



BECKENHAM TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



FAMOUS PLAYERS PART I

PAT SAWARD / 1949-50

Irish-born Londoner who starred with Millwall and then Aston Villa in the 1950s. A cool and confident left-half or inside-forward, he won an FA Cup winners medal when Villa beat the legendary 'Busby Babes' in the 1957 Final at Wembley. Captain of Villa's Second Division champions in 1960, he was capped 18 times by the Republic of Ireland whom he also captained and represented in the qualifying stages of the 1954 World Cup Finals. Took over as Brighton & Hove Albion boss in July 1970 and led them to promotion from Division Three in 1971/72.

RAY POTTER / 1951-52

Safe and reliable, goalkeeper who, after a brief spell at Millwall, joined Crystal Palace as an amateur in July 1952 - whilst still just 16 years old! Transferred to West Bromwich Albion in 1958, he made 238 appearances for The Baggies over the next nine seasons and was part of the team that beat Ron Greenwood's West Ham United - a side that included Bobby Moore, Martin Peters and Geoff Hurst - over two-legs to lift the 1966 League Cup.

WILLIAM 'BILL' LLOYD / 1952-54

Legendary goalkeeper whose career began at Beckenham for whom he continued to appear after signing amateur forms for Palace in November 1953. A 1955 Kent Amateur Cup and 1956 South Thames Cup winner after moving to Bromley in October 1954. He signed for Millwall in August 1956. The highlight of two seasons at The Den was the epic 1956/57 FA Cup run that saw The Lions knock out Brighton, Margate, Crystal Palace and Cup favourites Newcastle United before exiting against Birmingham City in the 5th Round.

CLUB HISTORY

1887 FORMATION AND OVERVIEW

Beckenham Town Football Club is one of the older non-league clubs still in existence having first been affiliated to the Kent County Football Association as early as 1887. The original club's first competitive season was 1888/89 with home games held at Rectory Field which was just south of Beckenham Junction station - where the present Rectory Road is situated. The original club was very different to subsequent incarnations with its players and officials predominantly comprising ex-public schoolboys, University graduates and wealthy professionals. The club went into abeyance just before the First World War. Records show a reformed club played in the London League 1923-1935 and also 1951-1961 and the Aetolian League between 1961-1964, before moving to the Greater London League 1964-1969. In addition to their present day participation in the FA Cup and the FA Vase, the club competed in the FA Amateur Cup between 1926-1968.

BETWEEN THE WARS 1923-38

In 1923 the club joined the London League and were Division One Champions in 1927/28 earning promotion to the Premier Division. However, after finishing second-from-bottom in their first season, they finished the 1929/30 season in last place and were relegated back to Division One. Runners-up the following season, they earned promotion back to the Premier Division and remained there despite coming last in the Premier Division in 1931/32. However, after finishing bottom again in 1932/33 they were relegated back to Division One. A 3rd place finish in 1933/34 saw them narrowly miss out on promotion, but after finishing bottom of Division One in 1934/35, the club chose to return to the Kent Amateur League and played in the Premier Division of its Western Section between 1935-38.

POST-WAR YEARS 1946-69

After the Second World War, Old Balgowans FC began playing informal games from 1946. That club renamed themselves as Beckenham FC in April 1947 and returned to the Kent Amateur League's Western Section Premier Division for the 1947/48 season. They competed there for the next four years until rejoining the London League in 1951. Ten seasons in its Premier Division followed including a 3-1 defeat to Cray Wanderers in the 1955 London League Cup Final. Throughout the 1950's the team was a feeder club for Crystal Palace but in 1961 they joined the Aetolian League. That became the Greater London League in 1964 when it merged with the London League. Beckenham were placed in Section B and a 5th place finish in the league's inaugural season saw them placed in the Premier Division for 1965/66. However, after finishing second-from-bottom that season, they were relegated down to Division One. Unfortunately, struggling for committed members, volunteers and funds, the original club folded in 1969 ultimately signing its name and all of its possessions over to neighbours Bromley FC.

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FAMOUS PLAYERS PART II

FRANK 'DOT' MORRIS / 1961-87

A truly talented all-round sportsman who played for Beckenham League works side Twinlocks before signing for Crystal Palace. He made 8 First Team and 31 Reserve Team appearances (14 in 1955/56 and 17 in 1956-57) for The Eagles. In total (Youth, 'A', etc) he appeared over 70 times for the South London club. An accomplished International Amateur Boxer, he was a player and a coach for Beckenham Town for whom his last appearance as a player was in 1987 – aged 55!

