

Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"



# AMBER NEWS

## Special 'So Far So Good' Edition

September 2021



# Opening Credits,

“For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.”  
Rudyard Kipling.

If we should always give credit where it's due, we must give the lion's share of the credit for a really impressive start to the season to Mark Bonner and a team in which it is obvious that each player is giving his all for his team mates. So impressive have we looked that the pundits predicting the imminent demise of Paul Cook at Ipswich Town have been suggesting that Mark Bonner is his obvious replacement. We needn't worry though. Our manager is United through and through and has said many times that he is living the dream and doing a job that he loves.

With the exception of a painful spanking at home to Lincoln City, when, arguably both tactics and line up were wrong, we have been competitive to say the very least. We nearly completed an astonishing



comeback at Accrington, always a tough place to go and some narrow wins early in the season against Oxford and big spending Bolton showed that we had prepared and invested very wisely. Not only that, we have got used to seeing this team fight to the last whistle. There is a lot of quality in the side too and Wes Hoolahan has a lot of highly skilled players helping him to create mayhem. I look forward to watching him linking up with a fully fit Jack Lankester who has the unmistakable aura of class about him. Conor Masterson looks like a great signing and we have yet to see the best of



Jensen Weir, Mitov, Digby and Jones look very comfortable at this level and Joe Ironside poses a real threat to opposition defences. I could go on but you get the picture. The game against Millwall showed that we have some startlingly good youngsters in the squad too.

There were those who felt that we hadn't spent enough to compete at this level but that was before a ball had been kicked.

These days we don't spend money we haven't got and, as we all know, huge expenditure can't guarantee success. Derby are being deducted points by the week, due to financial mismanagement and stories are coming out of Fleetwood that they are over 20 million pounds in debt. Having a wealthy owner is not always a good thing and it is likely that other clubs will be seen to be in jeopardy as well. No football fan likes to hear these stories.

To return to my theme, highly rated and previously unbeaten Burton Albion were blown away 3-0 at the Abbey. Refreshingly, their manager admitted that we were the better side and deserved to win. Not all managers Have been quite so generous. Perhaps there should be awards for honesty?

The icing on the cake was our first ever win at Fratton Park where home fans like to sing songs about it being our cup final. This followed the humiliating defeat against Lincoln and showed the character of the players. It was also a highly skilled and resolute performance. It was gratifying to see how much the players appreciated the loud and unstinting support of the 500 odd fans who had travelled to the game. Our away support is incredible at times and the reaction of the players is a palpable example of the unity running throughout the club.

Finally, we must recognise another superlative effort against a hugely talented Spurs U21 team. Big names, a huge budget and a glorious history mean nothing on the pitch, particularly when your opponents are United in Endeavour.



**CAMBRIDGE UNITED COMMUNITY TRUST**

## WELLBEING SCHEDULE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p><b>Jolly Joggers</b> 10:00 Meet point: Abbey Leisure Centre ALL</p> <p><b>Beginners Walking Football</b> 11:00 - 12:00 Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall 50+ Supported by </p> <p><b>Walking Football</b> 13:30 - 14:30 Orchard Park Astro 50+</p> <p><b>Man Vs Fat</b> 18:00 - 21:00 Abbey Leisure Astro 16+ BMI: 27.5+ <b>MAN-FAT FOOTBALL</b></p>	<p><b>SuperVets Football</b> 18:00 - 19:00 Abbey Leisure Astro 50+ Supported by </p> <p><b>United For All</b> 18:00 - 19:00 Abbey Leisure Astro 16+ Supported by  </p>	<p><b>Mental Health Football</b> 11:15 - 12:15 Abbey Leisure Astro 16+ Supported by </p> <p><b>Community Bootcamp</b> 18:30 - 19:30 Coldhams Common 16+ In partnership with  </p>
	Thursday	Coming Soon...
	<p><b>Walking Football</b> 10:00 - 11:00 Abbey Leisure Astro 50+ Supported by </p>	<p><b>Seniors:</b> - Dementia Café - Strength &amp; Balance Classes - Wellbeing Walks In partnership with  </p>

**SUPPORTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

Contact: Vicky Neal | Wellbeing Manager | 07760183400 | vicky.neal@cambridge-united.co.uk



<https://www.cufclottery.co.uk>

**JOIN TODAY**

## Why Should I Join CFU?

“How do I love thee?  
Let me count the ways.”  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Let me start by counting the reasons for joining us:

### How Have We Helped Our Club?

1. **Away Travel** is just one of the things that the club had neither time nor resources to run. Thanks to CFU and its dedicated volunteers, our fans will be able to attend every away game on their journey through League One.
2. **Programmes** - CFU organised a subscription service for those who prefer a hard copy of their programme. Thanks to this, more and more people will be able to expand their collections and enjoy this traditional pleasure.
3. **Player of the Season** was organised by CFU last season at the request of the club.
4. The CFU run **Lottery Scheme** has put a considerable amount of money into the club for some years to pay for things which it would otherwise have to do without. I know what a difference it has made to Ian Darler's work. It paid for the electronic scoreboards as well. It has also paid for materials used by the volunteers who help to maintain our venerable ground.
5. **Coconuts** preserves our history, promotes our traditions and helps to bring back former players for memorable evenings of nostalgia.
6. **Diversity and Equality**. We work closely with other groups, such as CUSP, the Community Trust, Amber Belles, the YMCA and other Homeless organisations, the Allotments group and the Muslim community who attend the Cambridge Mosque to develop strong links with the community. All fans should feel welcome and properly provided for at football matches. Problems need to be understood before they can be solved. We are working towards producing an audit of our fans' needs to make sure that they can be met as fully as possible.
7. **Fans' Director** – is elected as a member of the Board to represent your views. This is a huge advantage now that we no longer have shareholders to hold the club to account. A brief glance at Oldham Athletic and Derby County and the memory of what happened to Bury is proof of the need for fans to have a real voice. On behalf of shareholders we achieved an independent audit which ensured that the club and fans alike were able to understand the true picture. Transparency is the key to ensuring the responsible running of any organisation.
8. **Fans** are why football clubs exist. They have a right to be listened to. Your membership fee will help us to make your voice heard. That voice will be louder the more members we have.

