

THE HISTORY OF FOOTBALL IN MILTON KEYNES



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Supporters' Tales



Football at Wolverton Park, 1970

Although Brownies is quite nice I prefer football more than Brownies. *Megan Storrar*

The magic I could not describe. Wolverton Town, I stood. Never in the stand of course, because you couldn't see as well as from on the side where the railings were... and the little drop onto the track. You'd see them coming from the dressing room, the blue and white stripes, and then you were up in heaven. *Fred Hudson*

I'd go to Wolverton home games on a Saturday, stand there in all weathers. There was a stand but you could not get in it anyhow because it was packed. It was a penny extra and we couldn't afford that. All weathers we used to stand there. *Jack Little*

I can just remember in my first game that Matt Baker saved a penalty and Sean O'Hanlon was on the other team and now he's on our team. The first time they scored I was in the North Stand and I started crying because of the noise! *Megan Storrar*

Mrs Quinn, she was at every game. She had one of those old fashioned rattles. She would have a go at the opposition and then once, I'm pretty sure she run on the pitch at something and then she was banned. She got banned from the ground. I think the players got a petition up to make sure she came back. *Neville Wilson*



Mrs Quinn cheering for Bletchley Town, 1960s



Megan Storrar with Sean O'Hanlon



Wolverton Park, 1987

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Managers' Tales



The Media Tarts, National Hockey Stadium, 2007

The trouble with Bletchley was that they were ambitious but they didn't have the means. You know at the end of the day you can only play with what you can afford. *Brian Gibbs*

I got the job. To be frank no one else wanted it. I mean Manor Fields was sort of the fat lady was just about to play and no one wanted the job. Ok, we'd get a 'seeing to' but the players began to learn and I began to learn. You realise how enormous the task is. *Tommy Flanagan (MK City)*

I drove the Transit van and the players over there and I had no physio, so I was manager, physio, the lot! *John Horsley (Newport Pagnell Town)*

When I was manager of the Police team I had full power because, if they didn't play I used to go the Police Superintendent and said, 'This lad won't play.' 'Well, he will play.' And that was the end of it. *Staff Nash*

Brian Gibbs... He had a couple of spells with us, about six years or so. I liked him a lot. When we went to get him I said, 'We're on a bit of a bloody wild goose chase here.' And he took it and that's when we sort of really began to go places. *John Booden (New Bradwell St Peters)*

As Player/Manager I can pick myself and choose any position I want, something my ability would never warrant even in the lowliest of teams. *Jon Gregory (Media Tarts)*



MK Police with Ye Olde Swan, Sunday League Fair Play Award, 1980



MK City vs Witney Town, September 1980



New Bradwell St Peter vs Newport Pagnell Town, October 1980



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The Early Years



Stantonbury St Peters, 1922

We played about three matches, starting in August then the war came in September. Half the team were immediately called up into the Army so no more football. *Eric Kilsby (BB Old Boys)*

The old Northampton Echo's used to come by train and old Mr Muscutt, with his old bowler hat and his old mac, used to come round the little streets shouting 'Football Echo, Football Echo' but I didn't have a penny because I'd been to see the Town down the Park. *Fred Hudson*

When he was playing for Wolverton Congregational Church, Wolverton Congs... if they played at Castlethorpe they used to literally walk from Wolverton Station, along the railway lines to get to Castlethorpe to play. Then play the game and then walk back again. He always used to take a bit of cake, some fruit cake so he'd got something to eat on the way home to keep him going. *Geoff Ellis*

We were playing where the Bletchley College stands now. That was Bletchley Park and we were playing in the Premier Division of the South Midlands League which, in the first season I was there, we won the Premier Division. *Bob Page (Bletchley Town)*

Easter 1939, we went to Ostend for the weekend. We went on the Friday, come back on the Monday and we played a game out there. There were two other Bletchley players, fellows from Bletchley, Ted Stevens and Vern Stevens. *Harry Harris (Wolverton Congs)*



Bletchley St Martin, 1911-1912



Fenny Stars circa 1910-1920



Eric Kilsby



Stony Stratford Baptists, 1906-07



Wolverton Congregational Junior FC, 1935-36

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Down Memory Lane



Stantonbury Albion Football Club

Football was a great glue, keeping us all together. All these guys... you've probably known most of them since you were six, seven, eight years old and you still see them now. What you've got is that common bond... you played football together once! *Steve Flinn*