JAN WAWRZEWSKI / 1966-81

Club's all-time record goalscorer who once scored 52 goals in a single season. Played and scored during a short spell for Crystal Palace Reserves but chose to return to Becks. One of the few players who played for the old Beckenham FC, amateur side Stanhope Rovers and the subsequently re-formed Beckenham Town FC.

DAVE WENTWORTH / 1966-81

Goalkeeper who also played for the original Beckenham Town before returning to play for the re-formed club under Manager Dave Barker.

LEE FABIAN / 1985-2005

Club's record appearance holder with over 1000 games spanning an impressive 20 year career.

THE MODERN ERA 1971...

In 1971 the club was reformed, emerging out of the chrysalis of successful local junior club, Stanhope Rovers. Rovers had sprung up in 1959 as the brainchild of teenage footballers and friends, Howard Smith and Geoff Ward in association with Pat Quinn (the Head Games Warden at Stanhope Grove). The club had enjoyed considerable success playing in the Beckenham League and the South East London Amateur League. By 1971, it had become apparent that they were the top team in the area. Secretary Barry Starmer applied successfully for both the name Beckenham Town FC and the red and white colours that had been so synonymous with their demised predecessor.

Elected to the London-Metropolitan League in 1973, they finished runners-up in the Reserve/Intermediate Division in 1974/75 earning Senior status that summer. In 1975 they were placed in Division Two of the new London Spartan League (following the offseason merger of the London Metropolitan League with the Spartan League). After finishing runners-up behind Fisher Athletic in 1977/78, they were promoted to the Premier Division. They would compete there for the next four seasons, achieving their highest finish of 6th during that first 1978/79 season. Becks also reached back-to-back Spartan League Cup Finals in 1978 and 1979 but lost both - first on penalties to Welling United after a 3-3 draw at Banstead Athletic's Merland Rise ground. And then, a year later, 2-0 to Farnham Town at Fisher Athletic's ground.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

In July 1980, Beckenham moved from Stanhope Grove to their current home ground at Eden Park Avenue. Having obtained the facilities from the London Borough of Bromley - initially on a twenty-five year lease - forming a limited company at the same time. On August 16th 1980, Whyteleafe were the first visitors in what would be Becks' penultimate season in the London Spartan League. However, in November 1980 long-time manager Dave Fitzgerald resigned after for six years in charge. Kenny Baker took over as player boss and the club reached the FA Vase Fourth Round and successfully avoided relegation for a second straight campaign, but at the end of the season, Baker stepped down. His replacement Willie Proud guided the club to the final of the Kent Senior Trophy in 1982 but, despite taking the lead, they lost 3-1 to a very strong Fisher Athletic side at Hayes Lane, Bromley.

INTO THE KENT LEAGUE

In the summer of 1982 the club transferred to the Kent League's Division One - which became the Premier Division in 1998. Proud was replaced by John Collins in 1983 and he led Beckenham to the 1985 Kent League Cup Final. They led until the 85th minute when an equaliser forced extra-time and Greenwich Borough ultimately triumphed 3-2 at Sittingbourne. That summer Collins stepped down citing 'business reasons' and 22-year old player Mark Goldberg took over for a rollercoaster 1985-86 campaign before former player Bob Chilvers took over as manager for two seasons between 1986-88. Chilvers was back as coach when the club reached another Kent League Cup Final - this time under manager Kevin Sugrue - in 1993. This time they lost to a late winner against Ramsgate in Whitstable.

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BECKENHAM TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



FAMOUS OFFICIALS SUPERMAC WAS PRESIDENT

The Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan ('Supermac'), Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963 was the local MP for Bromley (1945-64) and was President of the club for a time during this period. Most remembered for saying 'You've never had it so good' as post-war Britain boomed. He died on December 29th 1986.

SYDNEY BOX AMONGST THE CLUB'S FORMER VICE PRESIDENTS

Sydney Box was a British film producer and screenwriter, and brother of another prominent British film producer Betty Box. In 1940, he founded the documentary film company Verity Films with Jay Lewis. He produced and co-wrote the screenplay, with his then wife Muriel Box, for 'The Seventh Veil' (1945), which received the 1946 Oscar for Best Original Screenplay. Box ended his cinema career in 1958 to concentrate on working in television and was part of a consortium that launched Tyne Tees Television in 1959. He died in Perth, Western Australia on May 25th 1983.