**Andrew Stephen, Chairman.**

## **'FOREVER UNITED' PARTICIPANTS GET KNITTING FOR LOCAL CHARITY**

A group of seniors that are part of Cambridge United Community Trust's Forever United programme have been busy over the last few months knitting blankets for local charity 'Wintercomfort for the Homeless'.

Back in March 2020, the Community Trust recognised that seniors would be most at risk of isolation and loneliness during the pandemic and so put systems in place to support them. They made wellbeing check-in calls, opened up a Community Careline, set up weekly Virtual



Afternoon Teas and organised monthly 'garden-gate' visits where their Community Engagement Manager, Simon Wall, would visit seniors to have a catch-up at a safe distance and deliver activity packs.

It was in these activity packs that participants were first introduced to special challenges that they could take part in to help keep themselves occupied during periods of self-isolation. These challenges included the Great CUCT Bake-Off and the Great CUCT Knitting Bee. "It was vitally important that we gave people something meaningful to do during lockdown," explained Simon, "Some of them hadn't been outside for months and they were struggling with their mental health. The knitting challenge was particularly successful because they knew that what they were doing would really make a difference to someone's life".

Overall, well over one thousand squares were knitted which were then sewn together to make ten amazing blankets. Some seniors even knitted extra hats and scarves. Cambridge United Community Trust have strong links with Wintercomfort, who provide life-changing support for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness in the city, so it felt right to donate the blankets to them.

"Wintercomfort are great admirers of the work that Cambridge United Community Trust does to create a sense of together-ness for those at risk of isolation. The recipients of these blankets, hats and scarves will be so grateful not only for the comfort and warmth they bring but also for the thought and care that has gone into each one."

Anyone wishing to donate wool or take part in the challenge, please email:

[simon.wall@cambridge-united.co.uk](mailto:simon.wall@cambridge-united.co.uk)



### *Olive Academies Link*

Cambridge United Community Trust have partnered with Olive Academies (Alternative School provision - [Olive Academies | Welcome to Olive Academies](#)) and this term will be delivering the Trust's Mental health programme 'Mind Your Head' to their KS3/4 students.

The Mind You Head programme includes 6 weekly structured lessons, delivered by a member of Trust staff, which aims to improve students understanding of mental health, offer them ways of managing stress and discusses how social media can both positively and negatively affect their wellbeing. The programme has been delivered across 11 mainstream schools and has been recognised on a national level in the 'all-party parliament group for a fit and healthy childhood' report under international practises and examples. We are very happy to now offer the programme to alternative provisions, such as Olive Academies, ensuring such important interventions are accessible for all students.



Following this programme, the partnership will continue to develop with small group physical activity sessions, allowing students to put into practise some of their learning about the impact physical health can have on their mental health.

Vicky Neal

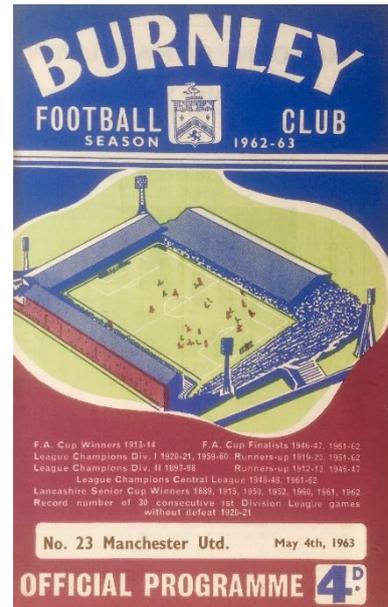
### **Programme Exchange**

The CFU caravan (in the front car park, adjacent to the club shop) has recently undergone a makeover. Alongside the evergreen match programme sales, 50-50 (Golden Gamble) tickets, and the CFU backed 'Away Travel' ticket outlet, is the new **PROGRAMME EXCHANGE**. For the past few years '100 Years of Coconuts' have been assembling a comprehensive library dating back to the inception of Abbey Utd match-day programmes, in 1947. Thanks to kind donations from fans the post 1970 element of the CUFC Programme Library is virtually complete. There are, however, still a lot of gaps in the pre-70s section, particularly late 40s and early 50s

'100 Years of Coconuts' are appealing to fans for help to complete the project. Obviously, donations are preferable but, as the ones still needed are illusive, a fair price can be agreed. Gathering dust in the dark recesses of an attic is no use to anybody. Helping to complete the library would be a magnificent gesture for which every donator's name will be included for posterity. Likewise, the completed library will not be hidden away in some dark cupboard but will be available, as part of the Club museum/archive, for any fan or researcher to readily access.

Past donations have helped to fill gaps and duplicates have provided a way of raising money to enable the acquisition of other, rarer editions (which can cost anywhere between £50 and £200 when they surface). Currently there are complete sets of Home programmes available, for most post 1970s seasons, which can be purchased for £5 per pack. There are hundreds of other Home and Away programmes, spanning the full 75 years, that can be picked up for as little as 50p each. Simply fill out a request form at the CFU caravan and we'll see if we have a copy of the one you need. All proceeds from the sale of historic programmes will be used to purchase the missing ones.

Gina Parkin



## Football these Days.....

“Some people think that football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that.”  
Bill Shankly

I am frequently told that football just isn't the game that it used to be, as if that's an entirely bad thing. Certainly, matches are no longer played on quagmire pitches, we don't wave rattles, sport rosettes, drink Bovril to avoid freezing to death or pass small children over the heads of the crowd to the front. Neither can we smoke pipes with foul smelling tobacco, pay at the turnstile or buy paper programmes because we all prefer to read them on our phones.... Most of all, I hear people complaining about playacting or cheating as I like to call it, “winning” penalties, shrieking and rolling about like demented acrobats. Histrionics belong to show business and maybe that's the point. Winning the World Cup in 1966 changed football for ever in this country. It ceased to be the working man's consolation for a bad week and became sexy. Crowds boomed, money began to pour into the game, T.V. took notice and our best players became household names. Even women knew who Bobby Moore was!