If fact somebody from Leeds United knocked the door, spent a couple of hours in the house and me dad (who wasn't interested in football) was wanting to get rid of him and he was offering a washing machine and one or two other things. 'No, no. He's still at school and he's going to get his exams. He's going to sit his GCE's.' 'Well, he can do that up at Leeds, you know.' 'No, he's local and he's at the Grammar school.' *Ferdie Old (Wolverton Town)*

I played against Northampton and after the game, Tony Clarke and the chairman at the time, Pat Coady, said, 'Would you sign for us?' And I said, 'Well, without talking about money or anything, find me a house, find me a job and I'm yours.' And that's all I was concerned about at the time. *Brian Robinson (Bletchley Town)*

We used to go up at the old recreation ground at Church Green Road in the evenings, in the midweek. The idea would be we'd all turn up, pick sides, the usual thing, 'I'll pick you, you'll pick him' and so on and then we'd get stuck in. And, of course, there would be half a dozen of the young ladies up there watching and waiting for the end of the match and, at about ten o'clock, when it started to get dark, we'd call it a day and start walking off home down the lane. *Peter Maynard*



'Down Memory Lane' event, Stadium MK, September 2007



Friends Reunited – Brian Robinson, Brian Liscoe, Dave Watts, Alf Pickersgill and Tony Clarke at the 'Down Memory Lane' event, September 2007



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Pitches and Grounds



Bletchley Football Club, 1965

There were two Horwoods and we went to the other one and there was a load of sheep on the pitch and the farmer wouldn't move them so the game was abandoned. We put it down as a draw, the Sunday league compromised. *Tommy Flanagan*

But Fenny Stars used to play in a league and they played down the Watling Street, opposite where the disused football ground now is. It was a field behind there. *Dennis Lovett*

We used to go down and watch Dad play for LMS at Albert Street. I certainly remember we used to sit on the railway sleepers there and go home after the game absolutely covered in coal and of course Mum used to do her nut, it was all this extra washing! *Steve Flinn*

1968/1969... we again played Belsize up at Tattenhoe Lane. If you look now it's nice and flat but if you looked then, it was like an old meadow with rolling hills on the pitch and we played this game because it had to be played and it was the biggest mudbath you ever did see in your life and we all got covered. *Gerald 'Bert' White (Wiltonians)*

We played on the pitches down at Wolverton. It's not there no more but they used to have like a big shed there. The one right by the cemetery. A big old pitch that was, but the thing is it could rain as much as you liked or whatever but you always played on it. *Wally Kalek (Greenleys)*

Playing in the Park? A wonderful experience. *Gerald Goodridge (Wolverton Town Minors)*



Death of a ground. Albert Street, Bletchley, 1972



Cheerleaders at Wolverton Park, 1987



Floods at Manor Fields, 1979



Snow at Manor Fields, 1982



Wolverton Town FC, 2005

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Local Heroes



Blechley Road School, 1955. Barry Lines is circled. Inset: Barry Lines (Northampton Town), 1962

And I have to say that I owe it to Jim Marshall. I said to him, 'Jim, you've really got to help us and I don't care what it is.' You take one of the great brands, the brand is such a powerful brand that you can sell t-shirts with Marshall on them so to actually have that and for them to pay for us to have it on our shirts is such a great thing. *Pete Winkelman (MK Dons)*

There was a fellow from Stony Stratford, a professional footballer, I collected a football as my Christmas present from Swain's in Church Street, which was the sports outfitters and with my mother got on the bus to go down from Wolverton to New Bradwell to see her mother, my granny. It must have been Christmas Eve and on the bus was this chap George Henson... the professional footballer and he signed. He actually signed my brand new football! And I mean, can you imagine... a professional footballer! *Gerald Goodridge*

Brian Robinson... one of the best goal keepers. *Neville Wilson*

Jack Ansell... I played with him at Headington. He played for Northampton Town but Jack became quite famous. He played in the FA Cup at Highbury and kept the score down to about 3-1, in the Second or Third Round of the FA Cup. *Tony Clarke*

They were very much disorientated and all over the place and the demise of the team going down the leagues is a consequence of that. But they've certainly turned it around and Pete Winkelman... hats off to him, he's done really well. *John Adorno*



