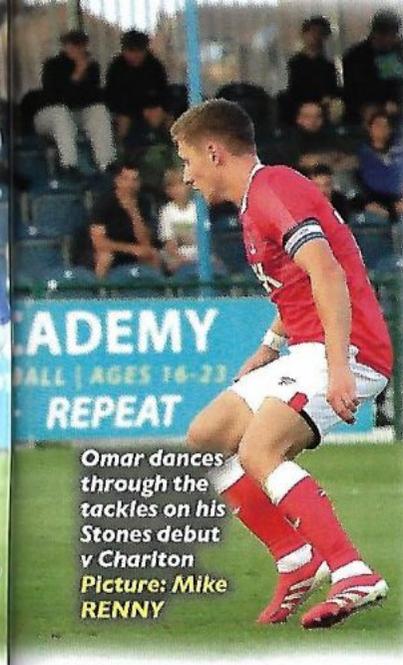
reviews I heard about Sam Cox, so I was really looking forward to working with him. You will get most benefit from me as a holding midfielder, a No.6, though I like to go past people too. Torquay used me on the wing last season and I enjoyed it, but I like being in control in midfield. I've heard the nice things that they have been saying about me and I'm grateful, but I don't listen to any gossip! I just want to get out there and play. I'm not at my

peak yet and there is no rush... I could have gone to a couple of League clubs but the offers weren't right for me. This season is all about enjoying my football and feeling I can be important for Wealdstone. You will see! I just want to win matches!

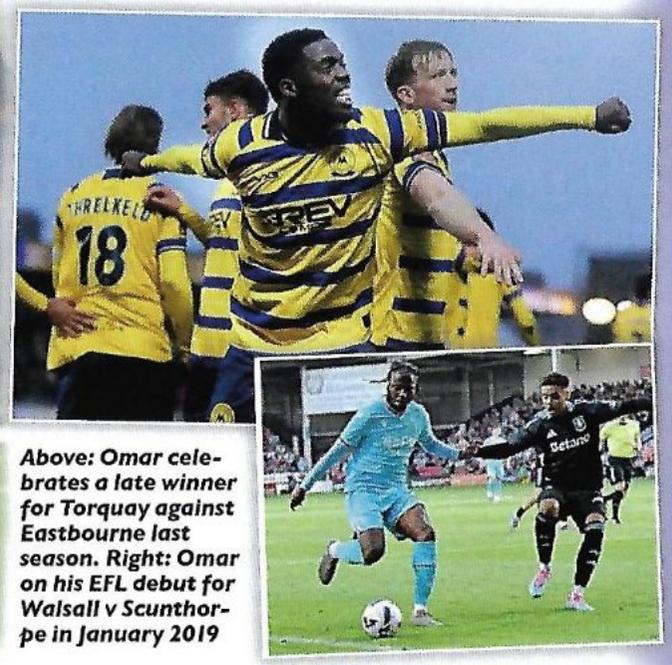
Whereabouts do you live, Omar?



Omar dances through the tackles on his Stones debut v Charlton
Picture: Mike Renny



Above: Omar celebrates a late winner for Torquay against Eastbourne last season. Right: Omar on his EFL debut for Walsall v Scunthorpe in January 2019



Are you still based on the South coast? My girlfriend is from Bournemouth and I lived there and in Exeter, a beautiful place, while I was a Torquay. Now I'm renting in Wokingham, halfway between Bournemouth and Ruislip

Do you know much about Wealdstone and its rich history? Yes I do... when I played for Dagenham and we played Wealdstone they talked me through the club - it's always nice to hear histories of any football club. I particularly remember playing at the Vale because I scored from outside the box! The goalkeeper was a nervous loanee I think (Jed Ward) and he let the ball go through his hands. But it was a very hard shot!

Do you have any relatives who have played the game, to any level? Yes, my dad played first division football in Belgium and won the league. I was born in Bujumbura, Burundi and moved to Belgium when I was three. I played for KV Mechelen and came to England when I was scouted by Walsall when I was 18.

What is the best moment of your

career so far? My EFL debut for Walsall was a great day and a proud moment for me and my family. It was against Scunthorpe and I couldn't really take it in!

Do you support a football team? Either now or as a kid? I've always supported Barcelona since I've been a kid... just the way they play and their brilliant players made me fall in love with the game.

Who has been the most important figure in your football career so far? My mother: She deserves everything in this world and the gift of me succeeding would surpass anything in this world.

What is your favourite restaurant and fave meal? It's a snackbar in Belgium where my mom used to take me in Belgium - they sell amazing fries there!

What's the best holiday you've been on? The best holiday I've ever been on was with my girlfriend to Greece.

What's playing on your airpod at the moment? Not music: I listen to motivational speakers before the games.

What's your feeling about the club and the squad that Sam is assembling at the moment? I have a good feeling and the project that he has in plan for us... I trust it and believe in his ideas. We have a very good group with good players. I just think everything he does is about us, and making us better in what we do attacking-wise and defensively. I'm not a sulker, I will play in any position he wants and do my very best. I just want to play and win!



By Tim Parks



Brunel
University
of London

One shot is all it takes

On behalf of our staff and students, we'd like to wish Wealdstone FC a successful year.

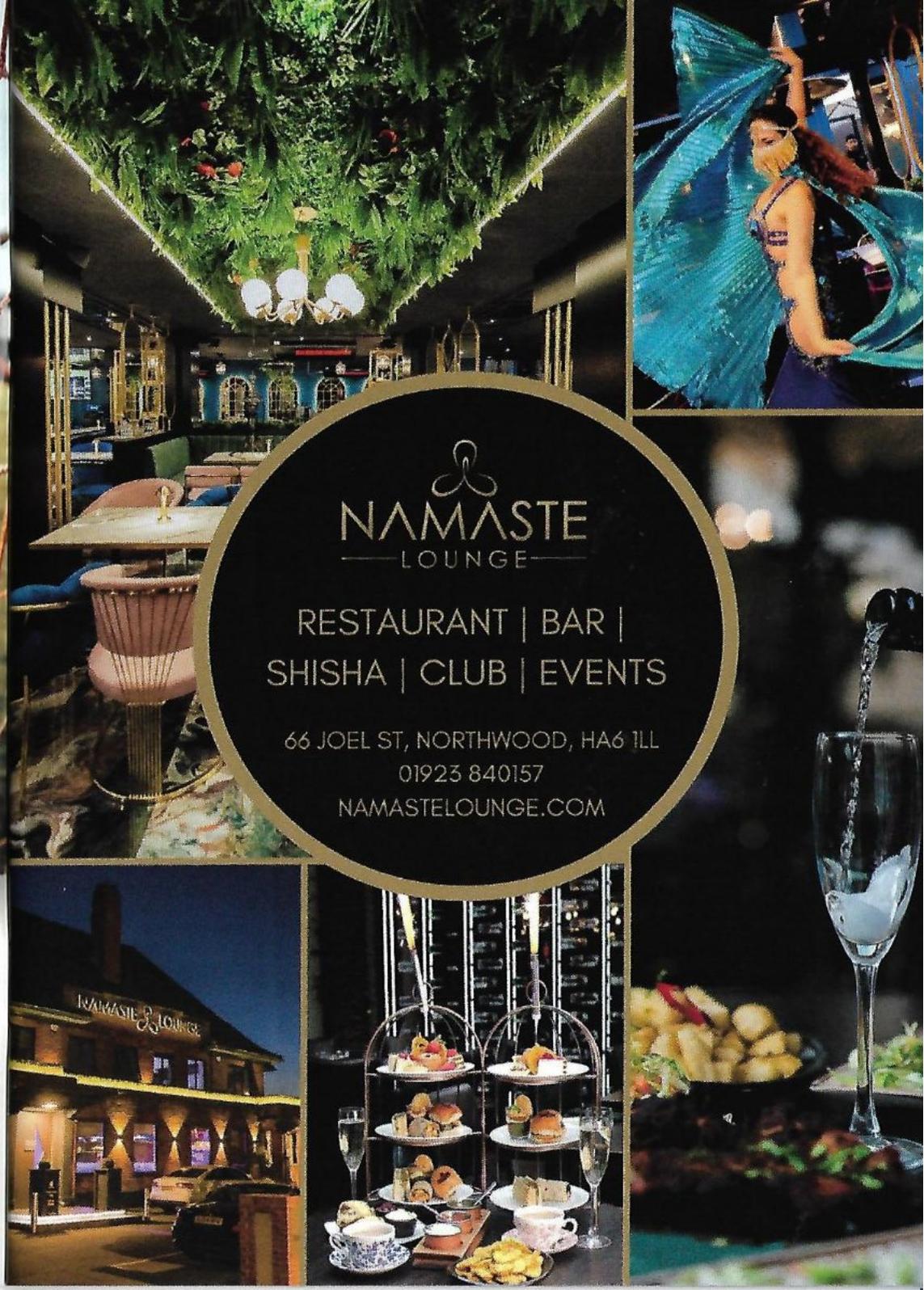
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IN THE first of a series of updates to be published throughout the season the Stones' Chief Operating Officer RICHARD HOPWOOD will provide a unique insight into the day to day running of a National League football club...



WELCOME to Grosvenor Vale for the start of the 2025/26 National League campaign.

For those unaware, my remit at the club is for both the day-to-day management of the football club and to develop, grow and ultimately professionalise Wealdstone FC.

Three years into that journey - by whatever metric you use - the club is unrecognisable from the one I walked into three years ago.

On the playing side we have of course moved into the fantastic facilities at Brunel University of London with the playing staff moving to daytime training, while plans for the new stadium move slowly forward and will be covered in more detail in future updates.

Of course we now have a lease for five more years here at the Vale until the new stadium is ready. Our number of commercial partners has risen significantly, and overall turnover has more than doubled.

There's more growth on the academy front, with our set-up blossoming from just 12 boys to now over 150 boys and girls over three sites - and the club now holds the coveted National League Academy licence. We have an under-23s, a development centre for aspiring academy players and a Womens Team. We also provide football coaching services to external partners such as Brunel University and Hillingdon council.

As a club we are, of course, competing against teams with bigger stadiums, more commercial partners, more hospitality offerings and bigger fanbases so we have to out-perform those clubs through something special in the short term to be sustainable at this level.

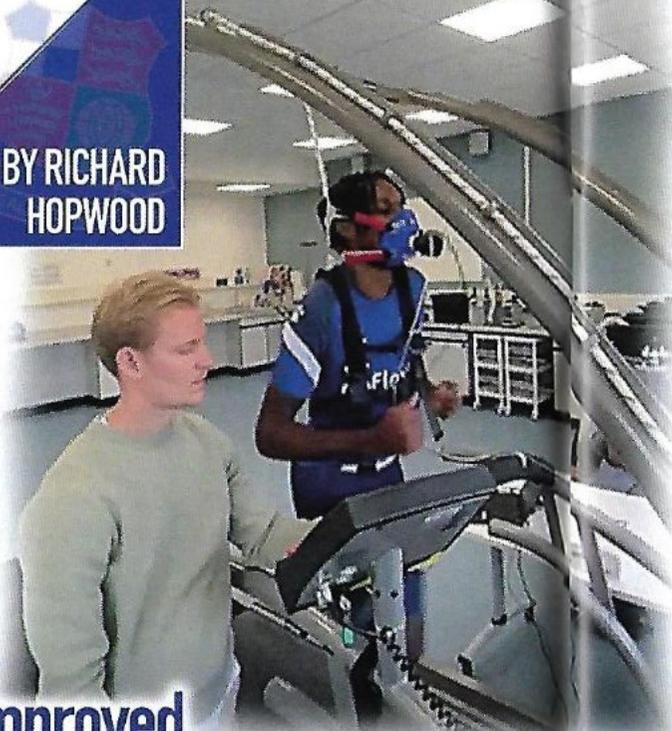
The small team we have at the club love the challenge and work tirelessly everyday to grow and develop WFC.