The cult of the football personality wasn't entirely new but before 1966 great players such as Danny Blanchflower, Brian Clough and Wilf Mannion were regarded with suspicion by chairmen whose word was law. Some, like Tom Finney, were regarded



almost as slaves of the clubs which had them under contract. After the maximum wage was abolished as unfair and illegal, the top players began to earn big salaries as clubs competed for their signatures. The game was becoming another branch of the entertainment industry, although most players could walk down the street without being

mobbed. Jimmy Greaves used to travel to home games on the tube and Ramsey's England players went shopping on the morning of the World Cup Final. We didn't feel entitled to a piece of our heroes then. They went back to ordinary family lives after matches. Many players found it harder and harder to concentrate on football when immense wealth came their way at an early age and some, like George Best, began to attract groupies as if they were rock stars. Despite the gambling, fast cars and laddish culture, we loved larger than life personalities, such as Rodney Marsh, Stan Bowles and Frank Worthington. They were rascals who we could relate to. They wouldn't get a game now perhaps, because they relied on their own unique talents to triumph over athleticism and clever coaching.



The sudden influx of foreign players, beginning with Ardiles and Villa, began to see off



the smoking and drinking culture so beloved of former pros. Dedication, sensible and healthy lifestyles including healthy diets became commonplace. Fairly average players could be trained to limit the effectiveness of more talented players by dint of supreme fitness. Young players were often over coached and flair tended to be imported rather than nurtured. It was always tempting to buy the complete product, particularly

when players from certain countries could be acquired comparatively cheaply.

Many fairly average players, such as John McGovern, became popular with managers. Brian Clough took him to virtually all the clubs he managed. Box to box midfielders

became very much in demand and the term utility player became a very unlikely compliment.

The spectre of hooliganism held back the natural development of the game for many years as groups of Bover Boys terrorised rival fans and each other. They had a primitive sense of chivalry and wouldn't attack anyone old, with a girl or wearing a replica shirt. Latter day Robin Hoods! We were all fenced in, women, children and minority groups often avoided the very tangible clannishness and hate. One huge

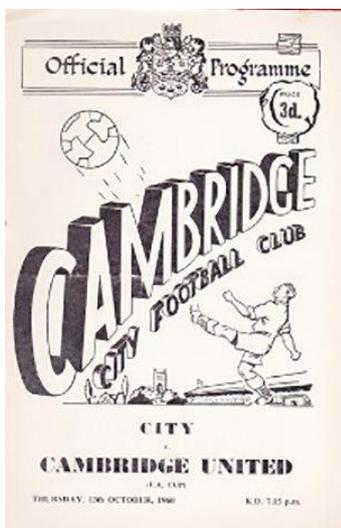
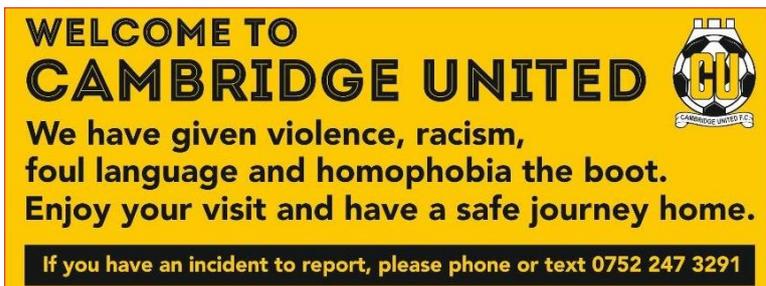


improvement in the modern game is the drive to make us all feel safe and welcome. This hasn't gone down well with some "traditionalists" but without it the game would die.

Hooliganism was effectively dealt with by the authorities over a period of many years and tragedies such as the Bradford fire showed that we needed to modernise grounds and our ideas. The fences had to go because they were unsafe. Fans began

to realise, despite the rivalry, that the game is what we all have in common. Money became a two edged sword when Sky TV hijacked the game in the nineties, having discovered that huge profits could be made from football and selling opportunities to view many more games to dyed in the wool fans. Even mediocre and untried players began to earn a small fortune and attendance at games involving the bigger clubs became ruinously expensive. Overpaid players became difficult to manage by coaches who often earned far less than they did. Agents did a fine job of massaging their players' already inflated egos.

Teams in the top division



decided that cornering most of the increased income wasn't sufficient and tried to form a European Super League without bothering to consult their fans, as if making money was all that really counted now. This would have destroyed what little real competition remained and would have meant giving the Big Six even more power than they already had. Some clubs bankrupted themselves by trying to compete with the big boys. Some club owners wanted to win at all costs even if it cost some fans the club they loved. Naturally the bubble will burst when the football authorities finally wake up to the fact that there has to be a much fairer distribution of wealth, strong grass roots and healthy competition, offering little

clubs the opportunity to set their goals high. Many fans have already become

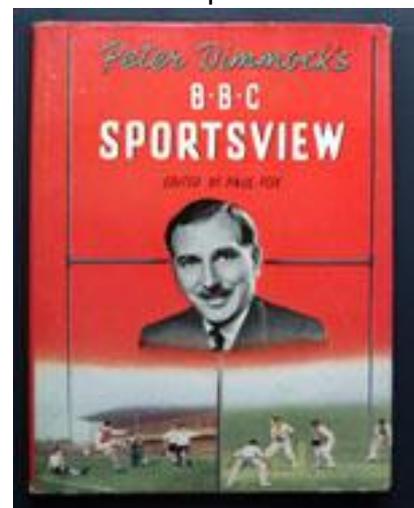
disillusioned and won't continue to turn up when they realise all the silverware will be won by the same clubs, season after season.

Not everything has been negative. Crowds have become more diverse and more accepting of minorities and some of the groups who traditionally didn't feel welcomed by other fans. Stadia are safer and better designed to meet a wider range of needs. However, the idea that our game is regarded by many as a product to sell, rather than something which could benefit us all, is difficult to challenge, although some clubs and the government have realised that reform is essential. Even the Big Six couldn't ignore the wishes of their fans and fans' rights will have to be enshrined by all clubs in the future...if the game is to have a future. Similarly, the selfish top clubs need to realise the danger of killing the golden goose.

