

The History of Uxbridge Football Club

In the late 19th century the game of "football" was growing in popularity and on the 3rd February 1871 a group of eminent local businessmen held the inaugural meeting of Uxbridge Football Club. A local solicitor, Mr William Gardiner, was elected as the Club's President and the club's colours were chosen as white shirts with a light blue Maltese cross and a light blue velvet cap with silver tassel. Friendly games against local opposition were played in the early years, until the FA Cup was entered in 1873. A First Round Victory over Gitanos set-up a Second-Round tie against eventual finalists Royal Engineers, which the Engineers narrowly won 2-1. It was at this time that Uxbridge could boast amongst its ranks a Full England International. Hubert Heron played for England on two occasions whilst an Uxbridge player before he moved to Wanderers FC where he gained further international honours. His brother Francis, formerly of Uxbridge, also played for England after joining him at Wanderers FC. The club changed its colours to Oxford Blue and Cambridge Blue shirts in 1874 but they were in financial difficulties and folded later that year.

The main problem for Uxbridge was the lack of a permanent home ground (a problem that was to plague them until the middle of the next century), the committee searched the town for a suitable base but were thwarted at every turn and they led a nomadic existence, moving ground every few years. The enthusiasm for a team in Uxbridge was still prevalent and the Club was reformed in 1879. In 1886 Uxbridge FC amalgamated with another local club, Uxbridge Crescents, and played under this name in season 1886/87, before reverting to plain old Uxbridge the following season. It was at this time that the Red Shirts, which are still worn today, were adopted and the nickname "The Reds" was born. Their first trophy was won in 1889 when they lifted the West Middlesex Cup, defeating Colnbrook 1-0 in the Final. The end of the 19th century was a particularly successful period for The Reds as they won the West Middlesex Cup on three further occasions and also won the prestigious Middlesex Senior Cup twice. In 1894 they beat the 3rd Grenadier Guards 2-0 and repeated that success two years later with a 3-2 victory over local rivals Southall in a replay in front of over 5000 spectators. The outstanding achievement however was in reaching the final of the F.A. Amateur Cup in 1898. This was the club's first season in the competition, and they had to win eight ties before meeting Middlesbrough in the final at Crystal Palace. Unfortunately, their Northeast rivals proved too strong for them on the day and ran out 2-0 winners. During this successful period for the club, they became founder members of Division Two of the Southern League in 1894, finishing fourth in their first four seasons. However, in season 1898/99 they finished next to bottom and the dwindling crowds (averaging around 500) meant that financially the club was once again in trouble. A decision was therefore taken to withdraw from the Southern League and join the local Middlesex League to try and stabilise the club. However, a majority of the more talented players joined other clubs, and they struggled in their new surroundings, finishing bottom with only one point from their 14 games. At the end of the season the club had a deficit of £130 and with few players the club once again folded.

For two years much fund raising amongst the local community finally saw the club's debts paid and the reformed Uxbridge FC joined the West Middlesex League for the 1902/03 season. In 1904 the Great Western Suburban League was entered and here they stayed until the outbreak of the First World War. Their best finish during this period was as Runners-up to Brentford Reserves in 1910/11. They also won the Middlesex Charity Cup on two occasions in 1908 and 1913, as they looked to re-establish themselves as a force in the football world. Following the end of hostilities Uxbridge joined the Athenian League and added "Town" to their name. An unsuccessful first Athenian League campaign saw them relegated back to the Great Western Suburban League in 1920.

A successful four seasons saw them back in the Athenian League in 1924 where they remained until 1937. The Middlesex Charity Cup was won for the third time in 1935 as Finchley were beaten 4-3. Two poor seasons saw them finish bottom of the Athenian League in 1936 and 1937 and the club failed to be re-elected. They joined the Spartan League for the 1937/38 season, dropping "Town" from their name at the end of the campaign stood proudly at the summit. Championship celebrations however were cut short when it was discovered that The Reds had played an ineligible player and were deduced six points, placing them in third position behind Champions Marlow. Following the debacle of their one and only season in the Spartan League they resigned and joined the London League prior to the Second World War. During the war years they continued to play and joined the newly formed Great Western Combination League before re-joining the London League in 1945, finishing as Runners-up to Edgware Town.