Once the season gets underway the schedule of football is relentless and the games keep-coming so May, June and July are the key months for planning and implementing significant off-field change.

chief operations officer update

BY RICHARD HOPWOOD

Dylan Kadji makes the most of the brilliant sports science equipment at the Brunel hub



From improved rehab to new club sponsors, all systems are go at the Stones

That meant early holidays for those involved at the club and it felt no sooner had my plane landed in Northern Spain that the news broke that former manager Neil Gibson and his assistant Lee Jones had decided to move on! We thank them for their time and efforts at the club (along with all the players and staff involved) for keeping the club in the National League.

It was a fantastic achievement.

It's been great to welcome back Sam Cox to the club - he's one of the best young coaches in the business, highly regarded and his energy and enthusiasm are infectious. He understands the club well and where we are on our journey and his vision for how the club will develop aligns perfectly.

First team matters sit with the manager so my role as the COO is to ensure that operational tasks such as football logistics and facilities organisation gives him and his staff access to the best organisational support possible.

Our review of the 24/25 season included a

comprehensive review of the medical support at the club and whether it was fit for purpose at National League level.

Working closely with our Medical Partners, Ravenscroft Health, we went into granular detail on all aspects of the Strength and Conditioning and medical support offered, breaking down how we recruit, how we train, how we manage injuries and how best to facilitate return to football post-injury.

Key lessons have been learnt and significant changes have been made this area as we try and avoid a repeat of the long injury list from last season.

As our relationship with Brunel University of London continues to grow, its department of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences have offered the club significant help and advice on medical matters and opened up their facility to the club free of charge.

It's a fantastic facility, used by many Premier and Championship clubs and also Olympic athletes for rehabilitation and we thank Oliver Gibson (Senior Lecturer in Exercise Physiology) in particular for his continued help and support.

A Wealdstone home game isn't complete without the many Brunel university student volunteers helping out around the ground and over the summer we've had two exceptional students - Vittoria and Simran - here on internships helping getting everything organised for the new season.

Wealdstone will continue to coach the Brunel University Football Teams and this year the Wealdstone FC badge will sit proudly on the sleeves of the University's kit.

New commercial partners

OUR OTHER commercial partnerships are also going well with over 85% from last season agreeing to continue to work with the club for the 25/26 season. We also have been delighted to announce the addition of two additional premier sponsors, The Bugler Group as Community Sponsor and Version 2 as Digital, Shorts and Team Sheet sponsor. Welcome to both companies and a thank you to all our sponsors for supporting the club.

National League conference

THE ANNUAL National League Conference, meanwhile, was held in May at the Celtic Manor Resort and Enterprise were announced as the new National League sponsors. At the same event, confirmation and details were given of the financial fair play system (SCMP) to be implemented from the 2026/27 season. For those interested, SCMP limits spending on player wages to a percentage of club turnover with the new

National League system directly mirroring that of EFL League 2 where the limit is 55%. For the last two seasons our club was comfortably within the required ratio though turnover was significantly boosted by one-off events such as the compensation received for departing managers, player transfers and last season's decent FA Cup run.

Such events cannot be assumed when setting budgets and removing those items leave us with a gap. We are now working through the potential impact of this on budgets for next season.

The National League also introduced the clubs to the acting head of the new Independent Football Regulator which means:

- ❑ Tough new financial regulation to make sure clubs have a long-term sustainable future;
- ❑ Stronger tests to stop rogue owners;
- ❑ New standards for fan engagement in club decision-making;
- ❑ Ban on clubs joining closed-shop competitions and breakaway leagues;
- ❑ 'Backstop powers' to ensure a fair financial distribution between leagues; and
- ❑ Protections for key club heritage aspects like home shirt colours and club badges and stadium moves.

Those following the situation at Morecambe FC will welcome the creation of an independent regulator... but the cost of the regulator will fall on the member clubs including those at National League level.

National League Cup verdict

FEEDBACK from the National League and the Premier League on The National League cup revealed that although not popular with supporters, it has been viewed favourably within football and certainly has provided much-needed funds to Wealdstone (just under £50k for last season).

One immediate impact is that it has allowed premier league academy staff to understand how National League clubs could play a greater part in academy players development. As a result, we were told that under-20s from Prem clubs would be excluded from the normal premier league transfer windows and could be loaned to National League clubs at any point during the season.

The National League have also introduced the multiball system commonplace in the leagues above, so ballboys on the pitch this season will become the norm here at the Vale. We thank those involved at Wealdstone Youth who have stepped forward to provide the ballboys on a regular basis.

In Part 2 (in next week's Halifax programme) we hear about exciting plans for the academy and the new WFC women's team

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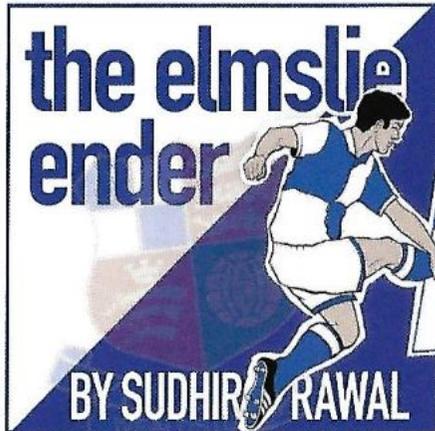
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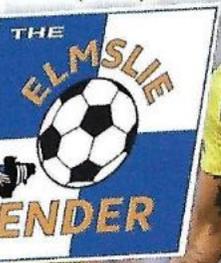
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©Elmslie Ender was among the first wave of football club magazines when it replaced 'Long Ball Down the Middle' as the Wealdstone fanzine in the mid-1980s. LBDTM's forerunner 'Wealdstone Whispers' was famously the THE very first football fanzine in Britain when it was published in 1971



Manny Duku is overjoyed to score the goal that kept us up



It's ridiculously far-fetched that the new season is underway.

Writing this from the balcony of my hotel room, overlooking a bay that stretches into the Adaman Sea, it seems only yesterday that the 2024-25 season ended with the extraordinary scenes of the FC Halifax Town match. Had

DAZN started their fly-on-the-wall documentary on Wealdstone last season, that epic finish would have been sensational television and Season One would have certainly led to a Season Two.

I readily admit that - going into that fateful Monday Bank Holiday - I thought we were toast, especially after the feeble performance at Boston, the timid draw v Maidenhead and then the capitulation at Southend. I could not see how the team that got a draw at the home of the champions or who outplayed Forest Green Rovers just a fortnight earlier, could put together

such pitiful performances that had allowed Dagenham into the box seat.

I even drove to the game, not thinking there would be much of an appetite for the end of season presentations. That is not to say I did not think we would win: I thought there was a decent chance of that.

We would be hopefully fired up by huge crowd. Halifax were also already in the play-offs, and I doubted that they would play their strongest team. Nearly 3,000, with only a couple of hundred Halifax fans, roared Stones on as they rampaged into the Yorkshire side and captain Cook put Stones ahead, Cesay added a second and then Carayol a third as Stones did as much as they could do.

But then came the news in the 32nd minute that Dagenham had taken the lead. The vibrant atmosphere was flat as a pancake. As Jack Cook said on *StonesCast*, the players knew something had gone wrong and it was lucky that we were three up by that stage. The game was then seemingly

petering out, with most of the crowd now resigned on a season in NLS.

But then Solihull scored with fifteen minutes to go. The Brian Collins Stand were the first to know and as news spread, it went around the ground like a Mexican wave. We believed again.

The noise levels sky rocketed. The minutes ticked down and most of us were watching various apps such as Flashscore to see what was happening in the Dagenham match. The Daggers kept missing chances as our game

finished while there were three minutes to go at Solihull.

Hundreds of youngsters were on the edge of the pitch waiting for the final whistle to be blown in Birmingham. Waiting and waiting until... a betting app saying the game had finished triggered a huge swarm of bodies onto the pitch while the game was still going on in Warwickshire!

The BC Stand was clamouring for them to stop the celebrations, but on it went. Players and fans dancing together, some on the shoulders of the throng that had invaded. Dagenham missed two more sitters in the time that the fans were on the pitch and the final whistle had still not gone.

What memes would have been made of our hubris had Dagenham taken any of those multitude of chances?

Our fate rested on a former manager that many of us were happy to see go, plus former Stones like Manny Duku (who gloriously scored Solihull's goal) with Sam Bowen and Jake Wells-Morrison in the Moors side.... but above all, the malfunctioning Josh Umerah whose missed chances kept us up. They always say Once a Stones, always a Stone, but Josh lived and breathed it that day :)

The pitch invasion could start in earnest, the great escape had been accomplished when we should have never been in that situation. The bar afterwards, as Max Kretzschmar has said, is quite unique in non-league football especially after a win. There is no place like it and the euphoria was palpable.

The supporters' hugely popular Neil Gibson and Lee Jones were lauded as heroes. The players slowly realised that this was one of the great days of their footballing careers, and continued their celebrations down at Hennessy's late into the evening with supporters - check out Alex Reid's TikToks to see them in full flow.

To reflect, we were relegated at the start of the game and until four minutes into the match. We were safe from the fourth minute to the 32nd, when we were relegated again until the 74th minute. We survived in extraordinary circumstances.



Undercover agents Josh Umerah (top) and Jack Wells Morrison (above) played big parts in the *Stones Survival* on the last day of 2024-25

As a fan, that was up there as one of the great Wealdstone days, in front of the most home fans at a league game for 50 years. The Vale has had some great moments especially of late, the last-minute winner versus Barnet or the *Miracle of the Vale* against Dorking, but has there been a better moment? I doubt it. For those that were there, it will be spoken about for the ages. How could you not want more?

Of course, reality is never too far away at Wealdstone and with budget cuts (installed after spending on a hybrid model last season that had relied on investment to come in), it was mutually agreed that Gibson and Jones would depart the club. As could be seen from the reaction to their *StonesCast* episode, they were hugely popular with fans but equally murmurs of tension with the players were circulating by the end of the season, together with an inability to move down from North Wales that had made their stay untenable.

The DAZN documentary would have made interesting viewing on the managerial front, as we would have seen what the tensions there were between the playing staff and the management team when Gibson/Jones were in charge and equally why Matt Taylor was adored by the players, but had no empathy or connection with our fans at all. It

would have been a great lens into the drama that played out.