Many of us long for the days when players didn't see themselves as actors in some endless melodrama or get job satisfaction from feigning injury or from conning referees and the paying public. We also want to see football associated with real values: fairness, sportsmanship, open competition and respect for opponents. I remember seeing much more of this in the Conference. We need root and branch reform not soundbites or gestures which are easy to make and conceal the real problem. Fans who support their team for a lifetime should be celebrated as the real winners. We should not be forced to turn owners, TV moguls or corrupt authorities into millionaires while the game rots.

### RIP James Peter Greaves

One of the few things that I remember about Christmas 1962 is being presented with the Sportsview Annual which reported on all the major sports' stories of the year. One of the main stories concerned the all-conquering Tottenham Hotspur team of the time. Household names such as Danny Blanchflower, Dave Mackay and Cliff Jones were the heroes of the hour, having taken Spurs to the first Double of the century by playing scintillating attacking football.



I had started to play football at primary school and we all wanted to be Jimmy Greaves.



He was the most expensive and most famous footballer in Britain but he seemed to score goals as a kind of hobby. He made playing football look effortless. He was balanced, graceful and different from all the others. He seemed to have much more time than anyone else and seemed to score while defenders were making up their minds what to do next. He didn't need time to control the ball or to think about where to shoot, he just seemed to tap it into the space that no one else saw.

His obituaries are full of his struggles with alcohol, missing the World Cup Final and his iconic tv show presented with his great friend Ian St John but these aren't the things that really matter about him. Oddly, I had been thinking about writing a piece about Jimmy Greaves just before I heard about his death. I read that some people in Manchester, who should know better, were claiming that Ronaldo is the best player of all time. Never mind him, or Pele, or Maradona for that matter. Greaves was in a class of his own and we will never see his like again. Even now I chuckle when I remember his Manager, Bill Nicholson complaining on Match of the Day that Greaves was lazy. He did nothing in the game except score. He did score five though. That'll do for me.



### It's Just Not Cricket

This well-known phrase dates from a time before cricket, like so many other sports, became disfigured by money and politics. I remember reading claims that England should tour South Africa despite the awful regime of apartheid because cricket was above politics. Of course, it isn't and those claims were a clumsy way of trying to legitimise something quite evil. The projected tour of Pakistan has been called off, quite rightly because of events in Afghanistan and security concerns. It is a shame for the fans but no player should have to face threats to their life. On the other hand, India's withdrawal from the final Test here was another matter. To do this simply to avoid jeopardising the start of the IPL made it clear that cricket is nothing to do with chivalry or honour...it is about cash. The Ashes may be more about rivalry and tradition than anything else but even that may be called off because of Covid restrictions. Cricket as a measure of English gentility is a myth or a memory only. Staging the Hundred just before a Test series showed that. Respect for tradition is as important as



the need for change, particularly when the motive for that change is profit.

Sport at its best can transcend all things but nothing worthwhile happens in a bubble. Not even cricket.

### Emma Radacanu

Emma's triumph in America has shown how good news can

affect the morale of thousands. We all know the feeling of having our whole weekend

ruined when our team loses or plays badly. It hurts our feelings, almost as if our team's failure to perform is deliberate or personal. A triumph such as Miss Radacanu's does exactly the opposite. When there have been no great expectations, success is all the sweeter. Expecting success just adds stress and takes the pleasure out of achievement. When our heroes make us this happy, they deserve all the fame they get. Wonderful!

## Hot off the Habbin [programme articles]

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*Oxford United*

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"You are the book that I never get tired of reading."  
Anon

Well, here we are again at the beginning of a season unlike any other beginning of a season. After the long grinding months of Covid isolation, crowds are back and we can suffer and enjoy the performances of our heroes in real life once more. There will be no buffering of our view unless we have spent too long in the Supporters' Club before the game. It will be great to be back there too. The day will be made complete by the presence of 1,400 fans from Oxford who have been denied their regular football fix as much as we have. I am sure that Habbin North will live up to its reputation for inspired pessimism. Some have us down already. Others say we haven't strengthened enough. Personally, I can't wait to see what the likes of Jones, Brophy and Weir can do. My Ipswich supporting friends are really upset that Jack Lankester has left them to join us. They say that he is a real talent. Mark Bonner is good at finding it. He has said that he prefers a small, tightly knit squad. It worked well for him last season and who can doubt his judgement.

The superstitious amongst us point out that a bad start often precedes promotion...historically but I wouldn't mind playing well from the start. We've lost Paul Mullin but new heroes always turn up to replace them.

Some of our former heroes have played for both clubs. The Atkinson brothers played a big part in our history and Big Ron took us very close to the big time. Whatever anybody else says, I believe that the football we played under him was the most attractive football I have seen United play in my time as a fan. He brought some brilliant players to the club and showed the value of never being afraid of your opponent. I remember watching them play at the old Manor Ground when a certain Brian Greenhalgh stood out for Aston Villa. I preferred that old ground to their new



one. Oxford's fate under rich owners has not always been an enviable one. Anyway, I do like a ground with four sides.



One of our finest captains, Paul Wanless is and was an Oxford man. As our skipper, I remember him inspiring us to a draw at Lincoln when the side had been reduced to nine men by a myopic referee. On another occasion to looked after my son, who was a mascot at Notts County, a game we needed to win and did. He also looked after us when we collected some complimentary tickets at the Kassam Stadium. He is a fine ambassador for the game and the clubs he has served.

I hope we win but more than that I am glad to be back. It is twenty years since we were last in League One and here we are again, making memories.

Enjoy the game.

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### *Swindon Town*

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“The beginning is always the most important part of the work.”  
Plato

How good it was to see and hear the Abbey rocking again on Saturday after nearly 18 months without a proper crowd. Oxford played their part by filling the away end and by making a lot of noise when their team were in the ascendancy. In truth, that was for quite a long time. For devoted Habbinites and indeed for all U's fans the sight of Mark Bonner coming out to applaud the home support was a moment to savour. More and more obviously, he is one of us.

Oxford are a good side and a really good test for us. For some time I thought that they might just be a bit to streetwise for us but our United are not easily beaten, a quality we saw demonstrated again and again last season. Joe Ironside, just as he was for much of last season, was battered throughout the game with absolutely no protection from the Referee. Shades of Trevor Benjamin. The Arrival of Sam Smith took some of the pressure off him and suddenly the complexion of the game changed. I hope that we will see a lot more of the two playing together. They had Oxford seriously worried for the last ten minutes when we might just have nicked it. We needed a good start to the season and got it.