'THE MIGHTY ATOM' WAS A VICE PRESIDENT

Also amongst the Club's list of Vice Presidents was Camberwell born Sydney Charles Wooderson MBE. Dubbed the 'The Mighty Atom' – he was one of Britain's greatest middle-distance runners whose peak career was in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1934 he won the silver medal in the one mile event at the British Empire Games. At the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, he suffered an ankle injury and failed to qualify for the 1500 metres final. He set a world mile record of 4:06.4 at London's Motspur Park on August 28th 1937 – it was a record that stood for nearly five years. In 1938 he set world records in the 800m and 880 yards with times of 1:48.4 and 1:49.2, respectively. Off the track Wooderson was a City of London solicitor and missed the 1938 Empire Games in Sydney because he was taking his law finals. Immediately after the war, in 1945, he ran his fastest mile, 4:04.2, just behind Arne Andersson of Sweden. In Oslo at the 1946 European Championships, he won the 5,000m in 14:08.6, the second-fastest time to that point. His versatility was demonstrated when he won the national cross-country title in 1948. He was awarded an MBE in the 2000 Birthday Honours List for services to local club Blackheath Harriers and athletics. He died on December 21st 2006 in Dorset.

THE NEW MILLENIUM

In 2003 Beckenham were awarded £100,000 by the Football Foundation which enabled their venue to become enclosed with hard standing all around the perimeter and for an improved drainage system to be laid in 2004. The first official fixture at the new-look venue was a Kent League match against Ramsgate on August 28th 2004. Their ground is widely considered to be amongst the very best semi-professional pitches in England. 2004/05 would be long-time boss Kevin Sugrue's last season and he signed off with another Kent Senior Trophy Final. However, Beckenham lost 1-0 against Thamesmead Town at The Belmont, Whitstable. 2005/06 saw Gavin Rose and Junior Kaddi arrive as joint bosses and a new look free-scoring team - cited by many Becks fans as their favourite side - ultimately finished runners-up to Maidstone United in the Kent League Premier Division. Second place was enough to earn promotion but the club were denied progress to Step 4 due to ground grading.

SUCCESS AT LAST

Jason Huntley took over as manager in 2006 and the club lifted the Kent League Challenge Shield when they beat the previous season's champions Maidstone United. In 2008 Huntley's side reached a third Kent Senior Trophy Final only to lose 2-0 against Thamesmead Town at Welling United's Park View Road. The Kent League was renamed the Southern Counties East Football League in 2013 and that season the club finally lifted the Kent Senior Trophy with a 4-0 triumph over Ashford United at Tonbridge. 22 days later they beat Corinthian 2-0 to win the SCEFL League Cup. In August, they secured the 2014 Kent League (by now re-named the Roy Vinter) Challenge Shield with a 3-0 victory over 2013/14 league champions Whyteleafe.

MORE RECENTLY

After finishing mid-table for six straight years, Beckenham struggled in 2016/17. They finished 18th - only avoiding relegation to Step 6 by a single point on the final day of the season. However, that mediocre form has been turned on its head in recent years. 4th in 2017-18 - thanks in no small part to the goals of the division's leading scorer Richie Atkins - they were 5th in 2018-19 and also reached another appearance in the Kent Senior Trophy Final – only to have two goals controversially disallowed as they went down 1-0 to Chatham Town after extra-time on Maidstone United's 3G pitch in front of 1128.

With the clear aim of gaining promotion, long serving manager Huntley and his coaching staff oversaw a huge squad overhaul in the summer of 2019 and by March 2020, Becks were league leaders and looking a good bet for one of the TWO promotion spots in a fascinating four-way title race. Then the Covid pandemic struck. And the season was subsequently declared null and void. The huge disappointment carried over into the 2020/21 where Becks had a sluggish start before climbing to 5th before the league was suspended as the nation went back into a national lockdown with that season also subsequently abandoned and promotion and relegation decided by the FA's Points Per Game (PPG) system.

The summer of 2021 saw the FA's restructuring move Beckenham Town sideways into the Combined Counties Premier Division South. Squadwise Huntley retained the core of the existing players but added returning goalkeeper Nick Blue, new skipper and former Bromley, Dulwich Hamlet, Welling United and Billericay Town fan favourite Danny Waldren as well as welcoming back former players Nick Curran, Jamie Humphris, Shameek Farrell and experienced midfielder Joe Healy. Despite early exits in the FA Cup, Kent Senior Trophy and League Cup four straight away wins in the FA Vase saw the club reach the Third Round before exiting at Glebe on penalties after a 0-0 draw. In the league they were amongst the pacesetters all season and clinched a first league title in 94 years with a 3-0 win over Camberley Town on the final day of a memorable season.

2022/23 sees them playing at Step 4 for the first time in club history as they look to renew a number of traditional rivalries from the old Kent League days whilst also making new friends in new locations playing in the Isthmian League Division One South East.