With Alex Reid off to Hartlepool, Kallum Cesay off to Salford City and the departures of Josh Grant to Carlisle and Muzzy Carayol to destination unknown, we look a much less experienced side...not forgetting Adrian Marriapa either.

Or the disappointing departure of Stones icon Alex Dyer to St Albans. And we never saw Craig Eastmond really kick a ball in anger, well not without getting sent off despite being our big money, supporter-funded signing.

With the backdrop of the reduced budget, we still have not signed a full squad of players (writing this a week ago) and Sam Cox's impeccable coaching skills and enthusiasm will be tested to the limit.

Sean Adarkwa will be the key man: we need him to be the leader who demolished Dorking a year ago. We are everybody's favourites to go down. If we pull off the much vaunted 20th place, there will not have been a better achievement by a Wealdstone manager (or the team) in years.

Up the Stones!

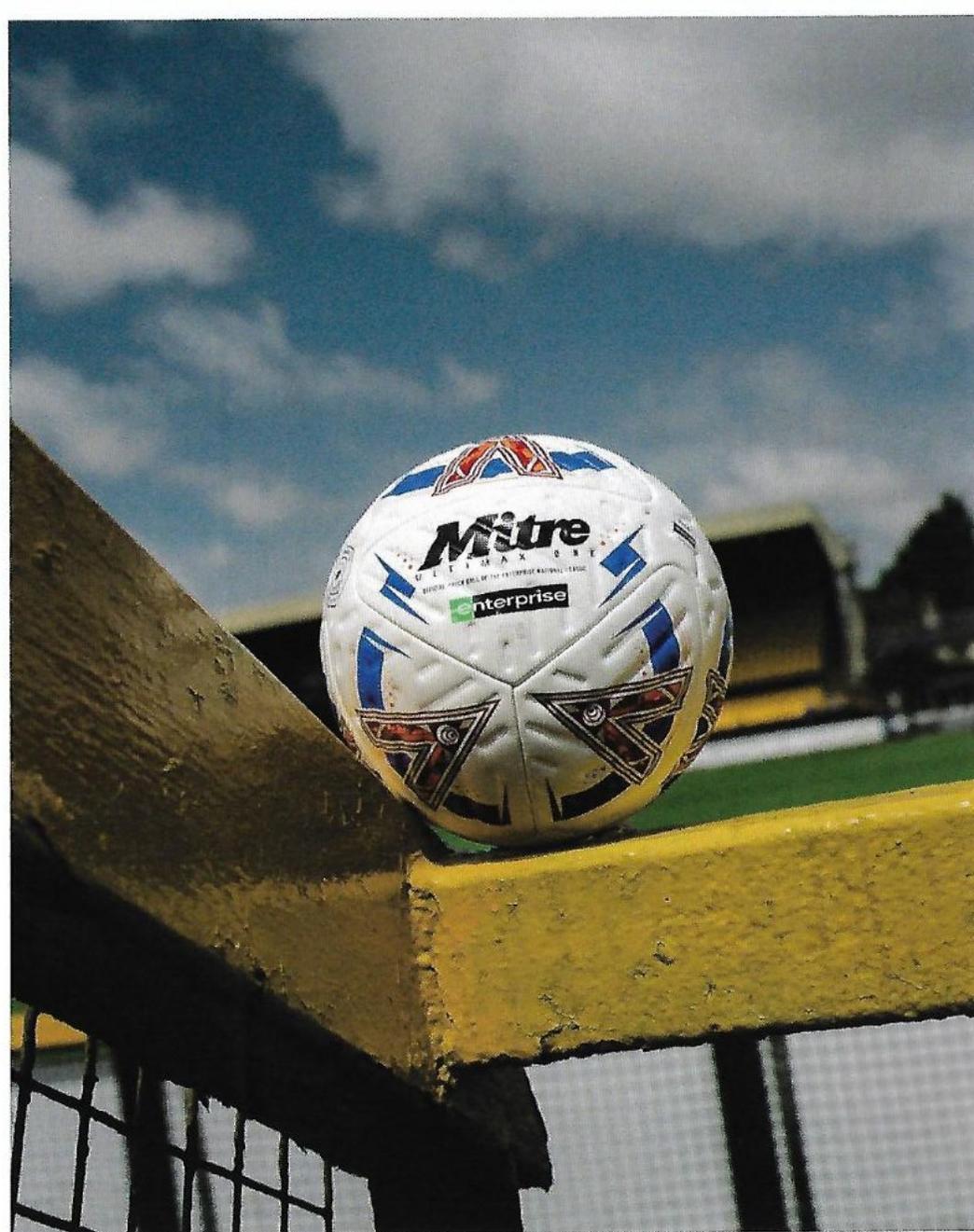
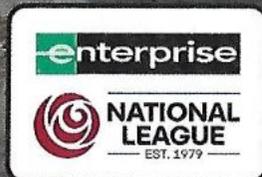
As a fan, that game was up there with the great all-time Wealdstone days



Back of the net! Jack Cook wheels away after lighting the blue touchpaper against Halifax

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Mitre
DIFFERENT LEAGUE

stones fan in the stand

Shay
Tobin

'I'd say that football is a massive part of my life...

it can ruin my weekends at times!

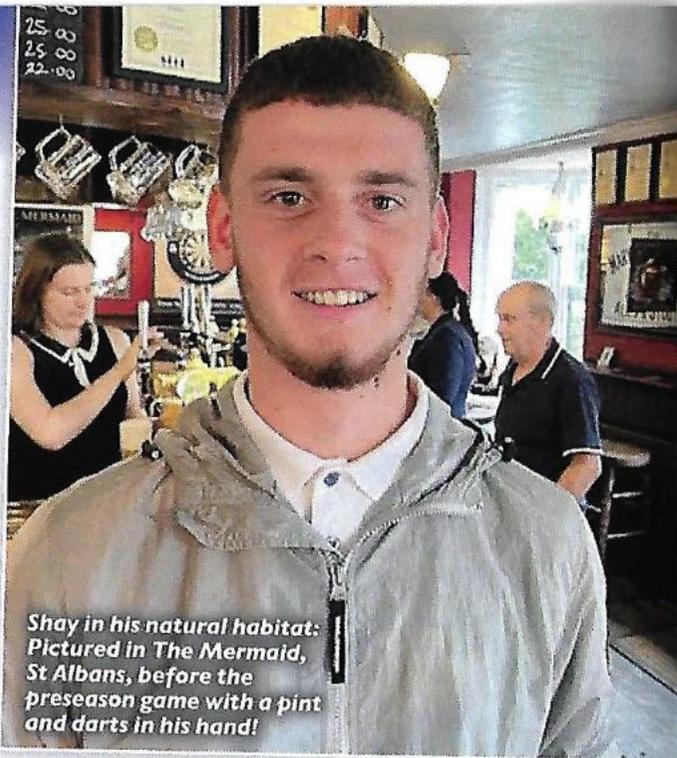
Your name and age? My name's Shay Tobin and I'm 21 years old.

Whereabouts do you live, Shay? Have you always lived in that area? I live in Ruislip, not too far from The Vale actually. We used to live in Hayes then moved to where we are now.

When was the first Stones game you saw?

What were your first impressions of the club?

To be totally honest I don't remember exactly what my first ever game was although I do remember that it was in the Ryman League. First impressions of the club were that it's a lovely club to be around - every-



Shay in his natural habitat: Pictured in The Mermaid, St Albans, before the preseason game with a pint and darts in his hand!

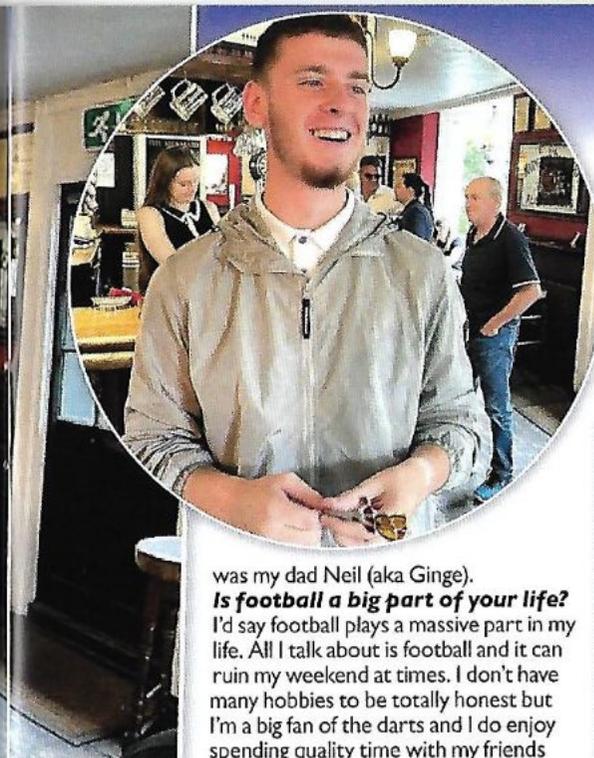
one is so welcoming. The first ever match I saw live must've been back in the 2010/11 season when I first started to come down with my dad, Neil.

Do you follow any other team? How devotedly? Home and away? When I was younger I had a soft spot for Chelsea, but as I've got older I don't really pay attention to them as I care much more about Wealdstone. Don't get me wrong I'll still watch a few of their games but the result won't really bother me as much. I manage to go to every Wealdstone home game, and I try to get to every away game.

What's the most memorable Wealdstone game you've ever seen?

In recent memory it has to be the Barnet home game where Charlie Barker scored that last minute header to win the game 3-2! (pictured left). But another great game was Bath City away in the play offs midweek in 2019, when we won 3-1 on a Wednesday night.

Who introduced you to the Stones? The man who introduced me to The Stones



was my dad Neil (aka Ginge). **Is football a big part of your life?** I'd say football plays a massive part in my life. All I talk about is football and it can ruin my weekend at times. I don't have many hobbies to be totally honest but I'm a big fan of the darts and I do enjoy spending quality time with my friends and family.

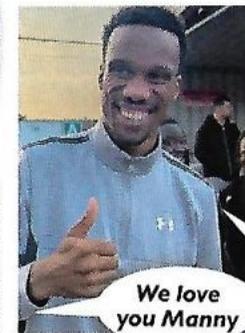
How do you fit watching football in with your family/working life? It's quite easy to fit football into my life as it's on a Saturday afternoon I'm not busy with work or anything like that so it works out perfectly.

Who are the best Wealdstone players you've ever seen? Could you name a best-ever Stones side, 1-11? Best Wealdstone players I've ever seen, Peter Dean and Lee Chappell have to be up there as they were childhood favourites, but Alex Reid has to be one of the best for obvious reasons. An all-time 11 is quite tricky, I'll go for Northy in goal, Chappell, Cronin, Cook, Ciaron Brown as the back line with Little, Pett and Dyer in midfield, Abu Eisa, Reid and Peter Dean in attack.

And finally, where do you think the Stones will be in five years? Hopefully in five years our new stadium will be closer to being built and we'll be a comfortable play-off contender in the National League.



Pictures can tell a thousand words...