George Henson



John Adorno with Jim Marshall, sponsor of Blechley Youth, 2004



Pete Winkelman

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The Young Ones



Knowles School, 1987

We used to meet at Denbigh School, walk down to Bletchley station, go on the train to St. Johns Station... walk all the way up to the Pages Park, play a game at two o'clock, walk all the way down to the station again. These kids got home at seven at night. Not picked up here and taken there. They walked. We got all the way over to Bedford. They paid their own fare on the train. *Barrie Field (Denbigh School)*

At that time, Bletchley was an entity on its own really. There were a good ten or eleven primary schools in Bletchley that played each other. They formed themselves into a league. And the rest of Milton Keynes, i.e. Wolverton, Stony Stratford and New Bradwell, which really was the rest of Milton Keynes then because this was before it was built. That was like another country really. *Donald Cook*

It started with a team called Woolstone which Tony Clarke was involved with. He played a lot of local football... probably an under-tens or an under-nines team. I met a lot of friends and I still actually know some of the people from back then. *John Adorno*

I never had the opportunity to play football at school. At Woburn Sands all we had was a playground and some gardens on a bank. Had to provide the vegetables for the school kitchens. No playing fields whatsoever. *Bob Page*



Holne Chase School, 1959



Come on lads! Young fans at a North Bucks Schools match in the 1950s



North Bucks vs Luton, English Schools Trophy, 1951-1952



Wolverton Junior School Team, 1959-60

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Referees' Tales



Bletchley Town vs West Ham United, 1968

It was about 1948. I passed me test like and I started in the North Bucks League and, of course, we used to bike everywhere. I think it were five shilling we used to get and three pence a mile! *Harry Harris*

I was refereeing up at North Crawley one day and they had a very speedy winger playing for the opponents and he kept going past their full back and then, one time, he went past and he just went down! I looked across and thought, 'He must have tripped up.' Then I saw an old lady with a walking stick on the side of the pitch and she'd obviously tripped him with her walking stick but it was so funny. *Bill Johnson*

And I used to go down sometimes and have a go at refereeing. From that I decided to take it up – Refereeing. It's a longer career than football. *Brian Smith*

Prepare my kit and I used to iron it personally and used to have creases down my sleeve and my boots were immaculate. I used to pride myself on having the best boots around. I used to have a clean pair of white laces. Every match I used to buy a new pair of white football boot laces, every match, for a North Bucks game! *Ron James*

And often if you didn't get a referee, I'd end up refereeing. I was the only one who was probably fit enough or knew enough about the game. It's all dads and stuff, so I used to referee the games when there wasn't a referee turn up. And I'm thinking 'I might as well do this properly.'

John Horsley



It wasn't me, ref! MK City v Aylesbury, 1980



Ron James



Sheffield Wednesday v Wolverton



You are joking, ref? Intercity v Stony Stratford, 1982

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The Social Side



Bletchley LMS End of Season Dinner, late 1940s

We discussed what we could do and we held a fashion show. I think that was the Scout's Hall and we raised quite a bit of money. Mr Cook worked down there and he took the tickets, the money and he stood in the cold and he were frozen so we done a jumble sale and with the proceeds we bought him a little hut and that little hut was there until they started building the houses. *Nellie Wood (Wolverton Town)*

I got Ralph Green to come to the club and he was worth his weight in gold... him and his wife and boys. They used to run dancing classes and all sorts just to get money in. *John Booden (New Bradwell St Peters)*

We played Sutton United once in the Amateur Cup. They had a special train to go so you can tell how many supporters they had. They took a band with them... Wolverton Town Band went as well. Just after the war, not long after the war. *Jack Little (Wolverton Town)*

I know from the early days that there was functions of whatever sort to raise money for the next season. I mean be it jumble sales in the early days. When I was at Belsize we used to have... down at the Leisure Centre... a sort of disco/group. If that got well supported that would more or less be our running costs for the next season. *Allan Bond*

There was more than one other player's wife that used to come and they used to sit in a vehicle all the match talking and they would never know at the end of the match whether we'd won or not. *Geoff Ellis (North Crawley)*



Bletchley LMS presentation to E. Skipper, 1953



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Winners



Wiltonians after beating Edlesborough United 2-0 (Dunstable Alliance Cup Final, 1970)

And so I became chairman of Bow Brickhill football club. We had the superb side, which won the North Bucks League and that's when we strengthened it, where we had Dave Watts, Alan Fairey and Brian Brewster join – The Bow Brickhill boys. *Ted Enever*

We won our qualifying games, the first rounds. We beat Euston away 4-0, then the next round we beat Derby Pattern Makers. We beat them 3-0, Wally Kalek got two and Danny Ferguson scored. Then in the semi-finals we had Derby Locomotive and we beat them 3-0. Wally got two again and Danny Ferguson scored. And then in the final, we went all the way to Derby to play Crewe, who used to win it most years. This was the only time that Wolverton ever won it.