Similarly, Swindon made an impressive start at Scunthorpe and we will need to be at our best tonight. Its true to say that Swindon is almost certainly the most unlovely place in Wiltshire. Other than the surviving relics of the once glamorous Great Western Railway there is certainly very little to look at. However, the Robins do have real pedigree. Their most memorable

achievement was the defeat of Arsenal in the League Cup Final on a ploughed field of a pitch at the real Wembley stadium. Don Rogers had an inspired game as he often did. Since then their history has been a series of ups and downs. Certainly, they have had any number of big names as manager, most notably Ossie Ardiles, Glenn Hoddle and Jimmy Quinn. Glenn Hoddle was scathing about our playing style despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that we beat them a couple of times. Mind you, no one liked being beaten by John Becks side, although many illustrious teams were.



Lets hope for a cracking atmosphere at our first evening game for ages and a good game to grace the occasion.

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### *Burton Albion*

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“It is never too late to be what you might have been.”

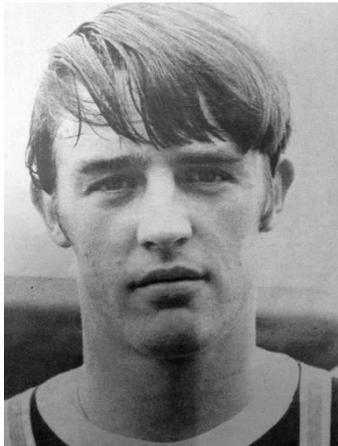
There have been times when I have been quite certain that the Pirelli Stadium is the coldest place on Earth. A number of times I have been reluctant to leave the relative warmth of the bar under the away stand to brave the Arctic breezes outside in order to watch some pretty forgettable football which I can see equally well on the screen indoors. On rare occasions we have managed to win there and once, having been 2-0 down in a play off semi final there, I walked down the steps to rejoin my family just as Lee Mceville scored the first his two goals which sent us back the Abbey level. I enjoyed the home leg just as much.



I never thought that Burton would escape from the Conference but Nigel Clough dragged them, division by division into the football league, a quite brilliant achievement. Against the odds they became a force to be reckoned with. Their stadium always seemed half empty and devoid of atmosphere but a game against Manchester United seemed to change all that. Parking there, or finding a welcoming pub was never a problem there and it seemed that most of the locals were entirely indifferent to football. The town was always better known for its beer production but I confess to having a soft spot for the place having completed my second teaching practice there in a suburb called Stapenhill.. At that time, they were still using steam engines on the sidings at the Bass factory. How time flies.

Just a few years before that, we acquired a tall rangy centre forward called Ian Hutchinson. Apart from anything else he invented the long throw by using his arms in a kind of windmill motion. He scored some goals for us too before going to play for

Chelsea where he made a name for himself as one of the bravest forwards ever to play the game. He was wonderfully skilled too. In those days it seemed highly unlikely that either club would ever appear in the championship and yet both clubs did. It is part of the enduring romance of the game that such a thing was possible. It is what all fans of so called little teams dream about. fairy tale endings like that seem less likely in today's money orientated game but that prospect is why we are all here today..



Burton under Jimmy Floyd will be a tough prospect this afternoon but so will we. We played well against a very good Accrington Stanley side and we are still learning. We will soon turn good performances into results. I hope that we start with Smith and Ironside up front but then I have always

taken the Ron Atkinson view. Fear no one!

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### *Bolton Wanderers*

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“The Universe has a way of favouring the underdog.”

Curtis Tyrone Jones

So far the word on the traditionally cautious Habbins has suggested that we were bound to lose to Oxford because they were in the playoffs last season and that Burton were similarly too good for the likes of us. Burton also wear a sort of yellow shirt and had already won their opening three games. Unfancied, newly promoted, underfunded and unfashionable Cambridge would do well just to keep the score down. Except, of course, as the game wore on, we began to outplay them. No one, not even Burton, had expected that. At 2-0 up the Habbinites were still nervous. At 3-0 the realisation dawned that Burton were under siege. Two up front and the masterful Masterman at the back meant that we were dominating a game which was meant to be a struggle. We must keep Masterman after January if we can. He is going to be some player.



It was difficult to choose a MoM. Williams, Digby, Ironside, Mitov and Jones all stood out. However, Wes Hoolahan was by far the best player on the pitch, a player as good as anyone in League One. We just have to keep him fit. So what about Bolton then? Another dose of David against Goliath? Certainly, Wanderers have made twelve signings pre-season and clearly mean business. Their ground is bigger and better than ours-as was Burnden Park. Their Tom Finney was, arguably better than ours. But having an illustrious history, a huge fan base and spending a lot of money doesn't guarantee anything on the pitch or on the day. We fight for the right

and it seems to me that we have already adjusted to this new level, full of big names as it is.

Two things stand out in my mind from games against Bolton. The first was an almighty bust up between rival fans on Coldham's Common after a game in the eighties. One of our fans was bitten, provoking some undiplomatic remarks about the starving North. More annoyingly, I remember a match from the Alladyce era when we were robbed of an historic FA Cup win against them. Leading 1-0, and deservedly so, Trevor Benjamin was scythed down for the most obvious penalty award you will ever see. It should have been a sending off too. The Ref bottled both decisions and the Trotters eventually stumbled to a 3-1 win. Every week, when I see Joe Ironside getting absolutely nothing from referees, I think of that game. It is clearly an offence to be big and strong. Sizeist I'd say.

Football is notoriously unpredictable. Teams fight for the right to win. This United side never know when they are beaten. COYU's!

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### *Lincoln City*

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"Brave men rejoice in adversity, just as brave soldiers triumph in war."  
Seneca.

We could learn a lot from Lincoln City, after all, as the first Football League team to be relegated to the Conference in 1987, it only took them a year to get back where they belong. It took us nine long years to do the same. On the other hand they seem to have found a use for Jez George long after he seemed to lose his credibility here.



They have of course been nearly men as well, being one of the very few teams to lose three playoff finals in a row.