Manny Duku (who scored the crucial Solihull goal on the last day of last season) was there incognito at the Charlton game until Jon Taffel spotted him....

We love you Manny

I'll go undercover for you again this season!



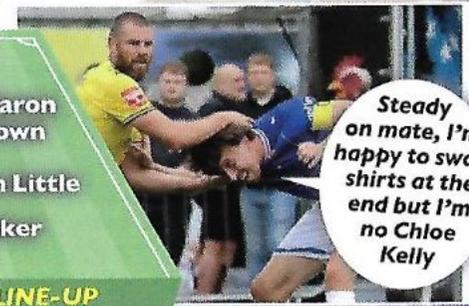
So when's your next return, Alex?

Three weeks Max

...While Alex Dyer found himself up against his old team mates in the St Albans game



...and Cooky enjoyed a bit of manhandling in the same pre-season warm-up...



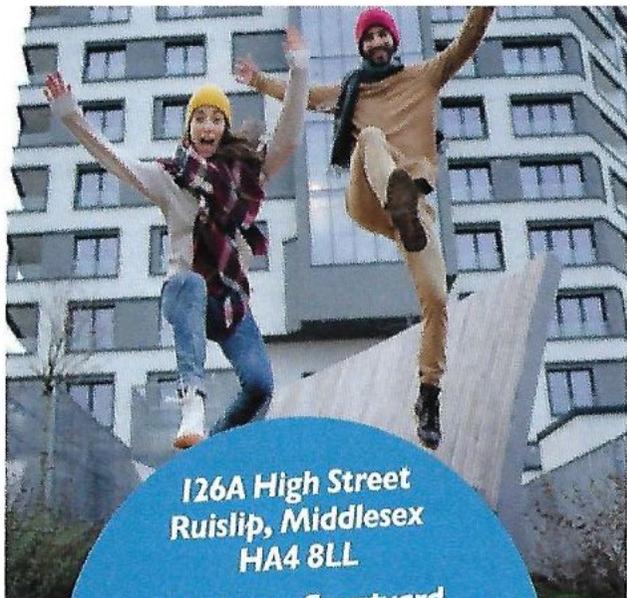
Steady on mate, I'm happy to swap shirts at the end but I'm no Chloe Kelly



Charlie Barker nets and the Bulla goes wild!

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SUPPORTERS CLUB UPDATE

BY NICK DUGARD



After that truly dramatic end to the final game of last season with the 'Great Escape' secured after a tortuous three minutes waiting for the Solihull result it's now time to get straight back to the footballing reality - and excitement- of a brand new season starting today versus newly promoted Truro City.

Congratulations to The Tinnars and we welcome their long distance travelling fans today (although The Vale is almost a stroll up the road in comparison to other journeys!). I well remember our trips and 'pitch inspection stories' down to Truro!

Six seasons on, this will almost certainly be our toughest campaign since we were promoted to the full time, predominantly BELT National League and survival is always our first priority - no change there then - but our fighting 'against all the odds' club spirit, whole club togetherness, and strong tactical awareness from the new MT will be the keys to successfully finding our way through. Above all our fans will always play a massive part and we at WFCSC will continue to support the club with significantly valuable donations and in many other ways.

A couple of months ago we held a meeting with directors Dominic and Danny when we covered a whole range of off field matters impacting the club, and, as you'd expect, the appointment of Sam Cox following the sudden departure of Neil Gibson. It was an open and very honest exchange of views and a very useful discussion. We were scheduled to meet with directors again last Thursday as regular direct comms are essential; part of the agenda would have been an update on the ongoing lease situation following announcements from the board regarding the preliminary Head of Terms agreement signed in June.

Whilst relegation was miraculously and memorably avoided last season, the going in the National League in 25/26 will ratchet up to yet another level, but (as announced) with a more challenging budget than even last season. Therefore the work of the supporters club and its committee will be more important than ever, particularly on the fundraising side. This we will continue to do

with your support and as our SC Chair, Mark, emphasised in last season's final programme notes v Halifax (when describing as an example the huge amount of behind the scenes preparation for the Wembley FanZone events) these deliver hugely valuable funds that translate into significant donations to the main club.

Our next fundraising event will be a brilliant Luther Van Gross gig after the Carlisle home game on Saturday 23 August. We thank all concerned for getting this event confirmed on as there were some very challenging logistics thrown at us with the late kickoff for this live DAZN match. Tickets via James Klarfeld- if any remain!

And on the subject of fund raising the committee were proud to donate a further £15k to the main club before the start of this new campaign. We'll be doing a cheque presentation soon.

May I again thank our hardworking committee and all our volunteer helpers for their fantastic efforts over a long and tough last season but also rewarded with highs along the way, particularly the exciting Cup exploits and that memorable league finale.

We really do need new volunteers and if you feel you can help us out in any way please step forward!

It is really important that our many younger fans are encouraged to get involved. We on the committee are not getting any younger! We are looking to arrange a get together event for this purpose soon - look out for posts on our socials.

We are temporarily short staffed due to committee family commitments today but you can still buy your 50/50 tickets that will be on sale; please note that the WFCSC Megastore will not be open today but the shop will be open as normal from our next home game onwards with new stock and loads of goodies! The Megastore is ALWAYS available on-line for souvenir and merchandise purchases. Check it out.

Nick

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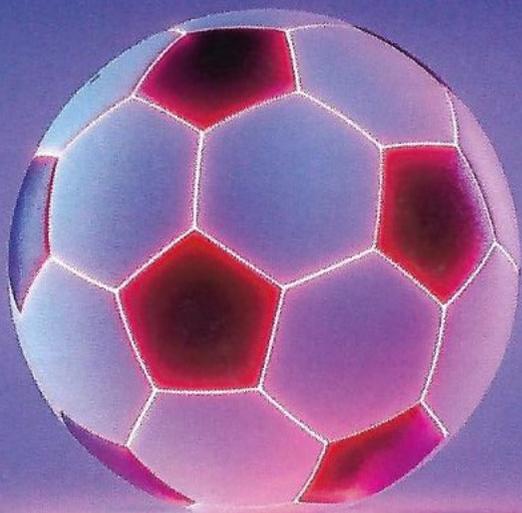
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1st Team Fixtures Season 2025/2026

Month	Date	Opposition	Competition
AUGUST	9	TRURO CITY	ENL
	16	FC HALIFAX TOWN	ENL
	19	Woking	ENL
	23	CARLISLE UNITED	ENL
	25	Boston United	ENL
30	ROCHDALE	ENL	
SEPTEMBER	2	SOUTHEND UNITED	ENL
	6	Scunthorpe United	ENL
	13	GATESHEAD	ENL
	20	Morecambe	ENL
	24	Tamworth	ENL
27	EASTLEIGH	ENL	
OCTOBER	1	Brackley Town	ENL
	4	ALTRINCHAM	ENL
	18	York City	ENL
	11	FA Cup 4th Qualifying	FAC40
	25	SUTTON UNITED	ENL
NOVEMBER	1	FA Cup 1st Round Proper	FAC1
	4	Yeovil Town	ENL
	8	BRAINTREE TOWN	ENL
	15	Hartlepool United	ENL
	22	FOREST GREEN ROVERS	ENL
29	Solihull Moors	ENL	
DECEMBER	6	Truro City	ENL
	13	FA Trophy 3rd Round	FAT3
	20	FC Halifax Town	ENL
	26	BOREHAM WOOD	ENL
	30	Aldershot Town	ENL
JANUARY	3	Carlisle United	ENL
	17	WOKING	ENL
	21	TAMWORTH	ENL
	24	Gateshead	ENL
	31	MORECAMBE	ENL
FEBRUARY	7	Eastleigh	ENL
	10	Altrincham	ENL
	14	YORK CITY	ENL
	21	Sutton United	ENL
	24	BRACKLEY TOWN	ENL
28	HARTLEPOOL UNITED	ENL	
MARCH	7	Braintree Town	ENL
	14	SOLIHULL MOORS	ENL
	21	Forest Green Rovers	ENL
	25	YEOVIL TOWN	ENL
	28	BOSTON UNITED	ENL
APRIL	3	Boreham Wood	ENL
	6	ALDERSHOT TOWN	ENL
	11	Rochdale	ENL
	18	SCUNTHORPE UNITED	ENL
	25	Southend United	ENL



PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY RESULTS

12th July	Northwood	A	4-0	Trialist, Trialist, Kadji, Trialist	(Att: TBA)
19th July	MK Dons	H	2-0	Tiensia, Georgiou	(Att: 325)
23rd July	Chariton Athletic	H	0-3		(Att: 685)
29th July	QPR Under 21s	H	1-2	Adarkwa (4), Trialist, Other Trialist	(Att: 615)
2nd August	Slough Town	H	2-1	Tshikuna, Woodman	(Att: 410)

Date in Red = MIDWEEK fixture

today's
opposition
in focus

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRURO CITY FC, THE NEWLY-PROMOTED 'TINNERS'

Truro City became a founding member of the Cornwall County Football Association (CCFA) on September 18, 1889.

On this same day, at a meeting which took place in the city at the Royal Hotel, the CCFA was formed.

City's first ever recorded match took place at Truro College on October 4, 1889 with the side prevailing 7-1 against Penzance and just six years later, a first of 15 Cornwall Senior Cups to date was secured. Truro defeated Launceston 5-1.

After initially playing league games in the Plymouth & District League, Truro joined the newly formed Cornwall Senior League in 1931. However, just three years later, in 1934, they re-joined the P&D League owing to a dispute over travelling expenses.

City were subsequently barred from entering the Cornwall Senior Cup but were re-admitted in 1939, just before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In 1951, Truro were founding members of the South Western League and on four occasions in the 20th century, Truro were league champions.

After many years with only limited success, in 2004, Truro were the subject of significant investment on the pitch and with a wealthy backer, a rapid rise up the non-league football pyramid ensued.

City were promoted to the Western League for the 2006-07 season which is arguably the most historic in the club's entire history. The side romped to the league title but it was in the FA Vase that the club wrote a new chapter in Cornish football history.

Truro reached the final at a newly rebuilt Wembley Stadium and in front of a bumper crowd, defeated then Wessex League outfit AFC Totton 3-1.

City fell behind to the Southampton-based side but a brace from Kevin Wills, alongside a single Joe Broad strike saw Truro lift the FA Vase - thus be-



coming the first Cornish side to ever appear, and then subsequently win, at Wembley.

In 2007-08, Truro won the Western Premier Division at the first attempt by 17 points and would become the first Cornish side to ever play in the Southern League.

The success didn't stop and just a single season at Step Four ensued with

City equalling a British football record of four straight promotions and for 2009-10, the side would ply their trade in the Southern League Premier.

Life was much harder at Step Three for Truro and there was to be no fifth promotion on the spin as the side finished the campaign in a credible 11th place.

It was just a momentary pause in the upward trajectory of Truro City as 2010-11 saw normal service resumed and another promotion to Conference South level saw the side just two promotions from the Football League.