Gary Kellett (Wolverton Railway Works)

I don't think the record will ever be beat to be honest, in the Sunday League... thirteen league titles, fourteen Knock-Out cups We were the first Sunday side to win the County Cup and we won that in our first year. *Barry Staniland (Greenleys)*

For seven years Milton Keynes Police dominated Police football and the only position we never had was a goalkeeper. But we didn't need a goalkeeper because we used to score so many, but we won everything for seven or eight years, and were never beaten really, League or Cup.

John Horsley

There were teams who'd been there a lot longer than us, a team called Spandit from Dunstable who were the perennial champions... we then came and we took over from them. I think we won the double in that league two years running. *Steve Flinn (Wiltonians)*



Belsize, Sunday League Cup Winners, 1968



MK City, Berks and Bucks Senior Cup Final, 1980



Stantonbury Charity Cup Final, 1993



Wolverton Railway Works after beating Crewe LMR in the final of British Railways London Midland Cup, 1981. Wally Kalek is far right on the front row

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Bletchley Town



Bletchley Town 1951-52 at Bletchley Park

There was a local builder called Pat Coady and a very energetic treasurer, a gentleman called Ted Sherry. These two people's ambitions were enormous and I was lucky to be involved with them. *Tony Clarke*

They were semi-professional in those days but I use the word loosely. They didn't pay great wages. I saw a number of players... they went to other people for one or two pound more than Bletchley could afford. Bletchley were on a very tight budget. *Brian Gibbs*

At one stage they was sort of leading the table and the next step up would have been into the Southern League Premier which was one step from getting into the League because there wasn't any Conference in them days. *Neville Wilson*

I remember playing at Wolverton one Boxing Day, there must have been towards two thousand down there. *Brian Robinson*

Within five days of joining a newspaper, I was reporting on the most senior team in North Bucks. Roy Tink, Len May I think played, Dick Riley was playing. George Pearce was in goal I seem to remember. Chris Burtell played on the wing. *Ted Enever*

Bob Morton played for England and we had him as manager. That was when the brilliant Bob Maxwell was about. We paid Bob Morton a minimum wage, you know. But Maxwell had him as a run around for him. *Charlie Caines*



Bob Morton gives a team talk – Bletchley Town in the mid 1960s



Match action, 1965



Bletchley Town, 1960s



Bletchley Town, 1966

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The Sunday League



Greenleys vs Primrose, Sunday League Cup Final, 1984

Bletchley and District Sunday League... it was at the start of 1966. *Bill Johnson*

I enjoyed the Sunday football. We all mixed together. It was a social thing, all guys our age. We always used to get together to play football and they'd hold dances and various fund raising functions. Different clubs... we'd all associate with each other. You know, it was pretty good. *Tommy Flanagan (The Chequers)*

In those days we had fifty-odd clubs. We had to write all the envelopes and we used to sit there folding up fixtures and going round the table. We'd have them all laid out on the table and you'd walk round the table and get one set of fixtures and staple them and put them in an envelope and then go round again basically. It was a family affair at one time because when I became secretary my daughter then became fixture secretary. *Bill Johnson*

One day a leaflet dropped through the door saying 'Come down to Wolverton Rec on the Sunday... forming a football team for Greenleys...' That was from Derek Newlands, he was our manager then. So one Sunday I thought, I'll have a little walk round there and see what's what, and that was it. There was about fifteen/sixteen blokes turned up and we just sort of played. *Wally Kalek*

And the Premiership was exceptionally good when you had teams like Greenleys, Stantonbury, Conniburrow. There were some good players in them teams. *Staff Nash (MK Police)*



Haversham v Greenleys, 1995



Greenleys. County Cup Winners, 1994



Sunday League Football Awards, June 1972



Primrose v Conniburrow, 1980