Many of us have been a little surprised at the Imps' sluggish start to the season which may be based in part on a Covid outbreak and in part on the hangover

from last season when their form declined quite suddenly and steeply. They have a lot of very good players and will no doubt come back very strongly. I just hope that their renaissance doesn't begin against us.

Lincoln has an enviable history of great managers, Most notably Graham Taylor who obtained immortality as a turnip on the front page of the philosophers' favourite newspaper, the Soaraway Sun. I knew what he meant when he said, "Do I not like that?" Much more popular than hapless Graham was Keith Alexander, a true gentleman who cared passionately about the game and the rights and concerns of the fans who make clubs what they are. He died years before his time and was mourned by all those who love the game. These days Lincoln's highly vocal fans are orchestrated in much the way the Ultras on the continent are conducted by fans with megaphones. They don't seem to watch the game but they do add something to the atmosphere, unlike the thugs from Swindon who bated stewards at Stevenage. Such people don't seem to know what sport means. It would be good to see the authorities respond properly against that behaviour...and worse as we see too often in countries which used to be behind the Iron Curtain. Taking the knee won't do it. Throwing clubs and countries out of competitions, if they do nothing to control their own fans, would.



Football is a game of passion of course and Lincoln's fans belie the sleepy reputation of the county where they live. My favourite game at Lincoln was when our passionate captain Paul Wanless led us to a creditable draw very much against the odds. For the last ten minutes of that game our fans sang, "And we've only got nine men." I forget the names of the two Cambridge players who were sent off.

I have always been fond of the club since those far off days when I ran in the Eastern Counties Cross Country Championship in 1970. We changed in the home dressing room at Sincil Bank, before running up the hill of the same name. The stadium was a very different place then but we were very well looked after there. I remember that the event stewards told us that we would only have to run up the Bank once. They lied. I have forgiven them now and must admit that the view of the cathedral as we ran along the ridge was a wonder to behold. Lincoln is a beautiful city. No doubt we are in for a tough game today. I hope that we will be listening to Coconuts when it's all over though.

COYU's

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*Fleetwood Town*

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"I'm a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down."  
Abraham Lincoln

The Fleetwood Town story is an inspiring one. They are in their fourth incarnation at the moment, which is by far their most successful one. Derided by many as a suburb of Blackpool, Fleetwood have been punching above their weight since they were taken over by a man with wealth and vision. He transformed their stadium and then their



fortunes and ambitions. As recently as 2012 we were playing them in the Blue Square Bet Premier....or the Conference as we came to know it for a few years.

On that day in February, we saw a tale of two strikers unfold. One was a certain Jamie Vardy who we already knew well from his days at Halifax. He had a brilliant game and we all know what happened next. He made the very most of his talent and his late

start in league football. The other was Richard Brodie who, I suspect, very few will remember. He came on as a substitute and was himself substituted later in the game-much to his surprise and apparent fury. He felt that he was already a huge star and behaved accordingly. When he played for York at Cambridge, he spent more time sitting on our excellent playing surface than chasing the ball. It seemed that he felt that the world and all the referees in it were so unfair. He waved his arms a lot to show this. Later on he was seen slipping, with rather more justification, on the floor of the Gents in the Supporters' Club. Three Stephen brothers in quick succession showed concern for his welfare and pointed out that his apparent inability to stay on his feet might be a real problem for a professional footballer. "But I'm a really good player," he wailed. His response perhaps shows why his talent wasn't ever really realised.

For a time, Fleetwood were managed by a man named Joey Barton. He did pretty well there but I suspect that one day his temper might get the better of him. It is always vital to respect your opponents I feel.



It's been a strange week. Following a hammering by Lincoln City, United played quite superbly to win at Fratton Park for the first time ever. Their fans didn't expect it because we are another little club. Our fans were wonderful, a fact recognised by our players. They respond better to encouragement than derision as we Habbinites know only too well.

Sadly, shortly afterwards, we heard the news that we'd lost the mercurial Jimmy Greaves. Whoever we support we know quality when we see it and he was a genius. RIP Jimmy and thank you.

# CFU Corner

## by Ben Phillips and Andrew Stephen

### *Oxford*

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”  
Coretta Scott King

It was a great thrill to be able to hold our AGM at last on July at the Supporters' Club on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Although the attendance was disappointing, I think that we have to accept that it will take some time for many people to acquire the confidence to join any social gathering after the pandemic. It was the first time the event was filmed and soon we will all be able to see the results.

It was particularly pleasing to see Ian Mather, Ben Strang and Mark Bonner present for a hugely interesting Q and A session. Their presence showed just how highly our wonderful fans are regarded by the club. We are very grateful to them.

During the business part of the meeting several of our recent initiatives were mentioned including;

- Away Travel being taken on by CFU. Gina, in particular has put in many hours to make this possible.
- Ben has been the force behind the scheme to take photographs of Season Ticket holders with the promotion trophy. He has taken hundreds of pictures to the delight of many. This hasn't been easy to arrange but it has been an excellent way of saying thank you to season ticket holders for their incredible loyalty.
- In conjunction with the club and the Community Trust, we are setting up a special area for fans with dementia and their carers. In addition, we plan a detailed audit of our crowd in order to assess which other needs there may be which we have yet to meet. Age, mobility, disability, autism and the need for support or extra provision will form part of a possible survey.
- We have supported a new Facebook group called the Amber Belles which will, amongst other things, provide a platform for female fans who haven't always had much of a voice.
- We have sponsored a football competition run by the Community Trust for BAME players and a season ticket for a recently bereaved fan with autism. We



have supported the allotments group and been involved in organising a football tournament for the homeless.

- It is my intention that we work in harmony with the club, the Community Trust and with CUSP to provide a better experience for all our fans.

These are just a few headlines of what we are doing in addition to our usual activities of the Lottery, Coconuts and representing our increasing membership. Covid hasn't stopped us!

Finally, congratulations to Dave Matthew Jones who has been re elected as FED. As he said, "There is much to do."

More later

### *Swindon Town*

It was wonderful to see fans back at the Abbey for our first game on Saturday v Oxford. It's been a long time coming and your support for Mark Bonner's side was nothing short of incredible.