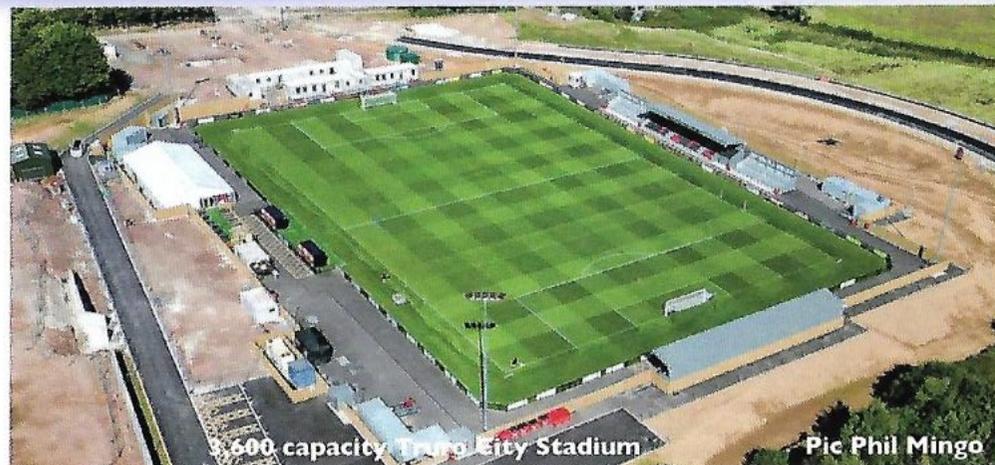
A first year of consolidation at Step Two saw Truro finish 14th but the bubble of success was about to burst in spectacular fashion.

The club ran into financial difficulties and were hit with a 10-point deduction for entering administration and a transfer embargo. The very future of the club looked uncertain but at the eleventh hour, City were rescued by a local based businessman Peter Masters. An inevitable drop down to the Southern League then took place.

A second relegation on the spin was avoided after a strong end to 2013-14 and once again, the club could start to look upwards.

They returned to the newly titled National League South for 2015-16 after defeating St Neots Town 1-0 in the Southern League play-off final thanks to a penalty from Shane White.

The next three seasons were up and down for Truro as they suffered two play-off semi-final defeats, sandwiched between a brush with relegation which was narrowly avoided.



There was yet more history for Truro in 2017-18 as they reached the first round of the FA Cup for the first time before bowing out to former Premier League giants Charlton Athletic 3-1 at the Valley.

The 2018-19 season saw Truro suffer a tumultuous campaign with three permanent managers, the start of the season playing home games at Torquay United, before moving back to Treyew Road after the festive period.

The upheaval had a detrimental effect on results and the season ended with relegation and new owners too.

Before the covid-19 pandemic, City looked odds on for an instant Step Two return under manager Paul Wotton but the league campaign in 2019-20 was declared null and void.

Part way through the next season, also owing to coronavirus, the season was not completed and the club would vacate Treyew Road, moving to Bolitho Park, home of Plymouth Parkway, while a new facility was built at Langarth.

After adjusting to life playing every game across the border and out of Cornwall, City returned back to National League South after a four year absence in 2023, winning the Southern League play-off final.

In a dramatic game away to Bracknell Town, skipper Connor Riley-Lowe scored the winning goal deep into stoppage time to hand City promotion and a 3-2 win.

The club began life back in Step Two, whilst a new stadium in Langarth was constructed, playing games in Devon, but due to a wet winter, were forced to play home matches towards the end of 2023-24, 200 miles away in Gloucester.

Remarkably, despite playing 10 games in 20 days during April, National League South safety was secured with a 16th placed finish.

During 23-24, the club was purchased by a North American consortium and this coincided with a huge upturn in fortunes for Truro City.

Firstly, the club returned to Cornwall and the city of Truro after four years away at the newly constructed Truro City Stadium. The club changed its nickname to the Tinnners and reverted to playing in red and black as its primary colours.

John Askey was also appointed as Truro's new manager, replacing Wotton who left for Torquay United.

Close to 3,000 fans packed into the TCS to see the side's first ever game at their new facility, which ended in a 2-1 defeat to promotion favourites Dorking Wanderers.

And despite losing on the opening day, City were one of the division's top teams, defying the bookmakers odds of being favourites for relegation to push for promotion and become the first team from Cornwall to play in the National League.

In one of English football's closest ever title races, six teams - City, Torquay, Eastbourne, Worthing, Dorking and Boreham Wood - all had a mathematical chance of winning the league on the final day.

Realistically, it was between City and Torquay with Askey's charges hosting relegation threatened St Albans, whilst the Gulls were on the road at Hemel Hempstead.

In the most dramatic of final days, both sides won, but City, holding a two-goal advantage over the Devonians, won the title by virtue of a better goal difference. Truro thrashed the Saints 5-2, whilst Torquay defeated the Tudors 4-1.

Cue glorious celebrations between players, staff and the supporters as City were champions. The club were not presented with the trophy immediately in the aftermath of their St Albans triumph however, due to multiple last day permutations.

Instead, the trophy was presented to captain Riley-Lowe in front of Truro Cathedral some two weeks later, as thousands of fans lined the city's streets for an open-top bus parade and celebration.

**tinners's
who's
who**



1 - DAN LAVERCOMBE Goalkeeper

The 27-year-old joined Truro in June 2024 from Taunton Town. Lavercombe began his career with Torquay United before he was snapped up by Wigan Athletic in January 2016. He left the Latics in the summer of 2019. AFC Fylde was Lavercombe's next destination for a solitary campaign. Prior to joining Taunton Town, Lavercombe enjoyed a productive three-year stint with FC United of Manchester.

2 - ZAK BELL Defence

Bell came through the academy system at EFL Championship side Bristol City and whilst a Robin, won four Wales under-19 caps. During his time at Ashton Gate, Bell had loan spells in Step Two at Bath City (2022-23), whilst also serving Somerset outfits Yeovil and Taunton last term. He left Bristol City during the close season, linking up with Step One side Maidenhead United. But after starting the first two matches of the campaign, then forcing himself back into contention around the festive period, he initially joined City on a month's loan in January 2025.

3 - CONNOR RILEY-LOWE (C) Defence

Connor Riley-Lowe started his career with Exeter City, where he came through the club's academy. Following his release from the Devon side, he was quickly snapped up by the Tinners on a permanent basis in 2017 before deciding to leave to join Bath City in 2019. Riley-Lowe returned to City after a year away following his release from the Somerset side in 2020.

4 - WILL DEAN Midfield

Will Dean joined the club in 2021 after his release from Exeter. Playing as both a midfielder and defender last season, Dean was a consistent presence in the team.

5 - TOM HARRISON Defence

Tom Harrison first linked up with Truro in November 2023, joining the Tinners on loan from then National League side Oxford City. After quickly settling into his temporary surroundings, City wasted little time in making the Bristol born defender's loan move a permanent one. He joined the youth ranks

at Championship side Bristol City in 2018 and progressed into the Robins' under-21 team, whilst also spending time on loan at Hereford United, Weston-super-Mare, Chippenham Town and Gloucester City. It was during the January transfer window in 2021-22 that Harrison left Ashton Gate to join Gloucester on a free transfer. He spent 18 months with the Tigers before switching to Oxford City, his most recent club, before joining Truro in November 2023.

6 - SAM SANDERS Defence

The 23-year-old joined the Tinners in July 2024. Sanders started his career at Premier League side Nottingham Forest. He first joined York City on loan from Forest during the 2021-22 before he moved on loan to Boston United.

7 - YASSINE EN-NEYAH Midfield

En-Neyah joined City for a second spell ahead of the 2024-25 campaign. Moroccan born and also eligible to play for Ireland and Italy, En-Neyah played a lead role in Truro's Southern League play-off final win over Bracknell Town. He left City 12 months ago and joined League Two outfit Colchester United, but spent most of last term on loan to Maldron and Tiptree. Along with spells at League of Ireland clubs Shelbourne and Waterford, En-Neyah came through the ranks at Nottingham Forest.

8 - DAN ROONEY Midfield

Back for his third spell with City, Rooney, joined Truro from Plymouth Parkway in 2023. His career has also included brief spells with both Bury and Bath City.

9 - TYLER HARVEY Forward

Having come through the ranks at Plymouth Argyle, Tyler Harvey made 50 appearances for the Pilgrims before moving to Wrexham. He joined the Tinners in 2017 and has been prolific ever since, scoring the club's goal in the first round FA Cup defeat at the hands of Charlton Athletic. Harvey scored 25 goals during Truro's last Step Two campaign before moving briefly to Bath City at the start of 2019-20. However, it was only a brief Twerton Park sojourn as he returned to Truro just two months later.

10 - BILLY PALFREY Midfield

A lynchpin midfielder in Plymouth Parkway's rise up the non-league pyramid, Palfrey moved back to Truro in the summer of 2023, four years after he left City. A product of the Plymouth Argyle youth system, Palfrey joined Truro in 2017. He also had a brief spell with Torquay United.

11 - DOM JOHNSON-FISHER Forward

A pacey winger, with an eye for goal, Johnson-Fisher was playing Step Five football with Steyning Town before moving to Whitehawk in the summer of 2023. He hit the ground running with the Isthmian League side and scored a spectacular goal in an FA

Trophy tie against local rivals Lewes. After moving to Truro, Johnson-Fisher made 13 National League South appearances during his maiden Step Two campaign.

12 - CHRISTIAN OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN Defence

Christian joined the Tinners from Kidderminster Harriers, on the eve of the 2024-25 season. The 24-year-old is the brother of former Liverpool, Arsenal and England midfielder Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain. Christian's father Mark also had a long and distinguished professional career, winning eight caps for England in the '80s. Born in Portsmouth, Christian progressed through the academy ranks at Fratton Park. He left Portsmouth in 2019 and joined Notts County on a two-year deal and has subsequently had spells at Gosport, Aldershot and Kings Lynn.

13 - AIDAN STONE Goalkeeper

Aidan Stone joined Truro City on the eve of the 2025/26 campaign. The 26-year-old custodian's most recent club was City's divisional rivals Yeovil Town. An England Schoolboy international, Stone's first professional club was Premier League Burnley and after enjoying a productive loan spell with Lancaster whilst at Turf Moor, he joined Mansfield in 2019. Since then, Stone has played for Port Vale and Notts County. Last term, Stone made 13 appearances on loan from the Magpies to Boston United, before joining Yeovil.

14 - LIRAK HASANI Midfield

The 23-year-old left Torquay United in 2025. Hasani was born to Kosovan parents in South Yorkshire and came through the ranks at Doncaster Rovers, making his first team debut as a teenager in March 2019. He enjoyed loan spells at Gateshead, Matlock Town and Bashford United before joining the former on a permanent deal in 2022. Hasani spent two years in the North East, but his time with the Heed included further loan spells, this time to Boston United, South Shields and Blyth Spartans.

15 - LUKE JEPHCOTT Forward

Luke was born in Wales and raised in Ponsanooth on the outskirts of Falmouth. Joining the Plymouth Argyle academy, his goals helped Argyle win promotion during 2019-20 and in two subsequent years, Jephcott hit double figures in League One, whilst gaining Wales under-21 honours. He left Home Park in the summer of 2023 and has subsequently served Swindon Town, St Johnstone and Newport County.