Uxbridge were founder members of the Corinthian League in 1946 and remained in this league for the next seventeen years. Finally, in 1948, after over three quarters of a century of searching, a ground of their own was purchased. A piece of land in Cleveland Road, Cowley was bought for £5,800 by then President Mr W.S. Try. The ground was named after a large house that stood on the land and "Honeycroft" was the new home of Uxbridge Football Club. During this period, they won their only Championship to-date when they were crowned Corinthian League Champions at the end of the 1959/60 season. They also won the Middlesex Senior Cup for the third time in 1951 when they defeated Hayes 2-1. This was a successful period in the club's history as they finished in the top five of the Corinthian League on no less than eight occasions and crowds were averaging around the thousand mark. A re-organisation of non-League football saw the end of the Corinthian League in 1963 and club found itself once again in Division One of the Athenian League. This was a lean time for The Reds, they were relegated to Division Two in 1967 and financial problems once again beset them. They gained national publicity in 1976 when England were looking for a side to play as part of their warmup for the forthcoming World Cup campaign. Uxbridge took on a full-strength England at Wembley, losing 8-0. The ground problems that had blighted Uxbridge throughout their history surfaced once again and the club had to find a new home. In 1978 they moved to their current headquarters in Horton Road, Yiewsley. A former works Sports & Social Club they have developed the site to the superb standard you see today.

Over the past 43 years they have added floodlights (opened by the visit of Arsenal in 1981), new stands, fencing and in more recent times a new clubhouse was opened and car park laid. On the playing front the club won the Middlesex Charity Cup for the fourth time in 1982, their first silverware for 31 years, and moved to the Isthmian League in the same year, winning promotion to Division One in 1985. The Final of the AC Delco Cup (League Cup) was reached in 1986, where they met Premier Division Champions Sutton United. The Reds failed to stop Sutton completing "The Double" though, losing 3-1 in the Final in front of over a thousand spectators at Imber Court, the home of Metropolitan Police FC, Uxbridge entered the London Challenge Cup for the first time in the 1992/93 season and hence followed a love affair between the Reds and the magnificent trophy. In the eight seasons they entered the competition they reached five finals, winning on three occasions in 1994, 1997 and 2000. They won the Middlesex Senior Cup for the fourth time in 2001, defeating Harrow Borough 3-0 in the Final held at Honeycroft. In 2004 the club were moved across the pyramid to the Southern League and have reached the Play-Offs on three occasions. In 2004/05 they lost on penalties, after leading Maldon Town in extra-time, in 2007/08 they narrowly lost 0-1 at Oxford City and in 2011/12 they lost 2-1 at Bedworth United in the Semi-Finals. In 2018 Uxbridge were moved back across the pyramid, re-joining the Isthmian League in the South-Central Division.

In 2019 Uxbridge appointed only their sixth manager in over fifty years. Ron Clack was in charge for 18-years from 1970, followed by Peter Marshall for one season, Michael Harvey for three, before George Talbot took the reins for fourteen seasons in 1992. In 2006 Tony Choules became the man in charge, being replaced by our current manager Danny Edwards in 2019. Danny is a UEFA A licensed coach who spent 15 years as manager of Chalfont St Peter AFC. He steered Chalfont St Peter to Step 4 of the league system in 2011, as well as reaching the 3rd Qualifying Round of the Football Association Challenge Cup on three occasions. Danny has with him a confident team which includes Fred Cummings as his Assistant Manager. Fred is well known to the followers of the Red Army as a combative centre half with 320 First Team appearances for Uxbridge in the 1980's. The Middlesex Chairty Cup was won for the 8th time in 2022, with a 2-0 victory over Hanwell Town. This feat was repeated last season when North Greenford United were defeated 2-1 in the final at Bedfont Sports.

In recent times the club have mourned the passing of several club stalwarts. President Alan Odell, who had been associated with The Reds for eighty years, in 2016. Chairman Alan Holloway in 2021 and the club's long-standing Treasurer, David Tucker, passed away in 2022. "Mr Uxbridge" had been associated with the club for over 50 years and was a massive influence in the running of Uxbridge Football Club.

From his legacy the club have been able to undertake the installation of a state-of-the-art 3G pitch, upgraded LED floodlights, a new 158-seat stand, dug-outs and both pitch-surround and perimeter fencing. More improvements are planned!

Watch this space!