We have had a number of concerns raised by fans attending the games, including long teabar queues, poor service in the food outlets and complaints that there were not enough printed programmes for those who can't get online or pay a subscription for one. Several people suggested that there is still a significant demand for printed programmes, both from collectors and from those who want to know which players to

look out for. We have listened carefully to fans' concerns on match days and are working closely with CUSP to raise these issues with the relevant people at the club, so they can be looked into and rectified where possible.



We were saddened to hear of a few fans who struggled with anxiety at being back in large crowds so soon after the pandemic, and who found it overwhelming and daunting. Again, we want you to know you're not alone and

we are always willing to try and help you in some way. We are still working with the club at trying to create a specific area in the ground for the elderly and vulnerable to sit on a match day. If you know someone who you think would benefit from this initiative and opportunity, please do contact us either via email or at the CFU caravan on a match day. We are always keen to know of fans whose needs are not being met so that we can try to get them addressed.

Sport is a very good way of bringing people together and a powerful way of showing how we can look out for each other. One of CFU's aims is to look out for and support fellow fans.

We recently learnt of an autistic fan called Mark, who we know through the club's Community Trust walking football session. He has been a diehard U's fan for a number of years, attending many games, but has recently struggled with a number of family bereavements and is struggling with his mental health and finances. Watching Cambridge Utd is one of the things that improves his health and we were saddened to hear that he had been worried he wouldn't be able to afford to attend games this year. CFU therefore decided to step in and help him by sponsoring his season ticket for this season to ensure he could attend games so his mental health would improve. The pandemic has, I hope, made us all more aware of our responsibilities to the community. We can all make a difference.

It's important we look out for each other, more now than ever, the pandemic has taught us to be kind to one another. We aim to help more fans in similar situations and every year sponsor a fan who needs help season ticket. We believe that every fan should feel safe, welcome and properly catered for at our ground. If you have concerns to raise or would like to find out more about what CFU do, please email us on

[cambridgefansunited@outlook.com](mailto:cambridgefansunited@outlook.com)  
or visit our website:

[www.cambridgefansunited.org](http://www.cambridgefansunited.org)

United in Endeavour

### *Burton*

For a long time now, we have thought football clubs should find ways to demonstrate that they are more diverse and welcoming to people of all backgrounds. CFU has worked tirelessly in the last 12 months, and continues to do so, to assist Cambridge United to show that they are a diverse and inclusive football club. This has involved a number of different projects.

During Lockdown one of the club's photographers, Ben Phillips, came up with a creative photography project called "Your City, Your Shirt". Learning about the difficulties that certain groups of people face in football, from groups like Fans for Diversity, Football Supporters Association and Kick it Out, Ben, in particular, wanted to find ways to show that Cambridge United is a welcoming club for everyone, regardless of your background.

Ben said, "I went and photographed as many people as possible from all backgrounds and walks of life proudly wearing the U's shirt. The idea was to highlight the diversity amongst the club's fan base and show the multi-cultural nature of the city we live in." Cambridge United is at the heart of a city, that is friendly and welcoming for everyone to enjoy.

Alongside this creative project, CFU has also initiated other events, most notably the partnership that CFU has set up with Cambridge Mosque. Members of CFU attended



the mosque during Ramadan and provided provisions to help members of the mosque during the Ramadan period, with support from Anwar Uddin at Fans for Diversity. Last week CFU members visited the mosque dignitaries, this time for a meeting about how they can consolidate the relationship between the two parties. They attended with the League Two runners up trophy and took staff members of the Cambridge United Community Trust along to discuss how they can work with the community who attend the mosque and help one another.

CFU has recently worked with the Community Trust at establishing a BAME specific football session which the trust coaches are delivering in the community, and CFU have provided funding for this by sponsoring the session.

Cambridge Fans United are on a mission to make the Abbey Stadium a place where everybody feels welcome and safe. They recently helped set up a social space, the Amber Belles, where female fans can chat openly about our wonderful club. It is hoped CFU can help support the group in a number of projects for female fans going forward. The group is open to anyone - regardless of gender - who supports our aims. The Amber Belles have already started to arrange their first social with a meeting with the Lincoln City female group, Lady Imps Supporters Association (LISA) when they visit the Abbey for our fixture on 11<sup>th</sup> September. The LISA group have over 1,200 members and it will be a great opportunity for the Amber Belles to pick their brains and share ideas which will allow them to grow going forward.

Fans Groups are as relevant to all supporters with or without a crisis at the club. The Pandemic has shown that our society is ripe for change. Football Clubs and their followers are powerful mechanisms for change, change that will benefit all of us.



The Future's bright, The Future is Amber!

### *Bolton Wanderers*

“Inclusion is not a matter of political correctness. It is the key to growth.”  
Jesse Jackson

John Gallagher has very kindly offered his two season tickets for use by deserving applicants on a match by match basis while he is in the United States. Applications should come directly to me at [acstephen@hotmail.com](mailto:acstephen@hotmail.com). We are working closely with the Community Trust to help as many fans as possible who may, for one reason or another, find it difficult to watch games at the Abbey. We have struggled so far to fill a designated area in Block F for Dementia sufferers and their carers. There are twenty seats available but so far we haven't found any takers. Maybe we will have to try again next season and advertise the scheme in advance?

We are in the early stages of organising an audit or survey of our fans to see how well we are meeting their needs in the stadium. We are not sure exactly what form this

audit will take but we believe that it is a vital step. If we don't have an accurate picture of the needs of our fans, we can't know whether they are being met. If you have any suggestions about how best to do this, please let us know. Equally, if you know of anyone whose lack of mobility, independence, disability, gender or cultural needs are not being adequately catered for, tell us about it. Our lovely old Abbey Stadium wasn't designed or built to meet the needs of today's crowds and there may be limits to what can be done but we must try. Eventually, we will have a new ground but we will need to know what design changes should be considered.



We should celebrate another ground-breaking visit to Cambridge Mosque in conjunction with the club and the Community Trust. I am certain that this is a relationship that will bear heavy fruit over the years. The Amber Belles group has provided a real forum for our female fans who are meeting up with their counterparts from Lincoln before that match. Away Travel, now in the hands of CFU have been doing a great job, despite the difficulties caused by one thoughtless individual. Much has been said about this incident, based on pure speculation. The response of the club and CFU have been entirely appropriate to the real facts and circumstances. The appearance of the one city, one shirt poster shows our commitment to Equality and Diversity. It is a long and demanding road but we are on it.