16 - TYLOR LOVE-HOLMES Defence

Tylor Love-Holmes joined Truro City in July 2024. In 2023/24 Love-Holmes was a regular for home town club Saltash United winning the Manager's Player of the Year award.

17 - SEIDOU SANOGO Midfield

Sanogo linked up with the Tinners' first team squad

throughout 2024-25's pre-season. He was subsequently offered terms and will remain at the Truro City Stadium until the summer of 2026. Prior to his Cornwall move, Sanogo was a regular for Folkestone Invicta.

19 - REKEIL PYKE Forward

The 27-year-old joined City after his summer 2025 release from Grimsby Town. Leeds born, Pyke began his career at Huddersfield Town and made one senior appearance for the Terriers, whilst serving Colchester, Wrexham, Port Vale, Rochdale and Shrewsbury on loan. He left Huddersfield for the Salop in 2023 and spent three seasons at the Meadow. A loan spell to Scunthorpe ensued whilst a Shrewsbury player before joining Grimsby for the 2023-24 campaign. After two years with the Mariners and a short loan at Eastleigh, Pyke became the fifth permanent signing Truro made during the off-season, as the club geared up for their maiden National League campaign.

20 - RYAN LAW Defence

After his release from Plymouth Argyle, Law joined City on a permanent basis in the summer of 2023. The 24-year-old returned to Truro with a wealth of football league experience having spent a season with City on loan from Plymouth Argyle in 2019-2020, where he picked up the club's Young Player of the Year and the Goal of the Season awards. He went on to make over 50 football league appearances for Argyle and Gillingham as well as having National League experience with Torquay United and Yeovil Town.

21 - MAX KINSEY Defence

Max Kinsey joined Truro City on a season-long loan from Premier League side AFC Bournemouth. The 20-year-old defender joined the Cherries in 2021 after spending six years at recently relegated top flight outfit Southampton.

22 - BEN ADELSBURY Defence

A versatile defender, Adelsbury joined Truro for a third time in the summer of 2022. He arrived back at the club with a wealth of non-league experience after winning the Southern League Premier South title with Taunton Town in 2022. Adelsbury had a previous spell with City between 2015 and 2017 where he made 53 appearances before going on to spend five successful years in Somerset with the Peacocks.

23 - HARRY KITE Midfield

The 24 year old was Truro's first signing ahead of the club's maiden National League campaign. Kite came through the ranks at Exeter City and made his debut in 2017. Creditor born, Kite would go on to make over 100 appearances for the Grecians, and was part of the side which won promotion to the third tier of English football in 2022.

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view from the away end

Truro fan
Ian Hyland

WE DIDN'T really publish enough 'away fan' features last season so today was an opportunity not to miss. Truro fan Ian's enthusiasm for his club is infectious... and he's making a ten-hour, 540-mile round trip today to see the Tinnners' first-ever game at this level... in fact the first-ever game at this level for a Cornish club!

Your name and age? I'm Ian Hyland (46), and I'll be at the game with my son Joe (20).

Have you always lived in Cornwall? No, I was born in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire but moved to Cornwall in 2003. Joe was born here, and my partner and all her family are 'proper' Cornish, so does that make me honorary Cornish? Anyway, I always put the jam on my scone before the cream if that helps – the right/only way of doing it!

When was your first Truro City game? It was back in 2011, Truro City v Leamington. My dad had started to follow Leamington after having played in goal for them back when they were a works team (Lockheed/AP Leamington) in the late 60s/early 70s - he was down visiting so it was a perfect game to go and watch. I had grown up watching a lot of non-league football because of my dad (who also played for Coventry Sporting and then Racing Club Warwick) in the 70s-90s when they were level seven or eight in the pyramid.

What do you recall of that game? A 3-1 Truro victory!

Do you follow any other club? I also follow Arsenal in the Premier League and my son follows Sheffield United. I would say that most fans in Cornwall have a 'league team' they follow as well as a local team that is more accessible to watch. For many (but not all) in Cornwall I think that, historically, that second team will have been Plymouth Argyle, but since Truro's return to the county many will have shifted to Truro as their local team.

Is Joe a big Truro fan too? As a boy he played for

Today is history-making for NLS winners The Tinnners, and fan Ian says: Travel will be a challenge but write us off at your peril!

the local Truro City youth team - when I first moved to Cornwall I used to play on Saturday afternoons myself, and it was when I retired from playing I was able to go more regularly to Truro's games. We had a group of dads/sons from his youth team that would go to the Truro games at Treyew Road. Fast forward to today and the same group of dads/sons are still going to watch them at the new ground. We have great memories of our FA Cup coach trip up to Charlton in 2017. Like me, he loves the fact that you can get so close to the pitch and are able to interact with the players – him and his friends would always be behind one of the goals have conversations with the keeper. He is now at Exeter University and tries to get home for as many weekend games as he can, and I will be picking him from Uni early on Saturday mornings on my way past for some of the away games as well.

Was it a surprise to win the NLS last year?

No one quite knew what to expect when we returned back to the county after a nomadic few years playing 'home' games in Plymouth, Taunton and even as far away as Gloucester. Playing 13 games in 28 days to narrowly avoid relegation two seasons ago made us one of the favourites for the drop at the start of last season. But, the new owners



Ian and son Joe



Truro's new out-of-town stadium takes shape

have come in and backed the club, bringing in a new experienced manager (John Askey) last season and a few new/key signings who saw a change in fortunes. Last season started steadily, we started to edge our way up the table but a Good Friday home defeat to Torquay looked like we were destined for the playoffs... until the Easter Monday victory v Weston put the league back in our hands going into the final day. Was it a surprise? That's the beauty of football, nothing should surprise you, anything is possible.

Are the club prepared for the demands of the National League?

In an interview last week, John Askey was talking about the challenges of getting players to come down to Cornwall to play... we are clearly very remote and a long way from the 'traditional' footballing hubs in the country, so convincing players to uproot and move to the South West is bound to be a complicated situation (though they are bound to love Cornwall once they get here). That said, we have only lost two players from the title winning squad of last season and have added half a dozen new players as well, so the playing squad has a consistent feel to it. I would imagine that the biggest challenge for the club and players is going to be the logistics of travelling to the away games – going up the day before? hotel stays? do you travel back through the night or during the next day? the impact of this on training schedules etc?

Is the thought of those long trips daunting... Gateshead, Carlisle, Hartlepool for example?

Clearly, the distances will prove a challenge, for both the team as well as the fans. Our closest game is Yeovil, and that's a 280 mile round trip! There will definitely be a small hard-core group of fans who will be looking to get to every away game available and all modes of transport will be used at various times throughout the season to get to and from games – "planes, trains and automobiles"!

What were your average crowds last season?

And is the new stadium up and running? We were the 3rd best supported team in the National League South last season (behind Torquay and Maidstone) with around 1,800 per week. For the final two home games vs Torquay and St Albans there were over 3,500 there. This would have put us at the 15th best supported team in the National League (and 200 per week more than Wealdstone). It would be

great to see that number grow further now: I believe we have allocated around 600 tickets for away fans for the first home game of the season vs York City). In the few years before Truro left Treyew Road we were getting around 200-400 per week at home games, so to be where we are now in such a short time frame shows how far the club has come.

Just 18 months ago the stadium was just a field of mud so to get to where we are now has been so impressive by everyone involved at the club. Capacity last year was around 3,500, but most of that was uncovered standing. Yes, our club house is a marquee and yes the changing rooms are temporary/portable etc, but the fundamental location and design of the stadium is set up for growth. People like Rob and Amy, and the others behind the scenes at the club have been working tirelessly over the summer to make further improvements: The covered seating has more than doubled in size and there are two new covered terraced areas going up behind one of the goals which will help improve fan experience. Of course its not going to be as 'grand' as some of the 'bigger teams' in the league but it is all a work in progress! Also, the playing surface will likely be one of the best in the league but my advice for travelling fans coming to Cornwall in the winter would be to wrap up warm and bring some waterproofs!

Have you added players to the title winning squad and do you think the team will prosper?

We have lost Jaze Kabia to Grimsby and Rocky Neal has also left, the only two departures of note. We have signed Christian Oxlade-Chamberlain and Luke Jephcott permanently after both had very successful loan spells with us last season, and this summer have added midfielders Lirak Hasani (from Torquay) and Harry Kite (from Yeovil), defender Max Kinsey (loan from Bournemouth), striker Rekiel Pyke (from Grimsby) and goalkeeper Aidan Stone (from Yeovil). I am sure that we will be looking to get a few more in over the next few weeks. How will we do this season? That's the million-dollar question! Listening to the *Stonescast 85* podcast this week I know that two of the three panellists tipped us for relegation but last year has taught Truro fans that pre-season predictions don't always come true! I think we have the ability to surprise a few teams this season. **Will there be too much reliance on Tyler Harvey?** Tyler had a fantastic season. NLS Golden Boot winner as well as Player of The Season. But Truro have many others who will undoubtedly contribute from all areas. Luke Jephcott scored crucial goals in the run in and I can also see good things this season coming from Dominic Johnson-Fisher – he is a lively and skillful forward who really grew into the season last year after joining from Whitehawk at the start of last season – he must be a defenders nightmare to play against!

So my message is: Write us off at your peril!



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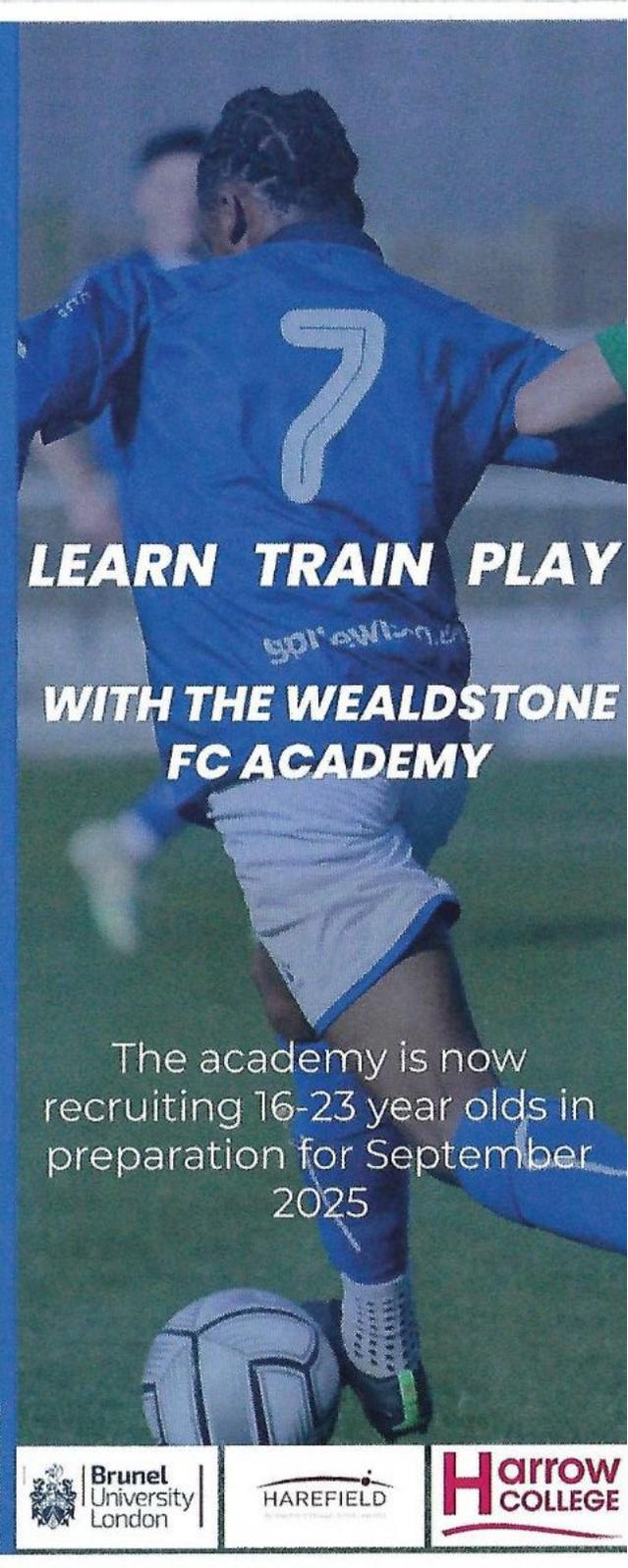
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We've met you before