Up the U's!

### *Lincoln*

"To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful, and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams."

Hilary Clinton

CFU was pleased to recently see the launch of 'HerGameToo', the aim of this new campaign is of fostering an ethos in football in which women are welcomed and respected equally. The group was set up by 12 passionate female football fans recently and developed well with setting up links with a lot of football league clubs showing their support.

As an organisation CFU actively supports ensuring that women are treated equally at Cambridge United. Cambridge Fans United are on a mission to make the Abbey Stadium a place where everybody feels welcome & safe. Committee members recently created a female fans group Called Amber Belles where female fans can come together and chat openly about our wonderful club. The Amber Belles are having their first social event at today's game and are meeting members of the Lincoln Imps Ladies group pre match. It is hoped the Amber Belles will do more events and things

going forward, we hope the ladies from both fans groups enjoyed meeting up and chatting and enjoy today's game. You can find out more about the amber belles by searching for them on Facebook.

CFU also supports the Cambridge United Ladies team in a number of ways and has just agreed to sponsor two players for the season in Captain Kayleigh Anne Burke and Amy Howlett. The ladies' team have had a flying start to their 2021/22 league campaign, under the management of newly appointed manager Darren Marjoram the girls are playing superbly netting 13 goals in four games. With last Sunday's fixture seeing them beat Kent United 5-2. If you are at a loose end on a Sunday afternoon then we recommend U's fans checking out the women's side that represent the football club, home fixtures are played at St Neots FC and it is free entry for season ticket



holders and £3.00 admission for adults. You can keep up to date with Cambridge United WFC fixtures and details on the club's website and social media.

CFU was also pleased to recently learn that the community trusts disability officer Phil Mullen has set up and is organising another football session to be added into his busy schedule for

people in the community. Phil is setting up a specific football session for people in the LGBT community, where they can come together and participate in a football session and chat and socialise together. If you would like to find out more about this session, please email Phil on [phil.mullen@cambridge-united.co.uk](mailto:phil.mullen@cambridge-united.co.uk)

Be Kind, Be Courteous, Be United.

United in Endeavour!

Enjoy today's game.

## and finally....

"Football clubs are at the heart of their communities, cultural institutions which bring a sense of identity, pride and belonging for millions of people every week."

Open letter to Nadine Dorries from the Football Supporters' Association.

I was reading only this week about Joe Kinnear's long and difficult struggle with dementia. It has been realised for a long time now that many ex-professional footballers struggle with this awful disease, a condition probably made worse by the repeated heading of a football. Research is gradually getting under way but, like so many issues in football, it is being addressed late and only then because the public pressure to do something has been increasing. The authorities have no excuse for not taking action years ago but this seems something of a theme. I would question what real action has been taken about racism, irresponsible owners, corruption, gross inequality in football and the selfish behaviour of the so-called big clubs. Our controlling bodies are fond of cliches, sound bites, political correctness and symbolic gestures such as taking the knee, which may be meaningful but cost nothing and fail to tackle the root causes of problems. If anything, gesture politics help to disguise the lack of real action. I sometimes wonder how members of our ruling bodies justify their high salaries.



The letter I have quoted from is urging Nadine Dorries to continue the excellent work begun by her predecessor, Tracey Crouch whose report found that urgent reform is needed to change the power structures dominating the people's game. Clubs must be protected from rogue and inept owners to make sure that there are no more clubs like Macclesfield, Bury, Oldham or anyone else where fans, in effect, have to watch helplessly as their clubs slide towards potential oblivion. We certainly need an Independent Regulator with significant powers to protect the interests of fans. Fans themselves must surely have a say in the way their clubs are run. Many clubs already realise that they exist because of fans and not despite them. CFU and Coconuts have



signed up to this letter which champions the rights of supporters and recognises that without real reform many clubs will die and the grass roots of the game will continue to wither.

I was delighted to see that Cambridge United were one of six clubs launching the Fair Game initiative which is calling for a change in the way football is governed and financed. There are now twenty four clubs involved, which shows that the demand for change is growing. All those clubs have agreed on a manifesto which sets out an argument for an owners and directors test which is actually fit for purpose and effective. Furthermore, it states that there needs to be a financial sustainability

package which would effectively protect clubs and their heritage. 25% of TV revenue should be distributed throughout the football pyramid. Clubs should not pay agents' fees and there should be a sensible and fair wage cap for players in the lower leagues. There is also a very interesting proposal that if players' contracts contain a clause guaranteeing increased wages in the event of promotion, that there ought also be a clause specifying a wage reduction in the event of relegation. This would provide players with a clear incentive as well as being much fairer to clubs which have to cut their cloth accordingly.

As you would expect, CFU are right behind both initiatives as we would support anything which protects the rights of fans and encourages fairness. We have sometimes been asked to justify our existence as a critical friend of the club at a time when there is no obvious crisis to deal with. Our job as a fully independent fans' group is to support the club as much as possible, which I think we do, very effectively but also to act as a check or balance if issues are raised by our members or other Cambridge fans come to that. We have significant financial reserves, an increasing membership and a director elected by CFU members. By that token, although we are not the only fans' group in Cambridge, we are the most significant. We have not always been popular with the club but if we became minions of the directors, our existence would be pointless. I would say that, now the day of the shareholder is over, our role is more important than ever. Things are very well run at the club at the moment and we must give every credit to the current directors for that but we have been badly run in the past and who knows what the future might hold!? If another crisis pops up, we will be ready. It is wonderful to see the club giving NHS members a free afternoon for the football at the game against Fleetwood. Traditionally, we are a family club with strong values. This gesture is one which we all applaud.

I'd like to finish on a footballing note. Liam O'Neil has had his detractors but he has been outstanding. That screamer at Fratton Park was the most eloquent of response to the doubters and a testament to his determination. I hope to see a few more of those this season.

Andrew





**Make a difference and join CFU.  
Your opinions and contributions are always  
gratefully received: [acstephen@hotmail.com](mailto:acstephen@hotmail.com)**

[Deadline for next newsletter- November 10<sup>th</sup>]  
**United in Endeavour**