BY TIM PARKS

YOU MAY remember long-time fan, the late Alan Couch, reminiscing a few years ago in this programme about the Stones' Easter Tour to Cornwall in April 1954, when we faced Falmouth Town on Good Friday (April 16th) and then Truro City at their Treyew ground the following day

Wealdstone were then members of the powerful Athenian League while the Cornish side played in the South Western League.

After walloping Falmouth 8-3, the Stones lost to Truro City 3-0... and for Alan, who was able to attend both these matches as he was doing his National Service in the Royal Air Force at nearby RAF St. Mawgan in Newquay, it was a pipedream to think of his Wealdstone ever facing a Cornish side again.

How extraordinary then that we have since faced Truro EIGHT times in league matches. And that the 3-0 defeat in the 1954 friendly was the last time we've tasted defeat in Cornwall!

My own first experience of Truro City FC was in July 2007 on holiday in Padstow. I was itching to see

WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB

Easter Tour in Cornwall

Thursday, April 15th to Monday, April 19th, 1954

Headquarters for Tour:
ROYAL DUCHY HOTEL, FALMOUTH

MATCHES:
Friday, April 16th

Falmouth Town v. Wealdstone
K.O. 3.15 p.m.

Saturday, April 17th

Truro City v. Wealdstone
K.O. 3.15 p.m.

Name _____

Exeter Hotel Room No. _____

Falmouth Hotel Room No. _____

1954

with half the county, it seemed, eager to see the fast-rising team who had caught the public's imagination.

Truro were only in the Western League, having just won promotion to the Premier Division, and still three promotions away from the Conference South... but the football they played that

night was at least equal to the sort of stuff Wealdstone were playing in the Ryman Premier League, two divisions higher.

Plymouth eventually won the game 2-1 but the prolific Stuart Yetton, who has played on and off for the White Tigers over the past ten years, put them ahead from the penalty spot.

My abiding memory was of a club 'on the up' and sure enough, they won the Western League Prem that season to get promoted to the Southern

League's Western Division (the first Cornish club to play at that level) and then immediately won promotion to the Premier Division... and then the Conference South in the space of a few years in a whirlwind of big money signings.

The club was being bankrolled by property millionaire Kevin Heaney. He had announced the club would be turning full-time professional once they reached the Southern League, but the huge travelling costs soon took their toll and, as the Stones were

a bit of pre-season football and noticed that the 'White Tigers' or 'Tinnars' (who had become the first Cornish football club to win a national trophy when lifting the FA Vase at Wembley in front of over 30,000 people two months earlier) - were facing League One Plymouth Argyle in a friendly.

I drove over to Treyew Road, expecting a decent crowd for the local derby but wasn't able to park within half a mile of the ground! Over 2,000 crammed the stadium



My cousin Alex, winning Fame Academy 20 years ago

travelling upwards to the Conference South, Truro were falling in the opposite direction as they suffered administration and demotion in 2012.

It seemed our paths were destined never to cross again. But Truro got their house in order under a new chairman (Peter Masters) and soon our supporters would be plotting the first of our wonderful visits to visit Cornwall. Pasties and football: the perfect combination :)

Now, of course, Truro have a new stadium and last season won the NLS to become the first Cornish club to reach football's fifth tier. Travelling will always be an issue but it's great to be playing them again

I've just remembered something else about that 2007 holiday in Truro. While we were in Cornwall we dropped in to see my cousin Stephen and his daughter Alex, who had sprung to prominence a few years earlier by winning the BBC's Fame Academy. The whole of Cornwall (it seemed) had come out to vote for the then-19 year old singer, and halfway through the game Plymouth's diminutive spiky-haired right back fluffed a clearance and was cat-called by someone in the crowd: 'You look like Alex Parks... and you play like her too!' Love it!

Stones v Truro City nine years ago: and what a classic of a first game it was!



2016

Saturday February 6 2016, Vanarama National League South: Wealdstone 4 Truro 4

A FOUR-GOAL comeback lit up this sensational first-ever competitive clash with the Cornishmen!

With most fans already looking forward to the last-day-of-the-season trip to Truro (which had sparked much excitement since the fixtures came out the previous July) this game was pretty unheralded. We were rooted in 15th place; our home form was dismal and the White Tigers were inside the play-off zone in a highly impressive first season back in the NLS. But we had picked up a surprise 2-1 win at high flying Dartford the previous week thanks to a goal apiece from our Dad's Army strike force of Scott McGleish (41) and Jefferson Louis (36). Hence the programme cover (above).

The gale-force conditions blowing up the Vale towards Couch Corner was a definite advantage - yet the 606 crowd weren't expecting a 3-0 half time lead!

Matt Ball, Matty Harriott and Big Jeff had all netted. Fast-flowing Truro might have had three themselves though, and would have been forgiven for giving up when Louis' cross was deflected into his own goal by a visiting defender for 4-0 just moments after the restart.

Supporter Sam Morris wrote in his 'fan in the stand' piece a few **CONTINUED OVERPAGE >>>**



Jefferson Louis celebrates the third goal with Scott Davies



The Wealdstone touring party, pictured at their Falmouth hotel in 1954. The players are in the back and middle rows! Above: The tour itinerary

'WE'VE MET BEFORE' CONTINUED

few weeks later that he had brought a few mates along to the game and they couldn't understand why he was still nervous when 4-0 ahead. Well, they found out! Truro stuck to their guns and kept attacking, but even when they had deservedly pulled two goals back with 10mins to go the 'impossible' seemed highly likely.

Our keeper Joe Taylor was pulling off a string of saves and suddenly Truro were looking unstoppable... and they were. Jake Ashe's brilliant freekick made it 4-3 and in stoppage time Brett pounced to make it 4-4. Extraordinary!

Saturday April 30 2016 , National League South: Truro City 1 Wealdstone 2

THE FINAL day of that campaign saw the long-awaited weekend away in the far West. Conservative estimates are that 270 Stones fans saw the game, travelling by plane, train, car and coach. And with only Jonathan North, Josh Urqu-

Four games in Cornwall and four Stones wins!

Saturday September 24 2016, Conference South: Wealdstone 1 Truro City 2

THE FOLLOWING season was nine months of ups and downs for both clubs, reflected in our two meetings. We faced the White Tigers at the Vale in decent form, standing in sixth place after (for once) a good start and poised to move into the playoff positions. Truro were 18th but as dogged as the previous season... despite going 1-0 up with an Elliot Benyon goal and seeing keeper Tom McHale pull off three terrific saves we were undone by the usual late Truro goals.

Saturday March 11 2017, Conference South: Truro City 1 Wealdstone 2

THE Stones picked up a sixth consecutive win in the NLS, our best-ever run in the competition. We had been pants as the New Year unfolded (remember the 4-1 trophy defeat to Brackley and the 4-0 hammering by Dartford, both at home?) but suddenly put a run together that lifted the Stones from 14th place to 8th. Joe White and



Truro salute travelling fans after the comeback

hart McLeod, Wes Parker and Tom Hamblin starting the next season - and on the coaching side Leo Morris and Mark Gill bowing out - it was just brilliant to finish with a three points against a team who had already cemented their place in the play offs. We ended up in 13th place (not bad after just one win in our first nine games for the second successive season) and two goals from Jefferson Louis (one a penalty) on his last appearance for the club ensured a weekend of much jollity for the fans. The benchmark for away trips ever since!

Tom Hamblin (late on) got the goals and 100 travelling fans cavorted on the misty terraces. The defeat put the Tigers in real trouble at the wrong end of the table... but they survived.

Saturday October 21, 2017, Conference South: Wealdstone 2 Truro City 1

THE pendulum swing firmly in the Stones' favour after this windy afternoon at the Vale (a weekend that ended with the roof of the stand blowing off). Two cheeky goals from Abs Eisa stole a 2-1 win.

Saturday February 10, 2018, Conference South: Truro City 1 Wealdstone 3

THE return in Cornwall saw another great Stones following - and boss Bobby Wilkinson making sure he oversaw a morning pitch inspection with Truro suspected of trying to secure a cancellation and a midweek 260-mile trip - celebrate a league 'double' when Dave Pratt scored his first two goals for the club. Danny Green's penalty wrapped it up.

Saturday Sept 1 2018, Conference South: Wealdstone 3 Truro City 0

THE biggest crowd for a Stones v Tinners clash (780) saw Stones romp to victory at the Vale with our two Bradleys - Bubb (2) and Hudson-Odoi - getting the goals.

Tuesday February 5, 2019: Conference South: Truro 1 Wealdstone 2

TRURO were relegated three months later while Stones reached the play-offs.. but it was Tyler Harvey (still playing) who buried a beautiful freekick to put the home side ahead at the break. Christian Smith levelled from the spot and a Danny Green special from 25 yards won the game.



A jubilant Dave Pratt gets his first goal for the club!

rewind: on this day

BY TIM PARKS



Saturday August 9, 2014, Conference South: Wealdstone 1 Eastbourne Boro 1 THIS was only 11 years ago but it seems like a lifetime... Stones' first-ever game in the Conference South (now the NLS) so nearly ended with all three points tucked away until a last-minute headed equaliser from Eastbourne.

And then we had to wait until the TENTH game to record our first win at that level!

Remember the joy as Luke Pigden's brilliant finish lit up the newly-built Bulla Stand with just 30 minutes gone? We were leaping about like loons, in expectation of a glorious start and that late leveller was barely a pin prick in the Wealdstone balloon.

A point wasn't bad against much-fancied Eastbourne, right? Especially as they had us under the cosh and our keeper Northy even had to keep out a penalty in that second half. We had won the Ryman League and were on a real high that didn't begin to dissipate in the next two away draws against Bishops Stortford and Gosport. But then came defeats to Farnborough (1-2), Bromley (0-4), Hayes (1-2), Bath City (1-2), and Concord Rangers (2-4), with a 0-0 at Ebbsfleet barely lifting the worry.

We were rock bottom. And had to go to 3rd-placed, moneybags Whitehawk on a Tuesday night. Bless them all, we took over 200 fans and they were rewarded with a backs-to-the-wall, Alamo performance with Pigden's freekick goal securing a shock 1-0 win.

Gordon Bartlett had to change our free-flowing approach to a more pragmatic one and slowly the points began to add up, and we finished the season in



Luke Pigden wheels away after scoring the club's first-ever goal in National League South
Picture: Steve Foster

mid-table having won 14 and lost 14... a far cry from the desperation of that trip to Whitehawk when our record was played 9, won 0, drew 4, lost 5.

The Vale in 2014 was a very different place. Look at the grainy picture (below left) of Like Pigden's goal against Eastbourne and the 706 crowd was pretty thinly spread in the stand-alone Bulla. These days we'd be disappointed with twice that number for a league game. Eleven years and only Sutton United and Boreham Wood have matched our upward journey.

Wealdstone line-up v Eastbourne Borough: North, Mills, Martin, Hamblin, Cronin, Godfrey, Wright, Pigden, McGleish, Hickey, Malcolm. Subs used: Turner, Hammond. Not used: Parker, Collins, Little

Eastbourne: Carey, Hamilton, Khindra, Sinclair, Lovett, Aldred, McCallum, Lok, Pacquette, Johnson, Worrall Subs used: Walker, Bown

Scorers: Wealdstone: Luke Pigden, 30 mins. Eastbourne: Dean Bown 90 mins
One story I like to tell about that season...

The game that followed the surprise 1-0 win at Whitehawk was against my local side St Albans City at home, a game I'd waited some 43 years for (since we'd last met in the amateur Isthmian League, 1971). I was desperate for victory and was crushed by our tame 3-0 defeat at the Vale. Lurking on their fans forum, I responded to the gloating messages about how the Saints were headed for promotion (they were third in the table at that time) and Wealdstone for relegation by offering a £10 bet that we would actually finish ABOVE them in the league.

One of their more objectionable fans eagerly took the crazy wager, but as the season wore on he became quieter and quieter. On the last day, when we were without a game due to Salisbury folding, Saints

were at Maidenhead needing to match our 4-1 win there to stay above the Stones on goal difference... but they could only win 3-1, meaning we finished 12th and they 13th! But how about the sportsman's bet, I hear you ask? Well I'm still waiting :)



Pigden buries his shot for an exhilarating 1-0 lead

Kit donors

2025-26



SUPPORT your favourite player by donating their kit for every game of the new season!

It costs £165 for either home or away kit... and for that you'll get a our gratitude plus a mention in this programme and on the club website, as well as on player interviews published on X (formerly Twitter) and You Tube.

To secure your favourite player contact Richard Hopwood on 077999 077816 or email him on richardhopwood@wealdstonefc.com

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Sean Adarkwa @SYL-ISLMA Syl's Goals Live	Junior Tiensia Matt Snell	Jack Cook (A) Trevor Davies	Deon Woodman (A) Gary Smith
Omar Mussa (A) Trevor Davies	Enzio Boldewijn (A) @StonesCast85		

Many of the photographs in this temporary set of kit donor images courtesy of Jon Taffel

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Sponsor a match...or donate a ball

2025-26

Celebrate an occasion or advertise your support for the Stones with these great-value packages

Sponsoring a match is a great way to celebrate an occasion or advertise your organisation's support. Packages start for fans at just £495 for 4 people, and for businesses at £595 + VAT for 4 people.

As a Wealdstone FC match sponsor you will enjoy match tickets for 4 people (inc. prime main stand seats if required); a fantastic advertising package, including publicity over the PA system; website and social media together with a piece in the programme; boardroom, Gordon Bartlett Lounge or Main Hall hospitality including a pre-match hot meal with wines and half-time refreshments courtesy of in-house caterer Lynn Evans; match-day programmes for all in your party; a dedicated table for you and your guests throughout your stay; the naming and presenting of the 'Man of the Match' award; and a souvenir memento of your day. Our match sponsors and their guests are all entertained in surroundings befitting such a special occasion be it a birthday, anniversary or any other special event! We will work with you to ensure you and your guests get to enjoy a truly memorable experience. **For further details contact abbeychandler@wealdstonefc.com**

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FC HALIFAX TOWN August 16, Enterprise National League

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SUTTON UNITED October 25, Enterprise National League

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BRAINTREE TOWN November 8, Enterprise National League

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MATCH SPONSORS: Rolfe East
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BRACKLEY TOWN February 24, Enterprise National League

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HARTLEPOOL UTD February 28, Enterprise National League

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SOLIHULL MOORS March 14, Enterprise National League

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..or be a part of matchday by donating the match ball!



A package for businesses (from £225 + vat) or fans (£180) for four people that gives you the satisfaction of knowing you've paid for the ball that Wealdstone are banging into the net (or out of the ground!). You get:
* 4 x Match tickets * 4 x Captains' Lounge hospitality + refreshments and snacks * Publicity over the PA system and via the official club website and social media * 4 x match-day programmes * 1 x Signed Ball

Call Peter Worby on 07967 698370 or John Young on 07874 846785 for more details.

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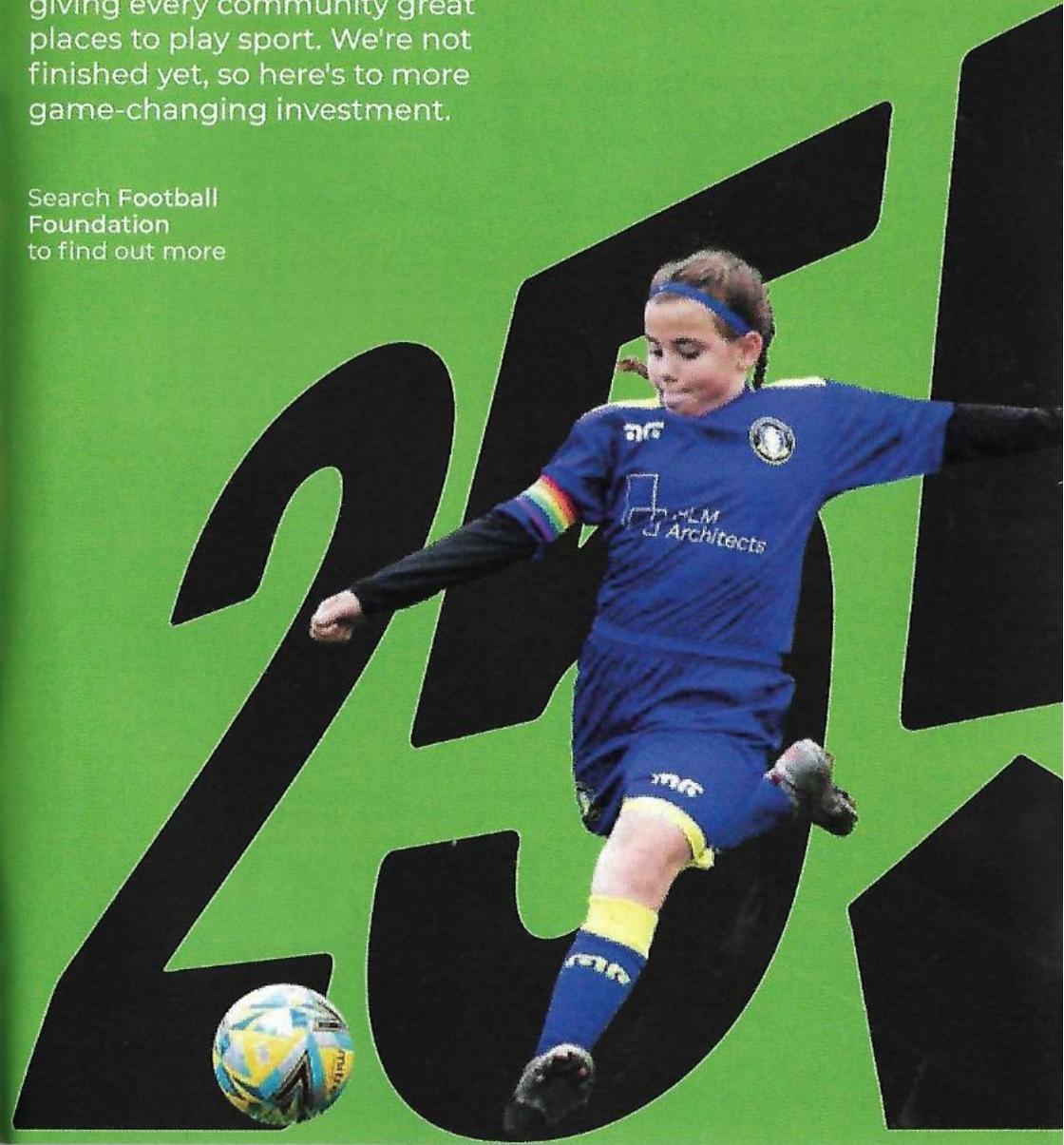
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Upcoming Fixtures

2025-26

Support the Stones here at home and across England

Here at Grosvenor Vale



Wolverhampton Wanderers

National League Cup
Tuesday 12th August, 7:00pm



FC Halifax Town

Enterprise National League
Saturday 16th August, 3:00pm

Stones on the road



Woking

Enterprise National League
Tuesday 19th August, 7:45pm



Boston United

Enterprise National League
Saturday 25th August, 3:00pm

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE 2024/2025 - FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Barnet	46	31	9	6	97	38	59	102
2 York City	46	29	9	8	95	42	53	96
3 Forest Green Rovers	46	22	17	7	69	42	27	83
4 Rochdale	46	21	11	14	69	44	25	74
5 Oldham Athletic	46	19	16	11	64	48	16	73
6 FC Halifax Town	46	19	13	14	50	46	4	70
7 Southend United	46	17	17	12	59	48	11	68
8 Gateshead	46	19	10	17	76	68	8	67
9 Alfrincham	46	17	13	16	68	62	6	64
10 Tamworth	46	17	13	16	65	72	-7	64
11 Hartlepool United	46	14	18	14	59	62	-3	60
12 Sutton United	46	15	15	16	59	64	-5	60
13 Eastleigh	46	14	17	15	58	61	-3	59
14 Solihull Moors	46	16	10	20	61	67	-6	58
15 Woking	46	13	19	14	52	59	-7	58
16 Aldershot Town	46	14	15	17	69	83	-14	57
17 Braintree Town	46	15	11	20	51	59	-8	56
18 Yeovil Town	46	15	11	20	51	60	-9	56
19 Boston United	46	15	10	21	54	67	-13	55
20 Wealdstone	46	13	14	19	56	76	-20	53
21 Dagenham & Redbridge	46	12	16	18	61	62	-1	52
22 Maidenhead United	46	14	10	22	57	75	-18	52
23 AFC Fylde	46	11	7	28	50	85	-35	40
24 Ebbsfleet United	46	3	13	30	38	98	-60	22

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